

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

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Mrs H Pegg (Radnorshire Museum)
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THE SEVENTY-NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

IT IS WITH GREAT PLEASURE that as President of the Radnorshire Society I am able to welcome members to our Annual General Meeting. This has been my first year as your President and that is not the only new thing, for we meet today at a new venue for our meeting and lecture. After many years of being accommodated at the Radnor College, later named Coleg Powys, we have found it necessary to move. We are indeed grateful to the Principal and staff at the college for their help over many years. Of course the Society room and library is still housed at Coleg Powys. This is only one of the changes which are being implemented, some forced upon us, and some because of necessity. It is not my intention to explain these changes now because these will be mentioned by the various Officers when they present their reports. Your Executive Committee has met on four occasions over the past year under the chairmanship of Vice-President, Alwyn Batley. During the course of the year two long-serving members of the Executive and Vice-Presidents indicated that they would no longer be able to attend the Executive meetings. We acknowledge our indebtedness to both Miss Joy Ashton and Revd Gruff Rees for all their work over many years for the Society and particularly the Executive. They of course remain as two of our Vice-Presidents. During the year we also lost one of our most valued members of the Committee and Field Section. I, of course, refer to the late Mrs Ruth Jones of Llandrindod Wells. A large number of the Society attended her funeral at Holy Trinity, Llandrindod Wells. It is not my intention at this juncture to mention or thank each of the officers for their work during the year, but we can do that as they each present their reports to comment on the excellent work that has been done over this last year. However, I feel that we must express our grateful thanks to one person, our valiant Secretary, Mrs Sadie Cole, who in spite of being hospitalized at Hereford for some time, and subsequently having to travel daily to Shrewsbury for further treatment, has kept the affairs of this Society and made the arrangements for this meeting. Sadie – our sincere thanks. Join me in a round of applause. Thanks, Sadie. Let us now get on with the main business of the meeting – to receive reports and elect an Executive and appoint Officers.

Mr R Gibson-Watt

THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

There have been the usual four meetings of the Executive Committee throughout the year, all of them well attended. It was with great sadness we learned early in the year of the death of one of our most loyal members, Mrs Ruth Jones of Llandrindod. A number of the Officers and Committee attended a memorial service held for her at Holy Trinity Church, Llandrindod Wells. During the course of the year, amongst the matters discussed at the meetings, as well as the normal organisation of the Society, two were of unusual importance and interest: the matter of updating the Society's Constitution to conform with present day regulations of the Charities Commission, and the suggestion of awarding prizes for contributions to the *Transactions*. In both cases special sub-committees were set up and the rewording of the Constitution is in the course of being completed. The matter of prizes for contributions to the *Transactions*, especially for a first-time contributor, was proposed in the hope of encouraging more would-be authors to share their knowledge through the pages of the journal. A panel of judges was provisionally appointed who would have discretion to award or not award a prize on consideration of its merit. A further prize is to be offered for an article which adds specifically to knowledge of Radnorshire. The sub-committee is investigating the possibility of awarding Bursaries to university students whose researches deal with an aspect of Radnorshire. This matter is still under discussion. As usual four public lectures have been held, the first being after the 2008 A.G.M. when the Society was treated to a series of readings from the translated work of Ffrancis Payne compiled and narrated by Mr Dai Hawkins. The three spring lectures were 'Beacon Hill Uplands Archaeology Survey', given by Mr Richard Hayman at the Offa's Dyke Centre, Knighton; 'History, Archaeology and Conservation of Wigmore Castle' by Jon Cooke at New Radnor Community Centre; and finally 'The Struggle for Maelienydd 1100-1277', by David Stephenson at Llandewi Village Hall. As suggested last year, new venues were used for two of the lectures and proved very satisfactory. Attendance was excellent at all lectures. Thanks are due to all members of the Society who helped in a number of ways to ensure the success of all the lectures. Correspondence on a wide variety of subjects continues to be dealt with, much of it coming via e-mail and being dealt with in the same way. The web site continues to attract new members and prompts much e-mail correspondence. Our thanks to Emma Brown, who continues to maintain the most attractive site. The Field Section continues to go from strength to strength and is responsible for attracting new members to the Society itself. I have again not been able to function at full capacity for a while and

this may continue for a little time but thanks to all the help of the Executive Committee members and Officers I am just about keeping my head above water. My thanks are due to all members of the Society who have helped to share my work load and whose good wishes have helped sustain me through a difficult period. Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, thank you.

Mrs Sadie Cole

THE EDITORS' REPORT

As *TRS* 2009 was going to press we received the sad news of the passing of the Revd. Dr Roy Fenn and of the Revd GN Rees. The next *Transactions* – *TRS* 2010 – will include tributes to them.

Mr Keith Parker elsewhere in this volume has written an appreciation of Mr Adam Fenn's many years of service as editor. The present editor can vouch for Adam Fenn's kindness and care, his absolute and dedicated professionalism and perfectionism. We are delighted that he has agreed to continue to advise us. Ms Daphne Turner, who now joins the *Transactions* as Assistant Editor, was born and educated in southern Ireland and holds an Irish passport but has lived and worked in England since 1961. Before retirement she was for many years Senior Lecturer in English at Kingston University where she published a book on Alan Bennett and articles on WH Auden. She has been an enthusiastic visitor to Radnorshire for over twenty-five years. For the last five she and Peter Conradi have led a poetry discussion group at the Bleddfa Centre which this autumn will study the poems from Wales collected in Meic Stephen's *Poetry 1900–2000*. It is the joint hope of the editors that the *Transactions* might in future be more punctually produced; both editors regret that they are unlikely ever again to be as flawless as in the past.

In November 2008 Dai Hawkins [Dafydd y Garth] approached the *TRS* editors seeking advice about publication of his translations into English of Ffrancis Payne, which included *Exploring Radnorshire (Crwydro Sir Faesyfed)*. This had originally been published by Llandybie in two parts in 1964 and 1966 as part of a series in Welsh of surveys of each of the counties of Wales, and consists of eight separate ambles around the county, past and present. One reviewer commented after his first volume of *Crwydro Sir Faesyfed* appeared that Radnorshire had hitherto been as strange to the native Welsh as East Africa. Payne was an eloquent ambassador for Radnorshire, redeeming its people's history and culture from their neglect both by his fellow Welshmen and by the English.

Ffransis Payne was an outstanding scholar and a remarkable man. Born in Kington in 1900, at fifteen he left school, the uneventful happy bustle of the Borders and the distant and enclosed world of his youth, for jobs in the iron furnaces of the South as check-weigher and later as coal-truck repairer, as a clerk in Glasgow, and as a World War One RAF wireless operator. After the Great War he was also an apprentice farm-hand at various Welsh farms and an itinerant book-seller on a bike with an official pedlar's certificate from the police, a job he recalled with qualified joy. Sometimes at night he bivouacked outside.

It is hard not to see distant parallels between Payne the vagabond book-seller struggling to bring gladness to outlying farms in Ceredigion and the itinerant fifteenth-century bards he came to discover and to love, moving from Radnorshire hall-house to hall-house with poetical wares for sale. Similarly Payne had insight into the agricultural Wales of mediæval and early modern times because he had ploughed fields with horses, stayed awake for 36 hours at a stretch lambing, and gone home with bleeding hands after a day's pleaching. He learnt Welsh and started to publish learned articles on Welsh folk culture. In 1941, taking his finals in Welsh at Cardiff, he was asked to criticise a passage he had himself written in his super-correct Welsh and published shortly before: his writing early gained a cult-following.

Payne discovered more than forty Welsh poets who had visited Radnorshire, and wrote about them in *Crwydro Sir Faesyfed*. 160 poems survive written between 1400 and 1600 in the area that is after 1536 called Radnorshire, to which a further 28 poems, addressed to the extensive Vaughan family at two of their houses just over the border in Bredwardine and Hergest, need to be added, making a grand total of 188. Payne felt that the welcome recovery of this lost literature healed a break with the past, a break occasioned by the loss of the old language. One of the many interests of Payne's book is his patient explanation of why and how this process of Anglicisation took place.

In 1933 he joined the staff of the University College of Wales Library in Swansea and in 1936 became an assistant to the newly established department of folk culture at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. He remained in the service of the National Museum till 1969. His final post was as Keeper of the Department of Material Culture at the Welsh Folk Museum in St Fagan, near Cardiff. He died in 1992, one year before the only national Eisteddfod to be held in Radnorshire (Llanelwedd), a development he of course approved.

In his pioneering essay for the *TRS* in 1938, 'Radnorshire Bards and their Patrons', Payne wrote that it is commonplace to assert that

Radnorshire alone among the Welsh counties has contributed nothing to Welsh literature as if it were ‘some sort of desert devoid of history or tradition or anything distinctive’. Payne, by contrast, thought the neglect of Radnorshire – Wales’s true centre whose learning and culture was inseparable from that of Wales itself – was both strange and impoverishing. He found that Radnorshire, just as it had among the highest proportion of timber-built medieval buildings of all Wales, as for that matter of church bells cast before 1600, had an extraordinary and rich tradition of praise-poems in Welsh too.

Payne’s work was celebrated by Dr Marged Haycock in *TRS* 2004, ‘The Scholarship and Creativity of Ffrancis Payne’, pp 25–49, to which members are directed for a fuller account of his life and work. His work on Radnorshire also makes an appearance in Peter J Conradi’s *At the Bright Hem of God* (2009) chapter four, which is indebted to Dai Hawkins’s translation.

Payne did not during his life-time authorize an English translation of *Crwydro Sir Faesyfed*. The editors are grateful to the late Mrs Helly Payne for her encouragement, as also to Ceri and Ifan Payne, for giving publication of Mr Hawkins’s translation in the *TRS* their blessing, and to the Executive Committee for their unanimous vision in backing this enterprise. We are honoured that this English translation is appearing in the *Transactions* for 2008 (Part One) and – now – 2009 (Part Two) and can be made accessible to those likely to gain from it the most profit and pleasure: the Society’s members. It is to be hoped that one happy side-effect may be to bring future *Transactions* closer to being ‘in sync’ with their given year.

This material has been translated from the work of Ffrancis G. Payne and we, Dai Hawkins and the Radnorshire Society accept full responsibility for the accuracy of this translation. Plates are reproduced by kind permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.

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A note about the translator Dafydd y Garth alias Dai Hawkins, who spent most of his first two decades in the Merseyside home of his Welsh-speaking grandmother: a big influence. During the 1960s he moved to Wales to settle for good and learn the language properly, claiming that he cheated by marrying Siân Hughes, whose family’s first language was Welsh. He and Siân came to live in Radnorshire in the early 70s. Both fell in love with the country and the people and decided to spend the rest of

their lives here. After over 10 years in Rhaeadr they moved in 1983 to a hilltop farmhouse in Nantmel, where Dai still lives.

Dai taught in secondary schools for over 30 years in Rhaeadr, Llandrindod, Presteigne and elsewhere. Teaching in all these parts of Radnorshire for so long gave him a wide knowledge of and deep interest in all parts of the county. Dai felt affinity with the local farming children, believing that they did not always get fair play in the current education system, and trying to stick up for them. Dai has made a special study of the Welsh dialect of Radnorshire; as a result he was employed for two years by Powys County Council as researcher for the Welsh Place-name Standardisation project. He accounts Ffrancis Payne a great influence, and feels privileged that he knew him during the last years of his life. He remembers Ffrancis Payne as 'always a gentleman; exceedingly helpful, always willing to share his knowledge and wisdom with others, and not at all possessive about his very considerable scholarship'.

MR ADAM FENN

With this Volume of the *Transactions* the Radnorshire Society bids a reluctant farewell to Adam Fenn after a spell of ten years as joint editor, for he cut his editorial teeth on the Millenium issue.

He was well fitted to the editorial role, not only by his abilities and personal qualities, but also by his professional training, for after reading Classics and Music at Keele, he took a post-graduate Certificate in Local Studies at that university before going on to Leicester for an MA in English Local History. He thus has a thorough grounding in the sources available to the local historian and so could give an intending contributor invaluable advice and encouragement. With an eye for detail and quick to spot inconsistencies in dates, names, titles and terminology, he greatly simplified the task faced by a contributor when they received the proof copy of their article for correction.

Though the editorial task is arduous enough, comparable to preparing a book for publication on an annual basis, Adam also brought to the editorial role his considerable IT skills and was thus able to save the Society considerable time and expense by laying out the text, in which tables, diagrams, maps and photographs had been integrated, ready for printing. His technical expertise meant that he was able to give the Executive Committee invaluable advice when the issue of digitizing the *Transactions* arose. His contribution to the work of the Committee was not, however, limited to the technical sphere for, living and working

outside Radnorshire, he brought a fresh and more detached outlook to its discussions.

We thank Adam for his invaluable contribution to the Society and wish him well for the future, hoping that we are saying *au revoir* rather than farewell.

Keith Parker

JOINT HON. LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Three new books were acquired during the year:

1. Conradi: *At the Bright Hem of God*.
2. Faraday: *Calendar of Acts in the Consistory Court of the Bishops of Hereford*.
3. Welsh: *Local History on the Ground*.

Mr J Barker

It has been a quiet year in his department at the Library – mostly conservation. Although the library is no longer open on a regular basis it does not mean that it is permanently closed. Anyone wishing to visit please telephone Mr Ridyard on 01597 825324, who will be very pleased to arrange access. A new book by one of our Vice-Presidents, Mr Keith Parker, has just been released – *Parties, Polls and Riots*, published by Logaston Press.

Mr G Ridyard

THE EXCURSIONS ORGANISER'S REPORT

WEDNESDAY 3rd JUNE 2009

Forty members spent the day in the historic town of Ludlow. We started the day with our guide Carol Overs at the 900-year-old Ludlow Castle. Dressed in medieval costume Carol guided us through the ruins of the Castle and its long, long history of the many people and of events that had taken place there.

Construction of the Castle began in the late 11th century as the border stronghold of one of the Marcher Lords, Roger de Lacy. He and the other

Marcher Lords had the duty of holding the frontier against the still unconquered Welsh. The river Teme, the level building surface and the steep slopes to north and west made this a fine defensive position. Over the years the Castle was extended and made into a major fortress, particularly by Roger Mortimer, who in the 14th century was one of the most powerful men in the country.

When Edward IV, son of the Duke of York, became King in 1461 Ludlow Castle became Crown property. The King sent his son Edward and his younger brother Richard (in history known as the little Princes in the Tower) to Ludlow away from the plagues of London. The nobles and gentlemen with them formed the Prince's Council, which later became the Council of the Marches. For more than a century Ludlow was virtually the capital of Wales.

Prince Arthur, son of King Henry VII, spent four months at the Castle with his wife Catherine of Aragon. Arthur died in December 1501 and his heart was buried in the parish church of St. Lawrence. In 1509 Catherine married Henry VIII. Their only child to survive infancy was Mary (1512–1558), who spent three winters at Ludlow Castle (1525–1528). In the reign of William and Mary (1689–1702) the Castle was abandoned and fell into decay. The new Government policy was to centralise control of the whole of England and Wales in London. At around this time the Castle ruins were purchased from the Crown by the 2nd Earl of Powis; the ownership still remains with the family. The Castle is now a picturesque romantic ruin and attracts thousands of visitors. The Shropshire Historical Pageant of 1934 revived the tradition of entertainment at the Castle and since 1960 a Shakespearean play is performed in the inner bailey every year during the Ludlow Festival.

After lunch Carol took us on a walking tour of the town. Built as an ambitious new town under the protection of the Castle, the early grid pattern streets, the Castle Square, the Market Place and nearly 500 listed buildings still remain a feature of modern Ludlow. The town's economy was based on wool and a very important cloth industry. During the period of the Council of the Marches, the Council's courts were very active and the town was full of lawyers, clerks and royal messengers. Many of the big houses such as Castle Lodge and the Feathers Hotel were built as private homes for Council members and employees. In the 18th and 19th centuries Ludlow was a fashionable social centre and county families built their elegant brick houses. Glove making was now the major industry.

We walked through Castle Square – Harp Lane – Shoemakers Row – Drapers Row – Fish Street and Pepper Lane. We saw Hosier's Almshouses – the Reader's House with its Jacobean porch and the Angel Hotel, where

Lord Nelson received the freedom of the Borough in 1803. Our walk ended at the parish church of St. Lawrence. The earliest church on this site was built by the Normans following the foundation of Ludlow itself. Nothing of this church survives except the font. The building we see today is the result of 300 years of alterations and repairs, the most extensive of them in 1859–61.

Ludlow Castle, the town and the church have so much history and so much to see, one day's visit was not enough.

WEDNESDAY 8th JULY 2009

On a lovely sunny morning forty-three members travelled by coach down the Wye Valley through a small area of the Brecon Beacons National Park into the South-east Wales Valley and on to Blaenavon Iron Works and the terraced workers' cottages. The Blaenavon Industrial Landscape, including Big Pit, was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in the year 2000. Its unique industrial heritage has been recognised as being of international importance because it is one of the prime areas in the world where the full social, economic and technological process of industrialisation through iron and coal production can be studied and understood.

We spent an entertaining morning with our guide Mr Ivor Baynon visiting the cottages and walking around the ruined Iron Works buildings. Blaenavon was one of the places where the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries began. Traces of this transformation – of the environment, technology and everyday life – survive throughout an extraordinary landscape located on the rim of the hills where South Wales coalfields meet the Brecon Beacons. The epicentre of the revolution in this landscape was Blaenavon Iron Works. A new industrial enterprise began on these hills in 1787.

The cottages known as Stack Square after years of neglect have been refurbished and were the location for the award winning BBC television series 'Coal House'. The first series was about the families living and working there in 1927. The second series 'Coalhouse at War', set in 1944, brought attention to the 'forgotten armies' of the Second World War. The cottages were built in 1788 to house the key workers for the new Ironworks and provided high quality accommodation for their time.

The afternoon was spent at Big Pit.

At the end of the 19th century Wales was one of the most important coal-producing countries in the world. In 1913, when over 60 million tons were being produced from over 600 collieries, one in ten Welsh people were employed in the coal industry and many more were dependent on it for a living. By the end of the twentieth century only one deep mine

remained in Wales. The coal industry, the most important industrial, social and political force in modern Wales, had all but vanished.

A large number of the party were kitted out with belt, helmet and cap before descending the 300ft. down the mineshaft, with a former miner as a guide, to do the Underground Tour. The remainder explored the many surface displays, Stables, Blacksmith's Forge. Pithead Baths Museum, Mining Galleries, Winding House, Lamp room and more exhibitions and interpretative features. Big Pit is an amazing interactive Museum. One afternoon was not long enough to see and do everything that was on offer.

Finally my thanks to all my helpers: Anne Goodwin, Alwyn Batley and my sister Marjorie Oakley.

Norma Baird-Murray

FIELD SECTION REPORT 2009

The Field Section's theme, 'Radnorshire in Victorian Times', proved to be a popular choice, resulting in much local interest and large attendances on our Sunday excursions. The 2009 programme began in March with the Annual Lunch at the Hotel Metropole with guest speaker Erwyd Howells, a shepherd and author from Ceredigion, who delighted members and guests with tales of a fast-disappearing way of life, culminating in a demonstration of bilingual sheepdog calls and whistles.

Kinsham Court near Presteigne, home of the Evelyn and Arkwright families, was our first excursion of the year. Our guide was Cathy Beale, author of a biography of the Arkwright family. We visited the church, toured the gardens and house (the house also having associations with Byron and Florence Nightingale) and enjoyed the most delicious home-made biscuits baked by our charming hostess, Mrs Wood. In May we met at Nantgwilt church with local historian, Lloyd Lewis. We visited ruined farmsteads and saw the impact on the landscape and settlement history caused by the construction of the dams at the end of the Victorian era.

The annual picnic in Kilvert Country was organised by Gwyneth Guy and Mike Reynolds and was a great success – with members sharing Victorian dishes, some wearing Victorian dress and reading passages from Kilvert's Diary. The July outing focused on the Victorian village of Norton and its patrons, the Green-Price family. Led by Judith Kenyon, members visited the church, the Old Rectory and Norton Manor.

The final outing in September centred on the Penithon estate of the

Haig family and was led by Jenny Lewis. A large gathering of members visited the home farm with its Victorian buildings and tiny planned estate village of Llaithddu. Our A.G.M. was held at St John's Hall, Llandrindod Wells, when our new chairman, Gwyneth Guy, paid a special tribute to her predecessor, Ruth Jones, who had given so much time, energy and dedication to the Field Section during the last five years – and to Miss Joy Ashton, our retiring Treasurer, who has been an inspiration to so many people throughout her long term of office. The evening concluded with a very successful 'Antiques Roadshow', when Mr Philip Baldwin appraised a large number of Victorian antiques.

The Field Section continues to thrive. Once again we thank all those who so kindly give of their hospitality, those who research and plan our Sunday excursions, Dai Hawkins for producing our excellent Newsletter and Richard Davies and David Peter for their help in designing the new membership form.

Our Victorian theme will conclude with a Soiree at the Fforest Inn near New Radnor on Friday November 13th. Our theme for 2010 will be 'Radnorshire and the Arts'.

Anne Goodwin
Gwyneth Guy

POWYS COUNTY ARCHIVES REPORT

This year approximately 1,200 visitors have come in person to use Powys Archives. The majority of researchers use records on microfilm/fiche, such as the parish registers and census returns, which are available for retrieval in our searchroom. In addition, the number of original items from our collections that have been issued from our strongrooms total around 1,270. Staff have responded to around 1,230 enquiries by letter or email. Approximately 274 hours of research have been undertaken as part of our paid research service.

Late in the summer of 2008 the County Council's Board adopted a series of policies for the Archives. These policies include: collection, access, preservation, outreach and a policy on volunteers. The policies have been developed for the Archives following our subscription to the National Archives Standard (TNA) in November 2007. Under the terms of the Standard, local authority archive services are required to develop and publicise their policies with regards to particular aspects of the service for the benefit of service users and other stakeholders. The

policies for Powys Archives formalise current practice and levels of provision.

The National Archives discharges its duties in relation to archive repositories in part by collecting and assessing information from repositories about their governance, storage facilities, documentation and access arrangements. In 2008 a questionnaire was completed by Catherine Richards for Powys Archives and the returns scored by staff at TNA. For comparison purposes the scoring for 2007 is given in brackets. In addition to scoring the questionnaires, TNA has banded the results for each section of the questionnaire into four performance bands (one-star, two-star, three-star and four-star). Overall Powys Archive was judged to be a two-star service.

	SCORE FOR POWYS ARCHIVES	AVERAGE SCORE IN WALES	AVERAGE SCORE IN THE UK
Section 1: governance	57% (47.5%)	57% (59%)	62.0% (64.0%)
Section 2: documentation of collections	69% (57%)	59.5% (55.5%)	59.0% (57.0%)
Section 3: access and outreach services	42% (45.5%)	48.5% (43%)	57.0% (52.5%)
Section 4: preservation and conservation	56.5% (50.5%)	63% (57.5%)	65.0% (62.0%)
Section 5: buildings, security and environment	45% (36%)	57.5% (53%)	64.5% (60.5%)
Overall score	50.5% (45.5%)	55.5% (51.5%)	61.0% (58.0%)

The Powys County Council's monthly website statistics for 2008/9 show that the Powys Archives homepage continued to be within the top ten pages viewed on the Council's website. In total 80,346 hits have been recorded for the Archives webpages in the past twelve months. The most frequently used pages are those containing details of our holdings.

The online digital projects created in previous years, which can be accessed through the Local History and Heritage webpages on the Council's website, continue to be well used. *Powys: A Day in the Life* totalled over 3.7 million hits in 2008/9. *Victorian Powys*, featuring eighteen communities, and its predecessor *Six Powys Communities Online* (history.powys.org.uk), totalled over 4 million hits. These digital projects continue to generate a large number of e-mail enquiries to Powys Archives.

Powys Archives received a 50% grant from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund for a diary which was being offered for sale by a book dealer in Canada. The diary was written by Katherine (Kate) Williams in 1870.

Kate, 1817–1903, belonged to the Williams family who owned the Bryngwyn Estate in Montgomeryshire in the nineteenth century. Her father Martin Williams bought the estate in 1813. The Williams family originated from Pant Howel, Carmarthenshire and had made a great fortune in sugar in Jamaica.

Also Powys Archives was awarded £13,391 by the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust to conserve four volumes from the parish of Llangynllo, Radnorshire. The NMCT grant fund supports conservation projects featuring records of significance in a national context. In Wales parochial records surviving from the seventeenth century are particularly rare. Four volumes have been conserved, but the collection consists of eight volumes in total. They contain an excellent series of accounts for the parish of Llangynllo, a rural parish in the county of Radnorshire, including churchwardens' accounts 1693–1871; overseers' accounts 1693–1837 (including payments to the poor 1751–1835); and assessments for poor rates 1802–1837.

Chris Price from Brecon library retired in 2009 following over 40 years with Powys Library Service. He started as a library assistant in the 1970s, and worked his way up to Branch Librarian in Brecon. Chris had responsibility for Local Studies in Breconshire, and has an enormous knowledge of the history of the county.

In November and December 2008, Powys Archives received a large transfer of records from the National Library of Wales consisting of registers and other parochial records for ecclesiastical parishes in Powys. Parochial records include churchwardens' accounts, vestry minutes, and records of settlement, as well as a wide variety of other types of records. In 2005 the Church in Wales designated Powys Archives as the place of deposit for parish registers and parochial records for the Archdeaconry of Montgomery in the Diocese of St Asaph, the Deanery of Arwystli in the Diocese of Bangor and also the Archdeaconry of Brecon in the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon. The designation of Powys Archives as a place of deposit, and this transfer of records from the NLW, now allow Powys Archives to liaise with incumbents, and to collect material from parishes across Powys.

Powys Archives closed for two weeks in February for its annual stocktake. Staff used the time to list collections and prepare catalogues for our searchroom. Cataloguing continues throughout the year, but this two-week closure of the service allows staff to tackle larger collections, mainly off-site in our outstores. Stocktake 2009 was a great success and we have finally managed to complete the numbering and listing of our collections for Radnorshire and Breconshire Urban and Rural District

Councils. In total these records occupy around 200 shelves. In due course new lists will appear on our website.

Powys Archives undertook the PSQG (Public Services Quality Group) visitor survey in May and June 2009. Below are some of the results:

- 100% rate our website as good or very good
- 83% think our catalogues (including online guides) were good or very good
- 100% rate the quality and appropriateness of staff advice as good or very good
- 53% feel our opening hours were the most important area to improve
- 26% want an improvement in visitor facilities
- 41% recorded this as their first visit to Powys Archives
- 41% of visitors are female; 59% are male
- 98% rate the overall service as good or very good.

Archives Network Wales, a web resource with details of the collections held by archive services, universities, museums and libraries in Wales, underwent a major revamp in 2009 and is now called Archifau Cymru Archives Wales (ACAW). Summary details about the collections held by Powys Archives appear on the website. It also contains visitor information for each archive service and guides to using resources, and provides a gateway for those interested in locating and undertaking research in Wales. The new address is <www.archiveswales.org.uk> or <www.archifaucymru.org.uk>

In the autumn of 2009 Powys Archives appointed a new member of staff to input our catalogues into our cataloguing system CALM. Catherine Hughes, a history graduate from Builth Wells, with experience in using archive services, including Powys Archives and the National Archives, joined the team for a period of six months. The cataloguing system CALM was purchased with the help of grant funding in 2007, and allows comprehensive searching of our catalogues by personal-name, place-name and by subject.

CALM is the most widely used cataloguing system by archive services across England and Wales, and information about each individual document is entered into a separate template. Each catalogue entry sits within a hierarchical tree within the database, reflecting the structure of collections. At the highest level information is recorded about the administrative history and content of each collection. Then at the lowest level (itemlevel) researchers will find detailed descriptions about each document.

Powys Archives 2008–2009 Annual Report was published in April. This summarises the work undertaken by staff and a full list of accessions

received. Details of accessions received during 2009 with particular reference to Radnorshire are as follows:

PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL RECORDS

Beguildy Parish/Community Council: minutes 1894–1998; financial records 1897–1988; councillors' declarations 1901–1980; attendance registers 1976–1993 [Acc 1886]

Records from Howey C in W School: stock books 1968–1981; attendance registers 1988–2006; other records 1999–2008 [Acc 1908]

Additional records from Howey C in W School 1885–2009 [Acc 1917]

Additional Parochial Material: Rhayader [Acc 1941]

Parish register for Llandeilo Graban, Radnorshire 1669–1812 [Acc 1942]

NON-OFFICIAL RECORDS

Lease of lands in Llanbister 1828 [Acc 1878]

Small collection of papers from the Castle, formerly the Lion Royal, Rhayader. Visitor book of the Lion Royal 1890–1939 [Acc 1884]

Sales particulars for building sites in Llandrindod Wells 1907 [Acc 1890]

Pedigree of one of the Jones families of Cefnlllys n/d [Acc 1891]

Boy Scout records: Rhayader and district 1920–1926

Small bundle of records relating to the manors of Radnorshire; licensing, sewers, income tax and the workhouse, Rhayader 1855–1963 [Acc 1896]

Two files of press cuttings relating to Powys Radnor Federation of Women's Institutes 1953–2004; Committee and monthly meeting minutes from Llanfair Waterdine WI 1926–2003 [Acc 1898]

Records from Thomas Francis Vaughan Prickard, Dderw: Copy of part of an OS 25" map, showing the location of the Pump House Hotel, Llandrindod Wells, attached to the second schedule for the lease of 19 May 1903, n/d; Bundle of plans, agreements, schedules and correspondence relating to the construction of Beaufort Road, Llandrindod Wells 1907–1911 [Acc 1899]

Family tree and copies of postcards and photographs relating to the Brooks family of Brooklands and Waterloo Farm, Llandrindod Wells C20th [Acc 1903]

Copy of a photograph of the Sayce family, Llandrindod Wells c1920 [Acc 1906]

Three deeds and an account, relating to Radnorshire 1787–1873 [Acc 1901]

Visitors' books from Avenue Lodge, Ithon Road, Llandrindod Wells, Radnorshire 1882–1939 [Acc 1915]

Copies of two photographs: Oonah Sladen of Rhydoldog, Elan Valley, Radnorshire; the Freeman family, later owners of the property 2009 [Acc 1916]

Parish magazine: Old Radnor with Kinnerton, Radnorshire 1979–2007 [Acc 1926]

Post card, sepia-tone letter card and booklet of detachable post cards, all of Llandrindod Wells, Radnorshire, c1900 [Acc 1931]

Kenneth Wilding Griffiths, of JL Griffiths and Co Ltd, Canberra Works, Llandrindod Wells, Radnorshire: Photograph in army uniform, as a young man; wartime memoirs; obituary, C20th [Acc 1933]

Miscellaneous documents found at Garmon View, Pant-y-Dwr, Radnorshire, early-mid C20th [Acc 1934]

Radnor Scouting records, includes photographs and other material C20th [Acc 1944]

Catherine Richards
County Archivist

RADNORSHIRE SOCIETY BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2008

INCOME		(2007-08)	
Membership subscriptions (net of refunds)	4875.00		
Part subs and donations	<u>213.62</u>	5088.62	5061
Field Section Subscriptions	285.00		
– Balance Transfer	<u>549.63</u>	834.63	
Sales		140.59	83
Grants		nil	
Gift Aid Scheme Claim		nil	
Building Society Interest		727.83	926
Excursion Costs Recovered		<u>1058.00</u>	<u>705</u>
TOTAL INCOME		<u>7849.67</u>	<u>6775</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Cost of producing and distribution of <i>Transactions</i>		2912.03	
Purchase of books for library		423.88	128
Hire Charges – Lecture/meeting rooms	158.44		
Library	75.00		
Equipment	48.00		
Lecture Fees	<u>45.85</u>	327.29	482
Donation – Friends of Radnorshire Museum	50.00		
Membership of Other Societies	<u>173.00</u>	223.00	182
Grant to students		nil	
Field Section costs		47.48	
Excursion costs		1023.00	886
Insurances		277.50	273
Administration			
– Stationery, post and printing	860.53		
– Website Change	nil		
– AGM press notice	29.10		871
– <i>Transactions</i> envelopes	nil	<u>889.63</u>	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>6123.81</u>	<u>2822</u>
SURPLUS INCOME FOR THE YEAR		1725.86	3953
MONETARY ASSETS			
As at 30.09.08	Bank	71.54	
	Building Society	25926.53	25998.07
PLUS NET INCOME FOR YEAR			1725.86
As at 30.09.09	Bank	1069.57	
	Building Society	<u>26654.36</u>	
		<u>£27,723.93</u>	

N.B. LIABILITIES – Estimated cost of producing *Transactions* for the two years 2007/8 and 2008/9 together = £7000; and the Field Section Newsletter £400

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

Stephen Roderick – Honorary Auditor

Richard C Davies – Honorary Treasurer

Ffransis Payne

EXPLORING
RADNORSHIRE

[CRWYDRO SIR FAESYFED]

TRANSLATED FROM THE WELSH BY

Dafydd y Garth

Part Two

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

It is a great honour and privilege to have the permission of Ffrancis Payne's widow, the late Helly Payne, and his sons Ifan and Ceri, to present *Crwydro Sir Faesyfed* to those readers who are, sadly, unable to read the original. Although Payne mostly wrote in Welsh, he was occasionally published in English. This translation does not attempt to imitate his English style, which might well have resulted in parody or pastiche, but tries rather to convey to the contemporary reader a feel of the learning, lyricism, wit and passion conveyed by the Welsh text.

The choice of forms of proper nouns was difficult. Where two or more current versions of a name exist, one form is chosen for the text, and its equivalents are put in footnotes and cross-referenced in the index. Passages which were in English in the original text are italicized. I should like to point out to non-Welsh readers that Welsh people are often referred to by their place of birth, residence, etc., e.g. William Williams, Pantycelyn; this custom is followed in this text. Poetry is presented bilingually for the benefit of Welsh-learners and those who want to work out for themselves the beautiful sound and alliterative patterns of the Welsh original. Since *Crwydro Sir Faesyfed* was first published in the 1960s, most of these poems have been the subject of scholarly editorship, resulting in versions that were not available to Payne. I am extremely grateful to Marged Haycock for her considerable work in checking the Welsh text of most of the poetry and making corrections to bring it into line with the latest scholarship. She also scrutinized my efforts at English versions, made many useful suggestions for improvements, and corrected a number of real howlers. Diolch, Marged. I would also like to thank Margaret Bowen for her help with the poetry of Morgan Elfael. The only early modern poetry for which I am solely responsible is that by Hywel ap Syr Matthew. Thanks to the Radnorshire Society for encouraging and publishing this translation, to my editors Peter J. Conradi and Adam Fenn, and sub-editor Daphne Turner, and to Mike and Gwyneth Smith for reading through the whole text and offering useful suggestions. To all these and to the many other people who have also been the butt of my importuning I offer my heartfelt thanks. For any errors, blunders and solecisms I alone am responsible.

I composed most of the first draft of this translation on my lap-top, sitting beside my wife Siân's hospital bed during the last months of her life. In her waking hours she listened to my latest efforts and offered her always percipient observations and suggestions. She it is to whom I am in greatest debt, and she it was who thought up my nom-de plume, Dafydd y Garth; and under this name I wish to dedicate this translation to a passionate lover of Radnorshire. Diolch o galon, Siân, am bopeth.

Dai Hawkins

Chapter V

AT THE FOOT OF RADNOR FOREST

Radnor Forest is the name generally given to the middle part of the high ground that stretches from the Wye valley in the south as far as the Teme valley in the north. This hill country is referred to in the old rhyme:

O Bont y Clas i Fwlch Bugeildy
Yno mae'r gwlan gorau yng Nghymru.

From Glasbury Bridge to Bugeildy *Bwlch*
There is the best wool in Wales.

Despite this one shouldn't look on it as nothing more than a world of sheep. Although the whole region is coloured brown on the map it is not monochrome or monotonous on the ground itself. Not all the high ground is open, and not all the open country is deserted. It is kept in check by green hedges, and between them are the enclosed slopes of productive hills as well as moorland and wild ridges.

The centre of the region, the Forest, has a sort of unity, at any rate. Here is the loneliest and the highest land in the county. It is a district of prominent hill slopes covered with bracken and gorse, and of long, bare slopes of peat and heather rising more than two thousand feet above sea level. This mountain country rises up like a bare, windy island in the middle of the green of the surrounding valleys. To the south-east lies the plain of Radnor;¹ the north and the west are bounded by the valleys of the Lugg² and the Cymaron; and the circle is completed by the river-meadows of Glyn Ieithon³ and the headwaters of the Edwy. Good black roads wind smoothly through these green lower slopes.

Before setting out on such a journey, however, I ought to refer to the title of this chapter. Clud⁴ was the Welsh name of Radnor Forest, and it should be used. 'Fforest Maesyfed' is a made-up name that has never ever been used naturally by anyone. But there will be more about this in a suitable place.

The best thing about a round tour is that you can start wherever you want. Presteigne⁵ was the starting point this time, and it is somehow fitting to set out on a journey from one of the traditional extremes of Welsh geography. In the middle of Presteigne, as in the middle of Rhaeadr,⁶ there

is a long street crossing a shorter street. This is the only similarity between these two towns. Very few of Rhaeadr's old buildings have survived. Some of them were destroyed by what is called progress. Others were eroded and reduced to ruins by the shaly nature of the local stone. But here in Presteigne most of the main streets have had the same houses on either side for centuries, although the local oak frames which held them together have been hidden here and there behind a skin of bricks or plaster. Indeed there are a few monstrosities to be seen. There is, for example, the fake-Tudor building on the corner of Hereford Street which is far worse than the red and blue bricks of the 1865 market opposite.

Long, narrow gardens stretch out behind the houses of the main streets, and behind them are the fields. As in every little town, some of the oldest and most interesting houses were originally inns. Some of them are still public houses, like the Dukes Arms in Broad Street, parts of which were rebuilt in the sixteenth century, and which still has an open gallery at the back of the house. One attractive-looking public house is the Radnorshire Arms, a black-and-white house with the date 1616 above the door.

To turn to higher things, the parish church at the bottom of Broad Street is worth seeing. It is a beautiful building and most of it is the work of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. An unexpected ornament inside is a tapestry of about 1530 hanging on the north wall. It is the work of a Flemish weaver and depicts the entry of Christ into Jerusalem.⁷

The churchyard has an unchurchyard atmosphere. I don't know why, unless it is the effect of the weather, because I have been here only on fine days. I find it hard to believe that people lie beneath the sunny surface. Indeed there is something light-hearted about some of the grave inscriptions I noticed. I remember one referring to

*My death so suddenly and quick
Occasion'd by a horse's kick.*

But there is a very different epitaph on a stone to the west of the tower. It relates the sad history of Mary Morgan, a seventeen-year-old girl who was publicly hanged in 1805 for killing her child.

Here, somewhere, either in the churchyard or in the church itself, Morgan Elfael, the poet from Diserth, was buried. I shall never forget one day in summer 1932. I was sitting in the Reverend H. L. Kewley's study in the lovely old rectory in St. David's Street reading the old Presteigne parish register. Suddenly I came across the record of the poet's burial on August 25, 1563 and, although it wasn't unexpected, I felt a thrill run through me. Seeing the handwriting of the priest who buried him, and the

fact that my hand was on the page where his hand had been, brought the poet out of the misty world of Radnorshire's lost literature into the world of today. Since then I have become familiar enough with the handwriting of the poet himself, and much of the mist has dispersed, but I have never since felt such excitement.

I don't want to go into too much detail about this town because that would take up too much space. Apart from this, it has been dealt with extensively by Mr W. H. Howse. Despite this, I should like to add a word here concerning the Welsh language, as I cannot accept Mr Howse's observation in his book *Presteigne Past and Present* that Welsh has neither a past nor a present here. There is no need to discuss the present: according to the 1961 Census, thirty people out of a population of 1149 could speak Welsh, and it is certain that they were newcomers. But it was different in the past. I have seen nothing to suggest that the gentry of the area turned their backs on Welsh earlier than in other areas on the borders. The situation among the ordinary people is shown by the lists which Miss M. G. Jones published in the ninth volume of the *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*. Parishes are listed 'in which the poorest of the Welsh children are put to school to learn English'. In 1675 there were twenty such children in New Radnor⁸ village, forty in Knighton⁹ and forty in Presteigne. Three years later there was the same number in New Radnor, twenty in Knighton, and thirty in Presteigne. Despite quite a bit of research in this field, I have never seen a single reason to suppose that the history of Welsh in this town was any different from that in any other town on the border.

We left the town on the B4356, which runs up the Lugg valley.¹⁰ The Lugg is a little river here; indeed, as I look at it today, it is hard to accuse the bard of exaggeration when he sang in a *marwnad* [elegy] to a man from the valley of 'the Lugg welling up in our eyes'.¹¹ A mile and a half from the town the main road turns right across the river, but we carried straight on. Our aim was to visit Casgob, a quiet little place sheltering beneath the Forest, known nevertheless throughout Wales because of its association with the name of that literary priest Williams Jenkins Rees (1772–1855).

But as we approached a lane by a farmhouse on the left of the road, I remembered that I had never ever seen Llanfihangel y Disgoed church, which is a few yards up the lane. And that was despite the fact that I had travelled that road scores of times. So we walked up to see it. The church stands on a hillock with a few houses around it. It is a church that has been rebuilt, more in accord with the sad willow tree growing on its south side than with the huge yew in front of its north porch.

Shortly after leaving Disgoed you cross Offa's Dyke¹² near Yewtree farm and a few minutes later you come to Maestreylo crossroads. We went

straight on over the crossroads and up a wooded valley that brings you two miles later to Casgob. 'About 5 houses'¹³ was the description of the village that was given in about 1700 and that is true today. The population has gone down and the number of trees has gone up, of course, but that is the only significant change. The top of the valley is closed off by the little hill that the church stands on. Behind it rise up the slopes of the Forest in waves of threatening blue-green. It is unfortunate that the word 'forest' has different meanings in English and Welsh today. Because they misunderstand it to mean trees, some people in the area get a sort of fake-historical comfort when they see the Forest that was always bare yielding to the forestry. Some corners were densely wooded, of course, and there were some wonderful trees on the lower slopes. But that is something different. Radnor Forest was always a treeless forest, pasturage and hunting country. According to an inquest in the year 1565 the only trees in the forest were '*VIII acres of lowe shrubs and bushes of smalle hazill and thornes*'. The jurors said that the tenants of the parishes around the Forest had '*free common of pasture there tyme out of minde in the said forrest*'.

The church is a thirteenth-century building and there is an old roof and an interesting screen inside. The mound at the western end of the building is very striking. There is a similar mound in the same situation against Bleddfach church tower, two miles to the north-west, and there has been much argument about the nature and purpose of these mounds. It has been suggested that they are burial mounds from the Bronze Age and that these churches therefore stand on sites that have been considered holy since prehistoric times. Recently that romantic supposition was demolished by Mr L. A. S. Butler. His investigations of Bleddfach mound show that it is made up of the ruins of an earlier church tower which fell down after going on fire. And probably the same thing happened here in Casgob.

As I said, the name Casgob is famous because the Reverend W. J. Rees was the priest here from 1806 until his death in 1855. His devotion to Welsh scholarship and the eisteddfod is referred to on a stone in the church put there by the Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion. Rees is not important as a scholar today, and not many people will turn to his editions of *Llyfr Llandaf* [*The Book of Llandaff*] (which was completed by his nephew Rice Rees) or to his lives of the saints. But there remains the work that he achieved by promoting the eisteddfod and the Cymmrodorion Society. A year after Rees settled here, John Jenkins (Ifor Ceri), a man of the same stuff as Rees, was appointed vicar of Ceri¹⁴ over the boundary in Montgomeryshire, and before long the two had started on their work of rekindling interest in the old traditional culture. Only those who are familiar with the Tonn Manuscripts in Cardiff Library and the Crosswood

ones in the National Library can know how much work was achieved by them. And prominent Welshmen's support for and good attitude towards Welsh couldn't be depended on any more than it can now.

Amongst the Tonn letters is one that Dafydd Ionawr sent to Rees in May 1819. That peevish creature had '*grown very indifferent about Welsh Poetry and Welsh Antiquities . . . All my efforts to obtain a favourable attention to Christian poetry have made no impression on the Public mind. Brutal Interludes, and no less brutal Satire, despicable Hymns, and Ludicrous Elegies compose the main body of Welsh poetry; And the wretched Inhabitants seem to have no Conceptions of anything besides . . .*' And so on.

Two years later we find Archdeacon Thomas Beynon writing to him: '*I am quite ashamed to think that you were the only South Walian at the Eisteddfod at Wrexham*'. He won a medal for an essay at that eisteddfod. I haven't seen it, but it was an essay on an historical theme, to judge by Ioan ab Hywel's *englyn* to him at the time:

Myfyriai, chwiliai, uchelwaith – hen oes,
Hynawsaidd oreuwaith,
Hanes ei wlad, fwynwlad faith,
Rhoddai i ni, mewn rhwyddiaith.

He studied, he researched, a masterpiece about times past,
A genial piece of best possible work,
The history of his country, a great, gentle land,
He gave us, in fluent language.

Rees was a man of many interests. He assisted Gwallter Mechain in his agricultural studies, and he was an enthusiastic supporter of Hugh Hughes the artist in his efforts to get a National Portrait Gallery. He was a man whom everyone could turn to. It was to him that John Davies, more often known by his pseudonym Brychan, turned for help when he took it into his head to open a school in Rhaeadr in 1822, prefacing his letter with an *englyn* as was his wont:

Dos lythyr difyr ar daith – heb sisial
A Saeson a'u clyt-iaith;
Ymrô, a rho Gymraegiaith
I Gymro gwych, mawrwyd, maith.

Go, entertaining letter, on a journey – and don't whisper
To Englishmen and their mongrel language;

Deliver yourself, and give the Welsh language
To an excellent, very great, wise Welshman.

From Casgob onwards the roads are rough, and, unless they have been greatly improved very recently, they are not roads for motorists. One of them leads past the church and over the hill to Bleddfach, and another one turns at the bridge and past Pentre farm and over the hill to the Lugg valley. It is best to leave these roads to walkers and turn back on our tracks to Maestreylo crossroads. But, before turning back, anyone who ‘collects’ nonconformist homes should notice the dignified stone house at the Pentre by the bridge. This was the home of Peter Edwards, a prominent Quaker of the eighteenth century.

After leaving Casgob and reaching the main road again, we turned left and soon descended to the Lugg valley once again and to the little village of Whitton, or Llanddewi-yn-Hwytwn, as it is called in Welsh. I always feel that I come to a totally different area when I travel the mile and a half from Maestreylo. The slopes and the fields and to some extent the houses look different. I find it hard to put my finger on something that has happened so suddenly, but we are already surrounded by the atmosphere of the Teme valley, although that region is out of sight and pretty far off.

Whitton is in a pleasant enough situation, although the few houses between the school and the church are not worthy of them. The church itself is Victorian, 1873 I think, and I like it better than the first time I saw it about fifty years ago. By now many of that age’s buildings have developed some character, but I cannot forgive those ignorant people who demolished some of the gems of the county’s churches like the churches of Llandegle, New Radnor and Llanfihangel Rhydieithon and erected their ‘neat edifices’ in their place.

We are reminded by a memorial on the wall of the chancel that we are close to another place that is famous throughout Wales. The memorial is a flat stone with an inscription on it in ‘*pious memory of John Price, Esqr. Of Pilleth*’, who died in 1597, and also in memory of his wife Catherine, two people who were the subject of a *cân moliant*¹⁵ by Lewis Dwnn in 1579. It says below the stone that it was moved here from Pilleth¹⁶ church after the fire which damaged it in 1894. From the churchyard outside you can see that church on the hillside of Bryn Glas, where Owain Glyndŵr won the battle of Pilleth in 1402.

Between Whitton and Pilleth you cross a stone bridge which has a house by it on the left-hand-side and another on the right. This is Nant-y-groes, which was in the possession of Dr John Dee and his family before him. This famous man was born in 1527 and he became famous as an

astronomer, mathematician and astrologer to Queen Elizabeth. He was another descendant of Llywelyn Crug Eryr, and he was a friend of John Lewis, Llynwene, Dr Siôn Dafydd Rhys, Morris Kyffin, and William Salisbury. He was interested in Welsh genealogy and in his own lineage, as his manuscripts show.

Pilleth church is wonderfully situated on the side of Bryn Glas. Below it is Pilleth Court,¹⁷ once the home of the Pryse family, and at the bottom of the valley on the banks of the Lugg is the site of Castell y Foelallt. Nothing is known about its history, but there are also green mounds that are thought in the area to be the graves of those who were killed in 1402. On the other hand, others say that they are natural mounds.

It is the Battle of Pilleth¹⁸ that is referred to by Shakespeare in *Henry the Fourth*, where the Earl of Westmoreland tells the king about

*A post from Wales loaden with heavy news,
Whose worst was, that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
Against the irregular and wild Glendower,
Was by the rude hand of that Welshman taken,
A thousand of his people butchered.*

About 1870 while the slope behind the church was being ploughed piles of human bones were discovered. It was decided that they were the remains of some people who had fallen in the battle, and trees were planted on that spot. That is the square plantation of pines that can be seen as you approach the church.

There was once an effigy in the church, Mair of Pilleth, which attracted many pilgrims in the Middle Ages. How many artistic masterpieces were lost, I wonder, when the 'idols' were thrown out of our churches? To judge from what I have seen in insignificant churches on the continent, our loss is immeasurable. There still remains in Pilleth church a well near the tower which is thought to have the power of healing diseases. As I said, the church went on fire in 1894, but much remains of the fourteenth-century work. The tower remains and in it is an old mediæval chest which was cut out of the trunk of an oak-tree. To the same period belongs the old octagonal font which is mentioned in a strange little story told by Dr John Dee in Harleian Manuscript 473. Dee was on one of his genealogical trips and had reached Presteigne by August 1574, and he says that he heard this story when he was with the poet Owain Gwynedd and some of his own relatives:

The common report there is, that Griffith ap Bedo Du which dwelt at Pilleth (in Bryttysh Pylale called) two myle from Prestene toward Mynachty, at the christening of a sonne of his, wold not have the same to be chrisened (as the manner is) with water; upon a prowld stomak caused the water to be voided out of the font, and filled it with wyne . . . and so caused his sonne to be therein chrisened . . . This was told me in the presence of Mr Jenkin Gwyn and Owyn Gwynedd.

By today the font that the little Bacchus was dipped in has been set on a new pedestal. Behind it I noticed a steel breastplate, spurs and the sword of one of the old Pryse family lying on the floor. It is said that these used to hang above one of the family monuments before the fire. On my last visit in May 1963, the water was dripping through the new roof and falling on them and onto a pile of hymn-books close by. ‘Pip’, said the rain on the breastplate and then ‘pop’ on the wet books. As if they were in concord with this rainy duet, one whitewashed wall was bulging out and the other one bent inwards.

As there isn’t an obvious track leading from the main road towards this tottering, but interesting, church, it should be explained that the motorist can turn in through the first gate on the right up the hill and follow a green track up to the church. On the other hand, he can walk up from the cowshed of the Court below.

The Court is an interesting old house. It is said that it was built by Stephen ap Rhys in the time of Henry the Eighth. This man was the son of the family of the Mynachdy in the neighbouring parish of Bleddfach. He was High Sheriff in 1556, and his son Siôn is commemorated by the stone we saw in Whitton. Siôn Prys himself was Sheriff in 1574 and five years later Lewis Dwnn visited him and sang in praise of him and his mansion:

Pilalau deau duedd – goludog
 Gwledydd sir Faesyfedd,
 Porth i weinion, pyrth annedd,
 Porth gwyn mawr parth gwin a medd.

Pilleth situated in the south – wealthy
 lands of Radnorshire
 A haven for the weak, the gates of the dwelling,
 A great white gate, a place for wine and mead.

It can be seen that the poet agreed with Dr John Dee that the parish was called Pilalau or Pilale, and not ‘Pillalley’ as the name appears in Llwyd’s *Parochialia*.

The Pryses were an influential family that was descended from Elystan through Hywel Fain of Maelienydd. A mile after leaving Pilleth you come to their main house, the Mynachdy, on the side of the road that runs from Knighton to Bleddfach. The Mynachdy is an old stone house. It stands in a sheltered spot on the banks of the Lugg. Behind it rises the Glog, a mountain that separates the Lugg valley from the valley of the tributary Gwibddu that leads to Bleddfach.

We came here one summer's afternoon with Mr Frank Noble from Knighton, a hard-working member of the Radnorshire Society, and we had a kind welcome from Mr Thomas, the tenant, who showed us an extensive part of the house. On the wall facing the road are two carved coats of arms with the letters J.P. and the date 1636. The County Commissioner for Ancient Monuments accepted this as the date the house was built, but it is pretty obvious that it refers to rebuilding or refurbishment. The entrance hall of the house is oak-panelled and it contains furniture that is very rare by now, a spear wagon with enough space for nine pieces of armour. Now there is only one piece left in it, all that remains of the '*pieces of armour and halberds*' that the county historian referred to at the beginning of the last century. There is a carved stone fireplace in the great hall. I would like to think that this was the hearth where the poets used to be made welcome, but it is obvious that parts of the house were rearranged at some time or other.

It was in this house that Siôn Ceri sang the praises of Siamas Prys, who was High Sheriff in 1550 and 1561, and some time later Bedo Hafesb came here to mourn his passing:

Prys oedd ymhob rhyw swyddau,
Pwy ar ei ôl piau'r iau?

A ninnau, cwyn a wna cant,
Y beirdd, awn heb urdduniant.

Prys held every sort of office,
Who after him will bear the yoke?

And we poets, a lament voiced by a hundred,
We shall have to go away without being honoured.

Not everything that Bedo feared came to pass at once. Some members of the family continued to serve the county, but I'm afraid that the poets were going '*heb urdduniant*' by the middle of the seventeenth century. Lewis

Dwnn was here about 1579, singing a *marwnad* to the Siôn Prys who was Sheriff in 1573, and he came here again in 1593 to praise another Siôn, 'the heart of the court of the Pryses'.¹⁹ But the heart of the old grey house started to go cold towards the poets shortly afterwards.

The Mynachdy has been a farmhouse for two centuries by now, a farmhouse that I can pretty easily feel at home in. There is plenty of space in it, and every bit of it has plenty of history, from the floor of the hall up to the dovecote above the oak stairs. Although the house is at the edge of the road, it is a road that goes where not many strangers want to go. It remains till today a road that leads local people to town and to market.

I will always remember that sunny afternoon here in the Mynachdy. The whole garden was full of the buzz of bees, and, from the old barns and beast-houses around the farmyard beyond the dark cypresses, came the mixed smells of wood and tiles warmed by the sun, the sweet smell of hay and cattle and the sweet sourness of old sacks of flour. The effect of this incense on me was like the scent of drink to a drunkard, and I asked myself why I ever turned my back on this simple and sensual life. There had once been good farming here at a time when that was acceptable and sensible. Here in the middle of the nineteenth century James Rea raised his excellent Hereford cattle. Today, of course, the Mynachdy conforms to the contemporary local pattern of ploughing less in the valley and ever more on the mountain to make better pastures.

The Mynachdy is in the parish of Bleddfach, and leaving the Lugg valley on the right you come after two miles to the village. By now the place is called Bleddfya by every one and this form of the name is an example of the power of orthography in an area after the Welsh language has been lost. The old practice of the Englishman was to spell Bleddfach as Bleddvaugh, just as Fychan was spelt as Vaughan and Mynachdy as Monaughty. At first the English forms represented the Welsh sounds, but in the end they became corrupted.

Apart from the fact that there is an inn here, called the Hundred House, Bleddfach is a place just like Casgob. There is a farm or two, a few cottages, and an interesting church, an architectural sister to the one in Casgob. And, as I have explained already, Bleddfach's tower is exactly like Casgob's tower, standing on a rubbish heap, supposed by the learned to be a prehistoric burial mound. But fair play to the Commissioners of Antiquities of the county, this is one myth they haven't swallowed, because they have realized that the heaps are more recent than the buildings. Despite all this, the church of Saint Mary in Bleddfach is worth seeing. Most of it belongs to the thirteenth century, despite a certain amount of renovation, the latest in 1907.

Like Casgob, Bleddfach had a literary parson, although he cannot for a second be compared with W. J. Rees. He was Samuel Phillips from Cwm-y-gerwyn. Cwm-y-gerwyn is by now in the middle of the forest about a mile up the lane opposite the school. Phillips composed a fair amount of English poetry in the second half of the eighteenth century; he said it was in the style of Pope, but I say it was in the style of Pope from a long way off. He composed gravestone inscriptions on his friends, too, and you can find one of them in Disgoed church. The manuscript of his productions, *Poems on Several Occasions: By an imperfect Pen*, is in the National Library. Here is one of them, a grave inscription from the heart about a certain William Jones:

*Here lies poor Will, whose constant care
And Study was – To please the fair;
Wretched fatigues he underwent,
His time was in their Service spent;
His Coarse lies here – his Soul and Senses,
'Tis thought, he lost – among the Wenches.*

I doubt whether this was cut on a stone in the churchyard, but I should think it was received with enjoyment in the inn nearby, an attractive enough inn, which hasn't been turned into a *cocktail bar*. At least that's what it was like the only time I've been in it. I remember that the innkeeper talked of nothing but water! Elan valley water that flowed through a pipe past his house on its long way to Birmingham and not a drop of it coming out of a single tap in Bleddfach!

There is a journey of four miles between us and Llanfihangel Rhydieithon along a road which is partly in the shadow of the forest and partly on the hilly moorland. Llanfihangel church can be seen from far-off. It stands on a rocky hillock and from the distance it looks dignified and attractive. On approaching it, however, one wonders whether it fully deserves its excellent location. We have here rebuilding from the year 1838. It was approved of by W. J. Rees, Casgob, who came here to preach on the day of the opening. There is no need to tell anyone who has seen the site that he took his text from Matthew XVI, 18. It is not so easy to imagine how a man of his instincts could be in favour of destroying the interesting old church that had been here previously.

Even the yew tree at the east end of the churchyard is younger than the yew of the churchyard ought to be! But in its shadow I experienced a little of what is for me the true atmosphere of a parish church, that is fine craftsmanship, local history, the memory of ancestors and the expression

of the pride and wretchedness of man. All this can be seen on half a dozen gravestones. An outstanding example of the last state I mentioned is the stone that states that it is in remembrance of a certain ‘*Sub-Agent to Lord Ormathwaites Estates*’ and that he died in 1824, but which notes that it was erected ‘*by Lord Ormathwaite in grateful remembrance of his valuable services*’. Poor old dead man: he even has a master in his grave, and on his tombstone. But, after all, he was only a ‘*sub-agent*’.

A few yards on the right is chronicled a disaster that happened in great snow up on Radnor Forest in February 1767, when three shepherds from the same family lost their lives:

*While shepherds watch their flocks by night
Whereas by chance did we
Then it did please Almighty God
To call upon us three
Then underneath the milk white snow
Our bodies there they lay
Until our dearest friends did know
To bear us safe away.*

This is a copy of the original stone, and near it are remembered others in the same tasteless way as on the other stone. I mentioned the good craftsmanship to be seen on many of these stones. I doubt whether one will ever again see such fine lettering as was carved on the old stones of our churchyards.

The school opposite is a good example of the old rural schools which are disappearing so quickly these days. It is a very unusually shaped building. I should think that those who built it used the old turnpike house as part of the new building. Remembering some of the inscriptions in the churchyard, I liked the one on the school wall which records its building by the parishioners in 1848 – without naming a single one of them. In the dip below the church there is an old woollen-mill which has been idle for many years.

Leaving Llanfihangel we come into the Cymaron valley. The road leads on the right towards the Dolau and that little brook that flows into the Ieithon two miles further down. The mouth of the brook is near an old ford. This is the ford on the Ieithon which is in the name of the parish, and it is possible that this is the Rhyd Goch ar Ieithon²⁰ which is mentioned in the old prophetic poetry.

A little further on our road turns across an open common, Rhos Swydd.²¹ *Swydd* is the old word which was used to denote the subdivisions

of Cantref Maeliennydd, i.e. the Swydd of Buddugre, Rhiwlallt, and Ieithon. Rhos Swydd is common land, and the soil which can be seen here and there in the ruts has dried up in the warmth of the sun to the same colour as the sheep grazing here. Here the old fairs used to be held with the entertainments and fighting and drunkenness that characterized them, and here too from the days of George Fox onward were held nonconformist meetings of every kind, some of them, too, characterized by bellowing and spiritual intoxication.

At the far end of the common the road joins the A44 in the middle of Pen-y-bont village. Pen-y-bont Rhydycleifion was the old name, and luckily the villagers at the beginning of the last century were satisfied to shorten the name, instead of translating it as well, as was done with Mynydd Bach down in the south, which is now Little Hill. It is thought that there once used to be a hospice or lodgings here for lepers, and there is still a field by the bridge called Cae'r Cleifion.²² At an earlier time nearby Dolau Jenkin by the mouth of the Cymaron was called Llwyn-y-cleifion.²³

Lewis Morris from Anglesey, who was here in the middle of the eighteenth century, noticed the good Welsh spoken by the inhabitants. *'The woman told us,'* he said, *'we might have some "Golwythion ac wyau",'*²⁴ *"Pa un a fynwch ai cig moch ai cig eidion tew?"'*²⁵ *They have better Welsh here than in Montgomeryshire and much better English, for all their children learn that language first. This is a branch of the North Wales Welsh and they make a distinction between themselves and "Gwyr y Deheudir"'*²⁶

It is very doubtful whether English was the first language of all the children at that time, because there were plenty of Welsh-speakers here when Ioan Thomas settled in the village in 1790. And a reporter for the *Gwylidydd [Observer]* for September 1827 said that the old people of Llanfihangel Rhydieithon still spoke Welsh. Welsh-speaking Welshmen or not, in the opinion of the author of *Rhad Ras [Free Grace]* they were 'ignorant, bullying and ungodly people'. And indeed on the first night of his time here, a burglar broke into the shop that was kept by his wife. Despite this he says that he set 'up a little church here and it was very valuable to us for some years, and some were added to our number . . . and preaching in a variety of other places around the village of Llandegle . . . Caes-mane (*sic*), Bryn-gwyn, the Rhos-goch, Huntington . . .' But he wasn't very comfortable here and he had adversity here 'more fiery than in any other place in Radnorshire', and he left Pen-y-bont in 1794.

David Howells, Swansea²⁷ laboured here for a short time at the beginning of his career. He came here in 1821 as a Methodist 'missionary'. According to his biographer in the *Drysorfa [Treasury Magazine]* for

1919, 'extensive parts of the county had sunk into the grip of ignorance and paganism'. In manuscript 3198 in the National Library there is a history of this mission by Ebenezer Williams, who was minister after 1826. It gives interesting accounts of how chapels were established in the area.

He refers, for example, to a place 'on the South Side of Penybont where there were two religious members belonging to Penybont':

'An attempt was made to Preach in farm Houses. They Answered that their houses were too sinful to preach in and at that time it was only possible to get a little *Cotage* [sic] of one of those religious members and its floor no bigger than the floor of the altar of the Chapel here. On the first Sabbath some Came together. On the second Sabbath the *Cotage* was uncommonly full. It was said that there would be Preaching out on the Common on the third Sabbath. Many people gathered by the ditches on the common but it was very uncomfortable because of wind and great rain. Then a farmer came forward and Said they could have his barn to hold a service and so it was and a few minutes later the barn of that place was full of hundreds of people . . . The man said they could Come there through the summer . . . but in the autumn the time for the work of Bringing into the barn came and we were turned out. Daily bread came to turn out the bread of life . . .'

I thought about this activity as we turned to the left at the edge of the common in the direction of Llandegle. As I said, this piece of land was a centre and a stage for the nonconformists and reformers of three centuries, the one a true and only light, and the other flashing over the hills and going out in the valleys. There is Dôl-swydd farm with its wooden walls, a field's width away from the road, where Harris preached in his day, and where (according to John Hughes, Liverpool) Robert Newell, Llanddewi Ystradenni was 'converted' as he listened to him. Today, as the television equipment on the roof testifies, a very different news is being received in the old house. About a mile across the fields beyond Dôl-swydd is Beili Siôn Llwyd, another farm where Harris was welcomed to hold a service.

There is only a mile between us and Llandegle. This little village stands in a green dip between the hills. On the north side rises Coed Swydd or Cefn y Graig, as it once used to be called, and on the south side rises Rhos Llandegle,²⁸ where they used to dig for lead and gold. To the east roll the bare slopes of Radnor Forest, one after the other along the horizon – Cefn y Grug, Cowlwyd, Bron yr Eglwys, the Fron Goch and the Fron Dyrys. This is where I read somewhere that '*its sloping banks, moors and*

commons are arid, barren and sterile'. This might be a fair description of the volcanic Craig, but the word 'arid' does not come to mind here on the edge of the rainy Forest. To my eye, at any rate, Llandegle is green and wooded, and, considering its location high up on the bosom of the mountain, the banks surrounding it are healthy sheep pastures.

According to every account of it, there once used to be an extremely interesting church in the middle of the village, but it was pulled down in 1876 and rebuilt. Recently the new tower fell down in a storm and it had to be rebuilt on its turn. Luckily the old rood-screen of the fifteenth century was kept, but, as in the case of Llanfihangel Rhydieithon, one can only regret what has been lost. In the churchyard can be seen the graves of the family of Thomas Phillips, the founder of Llandovery College. His father was a native of the parish and one of his forefathers was priest here.

By now the most interesting church of Llandegle is the old Quaker meeting-house, the Pales. It stands on the side of Coed Swydd Hill and the easiest way to get there is to turn into the narrow lane on the left as you reach the village. After crossing the brook beside the old mineral springs, which are completely ignored today, the road climbs for three quarters of a mile and then forks. You must turn left here and you quickly come to the meeting-house. The lane is very narrow here but if you go on a little through the mountain gate there is plenty of room by the quarry to leave the car and turn round.

The Pales is a thatched stone house and as far as I know the oldest Quaker meeting-house in Wales. In 1673 they began burials in the little churchyard close to it, but the present house wasn't built until 1716. That is the date of the earliest deed, according to Mr W. H. Howse. There is one whitewashed room about twenty feet long in the building. This is divided into two by an open screen. Meetings are held in one part, and the school in the other. The original plain furniture is still there.

The Quaker cause began here in the middle of the seventeenth century, and it played an important part in the history of education in the area, and, I'm afraid, in the disappearance of Welsh as well. The second period began in about 1866, when an Englishman called Knowles was appointed schoolmaster. Yardley Warner, a famous Quaker from America, was the next teacher and he stayed here until 1880. Warner was an interesting man. As can be seen in the biography written by his son, he did a great deal for the slaves in America. I don't think, however, that he was an ideal teacher for a Welsh area like this, although it had lost the language by then. The trouble was that he saw the people of Llandegle as slaves as well; slaves to sin, to ignorance, to drink, to tradition, and to the old world – and they

had to be liberated. It is likely that this urge to liberate even where there is no slavery has always been a characteristic of reforming nonconformists.

On my most recent visit to the Pales, I sat in the sun on the hill above, reading Warner's biography. How alive some of his letters seemed to me as I read them here, and the whole field of his labour from Fronlas and Rhonllwyn farms and the edges of the Forest down to Pen-y-bont were open like a map in front of me:

'I visited two families this eve, on my way home from Penybont. Alas! Alas for Welsh life – and the hardships of women! resulting from relics of Feudalism, ignorance, drink, and entailed lands. It is sad to see the process of baking under unhealthy conditions, to hear the cries of sick goslings, squealing pigs and shivering cows:- A girl of 15 sits nursing a gosling by the hour in her lap. A woman managing a kicking cow in inclement weather with no shelter – milking into an old iron black bucket.'

As I read this, Francis Kilvert came to mind. Yes, I thought to myself, but a dry Kilvert with no heart. But, as usual, I wasn't being fair to the Quaker. Warner had a heart, and a compassionate heart too, but Kilvert had a passionate heart. These were two very different men, to be sure, but they were both outsiders, living at the same time, in the same county, in pretty similar parishes, and seeing and recording the same rural life.

There was a strong link between the Quakers of Llandegle and those in America long before the days of Yardley Warner, and that was John Griffiths, a man well known among the fellow-believers of his time. He was born in 1713 in Ty'n'llan, an old yellow-coloured farmhouse at the edge of the main road in the village. Before his death in 1776 he had travelled thousands of miles to visit the Quakers of Britain and America. A diary of his travels was published in 1779 to be a '*lasting memorial and testimony to the truth*'. I felt it my duty to read it, but I have never read so dry, and, to me, so unprofitable a book.

From here on the side of Coed Swydd there is an excellent view across Llandegle and the moorland behind. On the left-hand side, towards the east, the green fields rise up gradually towards the slopes of the Forest. I counted a dozen fields of oats and two or three fields of wheat, more than I expected there. Here and there between the hills there are a number of old farmhouses – Cilmanawydd, the Fron-las, Tre-wern, Llanevan. These once used to be houses of note and the gentry of the area lived in them.

Mr John Lewis, Dolau took me up to the Fron-las one lovely day in spring. I wanted to see the old house whose name I had seen in the

manuscripts of the herald-bards. By now, the owner, Mr Joseph Watkins, lived in a new house close by, but he showed me the old building. It was a house with a wood frame and stone roof, like many houses in the hills of the shire. Close by is an old barn of the same construction, its framework drilled and scored for the cross-beams in the old manner. But now there is zinc sheeting on the roof and planks on the walls in place of cross-beams.

Although the Fron-las is only a mile from the village, there are sometimes still signs of winter there when it is spring in the fields below. It was the twenty-eighth of May when we were there and there was still a little snow in the sheltered depths of the valley behind the house. Mr Watkins said that he had seen snow there as late as June.

The main road climbs up gradually from Llandegle towards the forest past the farms of Tre-wern Clud on the left and the wild land of Rhos Llandegle on the right. After two miles we came to a chapel at the edge of the road. The door was hanging half-open and there was a hole in the roof. This is Cornhill chapel, which was rebuilt in 1847 with room for seventy worshippers. By 1911 there were only twenty-five frequenting it. Now it is an overnight refuge for the odd tramp. We went to the little churchyard in front of the door, where the pallid grass was higher than the tombstones. A rotten larch lay across the path where it had fallen in a storm. The cold emptiness of the place affected us greatly and we were glad to go from there.

Now we are on the edge of the parish of Llanfihangel Nant Melan and the Forest is reached in a few seconds. The winding road climbs along the sides of the Fron Goch and the Fron Ddyrys, with wonderful views over the Edwy vale below. In the future, however, they will not be visible because of plantations up to the edge of road.

Suddenly after one of the many bends a motte-and-bailey castle comes into view up on the horizon on the further side of a little valley on the right. It stands on a spur of the Forest more than twelve hundred feet above sea-level. This is Crug Eryr,²⁹ which I have mentioned several times before. It can be best seen from this side of the little valley, and I have often stopped to look at it while travelling this road.

Throughout my life what has attracted my eye to Crug Eryr up on the horizon were the few crooked windswept trees on the castle mound, waving like flags against the clouds. There were greater trees in the valley below – ash, maple, chestnut, some of them growing up the slope towards the plantation of pines at the side of the road. At any rate, it was always the few dark, twisted trees on the edge of the empty sky that drew my attention. Somehow or other, they turned the view into a picture by adding a completely accidental romantic touch to it.

It is strange how something set in the distance against the moors and the clouds can create in us such a feeling of loneliness. It is also strange how we transfer this human feeling to the inanimate thing that caused it. That is the effect these trees had on me. Although it was the wind that had sown them up there and treated them roughly ever since, they filled the sky with a human feeling as if they had been painted there by the skilful brush of an artist. And somehow this deserted grassy fortress up there was taken from the horizon of the land to the horizon of history. So, the effect on me of these few trees was great.

I pondered long about them, because one day in autumn 1960 I saw that they had completely disappeared from the air. Someone had felled them. I could scarcely believe it. I restarted the car and drove on to the top of the *bwlch*. As I walked towards the castle, I realized how much enchantment and magic had been lost when those few sad trees had been chopped down. Inside its new post-and-wire fence Crug Eryr lay as tame as a sheep-fold.

I climbed across the fence and stood once again on the top of the motte. From there you can get one of the best views in the county. Below you the Edwy valley stretches for miles towards the south-west, and in the distance through the *bwlch* you get a glimpse of Bryn and the Carneddi and Wye valley near Builth town. And beyond this in the far distance you can see the Epynt in Breconshire, and if it is exceptionally clear you sometimes get a glimpse of the Carmarthenshire Beacons.³⁰

But it is not even the view that is special, but its extent. Crug Eryr is surrounded by a wonderful panorama. Towards the west one looks down across the green fields of Gwaun-yr-arglwydd towards the hills of the headwaters of the Edwy and the golden pastures of Rhos Llandegle, a breeding-place of black-headed gulls and mountain ponies. Here, a long time ago, were Stephen Dwnn's 'wild horses',³¹ and others of that vigorous breed can be seen here today. Beyond the Rhos rise the undulating volcanic ridges of Craig Llandegle, changing colour beneath sun and cloud, and along the distant horizon lie the grey-green mountains of Gwerthrynion and Cwmteuddwr. The view is completed towards the north by the great hump of the Forest and on the eastern side one looks across Cwm Llywennydd and the bracken-covered slopes of Mynydd y Fan.

The view from Crug Eryr motte is typical of the county. Within a frame of moorland there is the green of fields and woodlands and the white of cornfields. There is much wild country in the picture, but there is little of this that could not be civilized. Indeed, considering its position up on the shoulder of the mountain, it is pretty fecund soil around Crug Eryr itself. A hundred yards away on a high field of what was once the Blaen Llywennydd small-holding I can see the oats in tidy stooks on the stubble.

Between me and the heather of the Forest over there is another field of oats one thousand three hundred feet above sea-level. But although whoever built this chapel chose a high, wind-swept spot, feeding man and animal was easy here.

It is not known who dug these ditches. I should think they were Welsh-speakers, because Gerallt Gymro³² refers to the place as *Castrum Croker*, a Latinized version of the name. He called here with Archbishop Baldwin in the year 1188 to recruit men for the armies of the Third Crusade. And talking of Gerallt, every map of the journey I have seen places this castle wrongly in Old Radnor, instead of here on the Forest in Llanfihangel. Later, in about 1300, Crug Eryr was in the possession of Einion Sais, the son of Hywel Seifon, who was one of the jurors of Maelienydd in 1292. His family tree is recorded by one of his descendants, called Siôn ap Rhys, a genealogist of this parish, in a manuscript now known as *Peniarth 137*. Here is what he says about Einion Sais, and it is good to hear the words of a native of this parish where Welsh has not been spoken for a century and a half:

Einion Sais a fu trigo yng Nghrug Eryr yn lle a elwir Tomen Crug Eryr ac a bioedd y tiroedd oll o bobtu, nid amgen deutu Cwm Llywennydd a Chrug Eryr oll. Ei dir oedd tir Siôn ap Ieuan Coch, tir Siôn ap Cadwgan, tir Morys o'r Cwm, tir Rhys ab Ieuan, Llywelyn ap Rhys a'i frodyr oll, tir Morys ab Ieuan Philip a llawer ychwaneg. Ei faerdy oedd yn Ysglys Ifan ac yno yr oedd ei forynion yn drin ei dda, a hwynt yn pori ar y Fforest Glud ac yn dyfod i'w godro yn Ysglys Ifan uchod, yr hwn le a elwir Beili Einion Sais hyd y dydd heddiw 1588.

Einion Sais lived in Crug Eryr at a place which is called Tomen Crug Eryr and he owned all the lands about, that is to say around the whole of Cwm Llywennydd and all Crug Eryr. His land was the land of Siôn ap Ieuan Coch, the land of Siôn ap Cadwgan, the land of Morys o'r Cwm, the land of Rhys ab Ieuan, Llywelyn ap Rhys and all his brothers, the land of Morys ab Ieuan Philip and many more. His manor house was in Ysglys Ifan and there his maids looked after his livestock, and they took them to graze on the Fforest Glud and came to milk them at Ysglys Ifan above, which place has been called Beili Einion Sais until the present day 1588.

And to avoid mixing up Einion with another Einion Sais, a forefather of Dafydd Gam, he says that he is from the Graig and the Fforest Glud and

Ysglys Ifan. His family tree runs like this: Einion Sais ap Hywel Seifon ap Gruffdd ap Gronwy ap Gwrgenau ap Hoidlyw ap Cadwgan ab Elystan Glodrydd, Prince of Rhwng Gwy a Hafren.³³ The princes of Maelienydd and Elfael were descended from the same Cadwgan ab Elystan through his son Idnerth, but the nobles who were descended like Einion Sais from the youngest brother Hoidliw ap Cadwgan were most important in Rhwng Gwy a Hafren after 1282. From this line and from the line of Rhys Gryg came chieftains and gentry who took the place of the old princes as keepers of Welsh culture in the province.

After the death of Einion Sais it is likely that Crug Eryr came down to his son Philip, because the pedigree says that Efa, the daughter and heiress of Philip, married Llywelyn ap Philip ap Meurig of the line of Rhys Gryg, who settled here about 1350, becoming well-known under the name Llywelyn Crug Eryr. There is reason to suppose that Llywelyn was a man from Gladestry.³⁴ According to Sir S. R. Meyrick, he was a herald-bard, but it is as the head of a very influential family that he has a place in Welsh literature. His descendants were patrons of the bards and of Welsh culture from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century and at the same time they were prominent in the administrative life of the area. I have already mentioned people like Dr John Dee, John Lewis, Llynwene, and the talented Lewis family of Gladestry and Harpton, all with the blood of Crug Eryr in their veins. Another one of the family descended from father to father from Siôn ap Llywelyn ap Llywelyn Crug Eryr, whom Lewys Glyn Cothi sang to, is Anthony Powell, the English novelist.

When Owain Glyndŵr passed by, Crug Eryr was burnt; '*defaced*' is how Hugh Thomas, the Breconshire genealogist, describes the damage. Dafydd ap Llywelyn Crug Eryr was besieged, too, although whether this was here or at New Radnor castle, I do not know. The name Owain is a bogey in this area to this day. If you believe folk tradition, he did more material damage in Rhwng Gwy a Hafren than all the despoilers of the ages put together. However that may be, I believe that his war was responsible for a clear gap in the history of literature in the province. There is a wealth of poetry to the grandsons of Llywelyn Crug Eryr, Philip Dorddu and Hywel Fain, to name only three of the pillars of Welshness in these parts, but there isn't a single *awdl* or *cywydd* to the three men I named, nor to their sons. How much, I wonder, was lost in the flames in Old and New Radnor, and in old homes like Crug Eryr?

Einion Sais's lands are not named on the map. The Graig was a township in the parish of Llandegle. Ysglys Ifan is not the Llanevan between Llandegle and the Forest because Llanevan was the usual name of that place long before 1588. It is clear that it is near the Forest itself, and I believe

that Ysglys Ifan was on Fron yr Eglwys above Llanevan. I have already mentioned Cwm Llywennydd. The name isn't remembered now, except by the few who remember the cottage Blaen Llywennydd. The most important of the names that Siôn ap Rhys talks about is the Fforest Glud. This is the latest form of the Welsh name for Radnor Forest. This name keeps the memory of a 'lost' region, a region of which the Forest was the heart. From this region Einion Clud, Prince of Elfael, took his name. He was killed in 1176. Three years later, while singing the *marwnad* of Einion's brother Cadwallon, Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr sang of him as:

Prif arglwydd brolwydd bro Din Eithon,
Priodawr clodfawr Clud ac Aeron.

The chief lord, bringing prosperity to the land of Din Eithon,
The praiseworthy rightful owner of Clud and Aeron.

By 1306 it appears that Clud was the name of the Forest only because in an inquisition on the lands of Edmund Mortimer in that year there is reference to '*a wood named Clud which is called the chace of Radnor*'.

Clud was the name of the Forest to the Welsh of the fifteenth century, too. Lewys Glyn Cothi sang to Ieuan ap Philip ap Llywelyn Fychan, who was a grandson of Llywelyn Crug Eryr, who dwelt in Llanevan under the shadow of the Forest, calling him 'Ieuan o Glud' and describing him as one who had 'his name and his claim to the jurisdiction of Clud'.³⁵ The bard came here more than once 'to recite poetry to Clud'³⁶ and he says as follows:

Unnaid wyf â'r wenynen
Hyd Glud a Llandegle Wen.
Mae yno fedd, mae ynn fwyd,
Mae aur golau 'mro Gowlwyd.

I take the same line as the bee
To Clud and fair Llandegle.
There is mead there, there is food for us
There is bright gold in the Cowlwyd district.

At the beginning of the next century when discussing the famous Hakluyt³⁷ family, Leland names them after '*the forest of Cluid in Radnorshire*'. By the middle of that century, at any rate, it appears as if the name Clud had started to become an adjective, because there is mention of the '*fforest Glededy*' in an English document, and, as we saw, Siôn ap

Rhys wrote of ‘y Fforest Glud’ in 1588.³⁸ He spoke of ‘Drewern Glud’ as well, that is the Trewern farms close to Llanevan. By now the name remains in one place only, that is the farm of Gludre at the foot of the Llethr Ddu on the northern edge of the Forest. I am afraid that the forestry has swallowed Gludre by now and that its name too will be lost before long.

And, sitting on the motte of Crug Eryr with the beauty of the country spread out before us, perhaps we may be forgiven for darkening the air with the clouds of the study as we search for the places and names of the lost Clud. A certain amount of digging into the past cannot be avoided in this book. The Radnorshire of the Welsh-speaker is not the same county as the one seen by the stranger on an excursion. My Radnorshire is far more Welsh and richer than that. I don’t want anybody to pass Crug Eryr without knowing that he is close to one of the real homes of Wales. I am not of the same opinion as Glasynys, who came past on his way to Llandrindod:

Nid oes yng ngwlad Elystan ddim nodedig, –
 Mae’n wir fod Gwy yn rhuo’n uchelfrydig,
 Ac ambell ffrydig swnllyd draw ac yma,
 A brwynog weunydd yn ddi-fai bugeilfa;
 Ond nid oes yma ddim a gyffry’r syndod
 O’r Fforest ddigoed hyd Ffynhonnau’r Drindod;
 Ryw noethlwm fryniau cawnllyd, a thomenau,
 Yn grugiau hyllion, o dan bwys gofidiau.

There is nothing notable in the land of Elystan, –
 It is true that the Wye rushes arrogantly,
 And there are a few noisy little streams here and there,
 And rushy moors making faultless sheep-walks;
 But there is nothing here to excite amazement
 From the Forest to the Wells of the Trinity;
 A few stark naked reedy hills and humps,
 Ugly knolls, under the weight of worries.

Soon after leaving Crug Eryr you reach the Fforest Inn and the village of Llanfihangel Nant Melan. As I have discussed these before, I shall rush down the smooth road. The road was transformed recently, especially the old winding mile between Crug Eryr and the inn, and I can see preparations for straightening the famous ‘horseshoes’ at Pen y Fforest, as well. Like every old road this was part of the countryside. Climbing every hill and slipping past every hillock and following the hedges from gate to gate. But the new roads slice the country up. Straightened and flattened they go across

the corners of fields and through gardens as bold as the iron road. Wherever you go on to, the reformed road of today is something from somewhere else.

The name of the last house of Llanfihangel on the left is *The Folly*. I didn't realize how suitable the name was until I saw the house under a mass of snow one winter, looking like an igloo. The road runs here across the steep slope of the Mwnd, and sometimes the snow slips down the slope and fills up the road. About half a mile further on, a track follows the hedge of the first field on the left across the foot of the Mwnd towards a little valley where there is a waterfall called Water-Break-its-Neck.

It is better to leave the car at the side of the road as there is a sign on the gate prohibiting cars. Mr Williams, who farms the Warren above the waterfall, put the notice up there, and he told me that so much of the track was churned up by visitors' cars one Sunday that it caused him days of work.

It was a lovely May day when we last visited the place. The verdant bracken on the slopes of the Mwnd was fragrant in the warmth of the sun and it was sheer delight to tread the sward after being in the car. Across the fields on the right stands the old farmhouse of the Fron. This was the last house in the district to burn peat. I clearly recall the peat-stack at the top of the Fron behind the house. I think it was at the end of the First World War that I saw the peat drying there in the windy sunshine for the last time. The boundary between Llanfihangel and New Radnor runs through the house, and I remember that when my sister was spending a holiday there many years ago she slept with her head in one parish and her feet in another.

A little further on you have to follow a branch of the track that leads down on the right-hand side through a Forestry Commission gate and go down to the bank of the Nant Du. This is a little stream that has its source up on Esgair Nantdu and flows down through Cwm Dafydd Morgan. Another little stream joins it here and, if you follow that one up through the wooded valley on the left-hand side, you soon come to the waterfall. This valley is a 'romantic' spot in the style of some of the pictures of Salvator Rosa, with wooded cliffs closing in on us and the cataract foaming down from the rock and falling through the grey-green shadows.

Water-Break-its-Neck is the waterfall's only name. However, I doubt whether it is very old. The place is mentioned in Edward Lhuyd's *Parochialia*:

Ynghgwm y reiswr y mae'r avon a elwir avon cwm y reiswr yn torri
i gwddwf ag yn syrthio o ben craig o bobtu cant a hanner o lathenni
o uchder.

In Cwm y Reiswr the river that is called Afon Cwm y Reiswr breaks its neck and falls down from the top of a rock about a hundred and fifty yards high.

I wonder whether the name of the valley wasn't Cwm yr Heusor³⁹ to start with and that the 'h' disappeared from the beginning of the word in the usual practice of the district. If so, it would be easy enough to understand the '*yr eusor*' as the English word 'razor'. The next step would be to mistranslate the idea as 'break its neck'.⁴⁰ However that may be, Cwm Du is the name of the part of the valley below the waterfall.

The slopes surrounding the valley used to be a popular place for picnics, but the pattern these days is to stay in the valley bottom and eat in the car. And this is the best place for whimberries or bilberries that I have ever seen, with the clumps growing up to your knees in some places. I have often seen scores of people gathering whimberries in the days of low wages. The wives of the farm labourers of the district came here with their children, and spent many a day whimbering, selling the fruit of their labour in the evening to the merchants who would be waiting at the foot of Mynydd yr Eithin, or the Fron, or the Mwnd. I heard tell that many a woman would pay a year's rent for the cottage and clothe the family with the money she earned, especially during the First War when the whimberries were sent to the dye-works. These women had a special way of gathering these devilishly small berries. They held their baskets between their legs and using both hands plucked the fruit and the leaves into the baskets. They looked as if they were milking on the field: they would milk the bushes by stripping everything that came free into the baskets. When the basket was full, a sheet would be spread on the ground, and lifting the basket high up they would pour its contents slowly onto the sheet so that the strong wind of the forest would blow the leaves away. This was the old method of winnowing corn.

There is no need to recommend the green solitudes and the purple of the hills around the waterfall to anyone who loves walking, but for the others, slaves to four wheels, there is nothing for it but to return to the main road.

A few yards in the direction of New Radnor, you cross a rather insignificant bridge which is named on the map (when it has the honour) Pontynanty. The Nant Du flows underneath it to join Nant Melan. By today, anyway, the name of the stream has been translated and it is now called Black Brook, but there is no excuse at all for 'Esgair Nantau' of the maps. Some half-Englishman trying to make literary 'sense' out of the local pronunciation of the correct Nant-du is no doubt responsible. Most of the fields kept their Welsh names until the

time of tithe lists in the first part of the last century. Indeed, some of them were used within my memory. Here are some of the names on Fron land on our left: Clos-y-garreg [Stone Close], Dol [Meadow], Dros-y-clawdd [Over the Dyke], Clos Wladus [Gladys's Close], Clos Guto [Gittoe's Close], Clos-y-capel [Chapel Close], Cae-tirion [Pasture Field *or* Pleasant Field].

These fields meet us at Haines Mill.⁴¹ The name of this mill was romantically miscopied as 'Melin Itain' by the editor of the *Parochialia*. Haines Mill is its name now and it stands at the jaws of a pretty dingle on the left. Harley Dingle used to be our name for it, but by now the rustic 'dingle' has yielded to the more respectable 'valley'. It is possible that Cwm Ynys was the old name because that was the old people's name for the top part.

Until the last war people were allowed to go through the valley, but with the war the I.C.I. came into possession of the top end of the valley and it was used by them as a place to test bullets and machine-guns. Although the company has improved the road up the valley, cars are prohibited, and indeed there is not as much welcome for visitors as there used to be, unless you ask at the mill. We came here one Sunday when the I.C.I. shooters were resting and the valley was quiet and safe the whole way. I had a word as I passed with Mr Davies the Mill and I little thought that he would have died and the mill would be in different hands by the time I passed next. There has been a mill here since the Middle Ages, but the wheel is idle now. It was water from the Summergil, which rises at the top of the valley, that used to turn the wheel. I say this for the benefit of our map-makers who cannot distinguish between Summergil and Nant Melan.

Presently you come to a gate with a notice on it telling you not to proceed further if there is a red flag on the pole near by. The visitor is referred to a track on the left which goes down to the stream, and is told that this path is out of reach of the bullets when there is shooting, and it leads up over the side of the Fron. For anyone who wants to climb up to the tops of the Forest this is the best path. It climbs up to the *bwlch* between the Fron and the Rhos Fawr. You can follow this track to the middle of the Rhos and the highest point in Radnorshire, a little over 2,200 feet above sea-level. This is not very high, of course, but it is a lonely place and you should keep well clear of it during stormy weather.

Today, anyway, there was no red flag on the pole and we went on until we came to another gate and the final warnings. We went down past the shooting butts towards the quarry where the targets are. It is strange how the atmosphere of this part of the valley has been changed by two cabins, a dozen poles, a telephone wire, a pot of paint, and a notice.

Before reaching the quarry you pass Cwm Ystalbach on the right. It is a narrow dell climbing up between Mynydd yr Eithin and the Creigiau Mawr. At the top end of the valley the round top of the Whimble sticks up into the blue sky. The top of the Whimble is like one of those Welsh weather-houses; when it is wearing a cloudy cap it is a sure sign of rain. Today, at any rate, there is not a cloud to be seen. On the slopes of the Creigiau Mawr the afternoon sun is turning the fresh green bracken into a lemon colour. From higher up, from the grey, rocky ridge, the last refuge of the wild cat at the end of the last century, the rough croak of the carrion crow comes down through the heavy air as slowly as a withered leaf. The valley was always characterized by colour and stubborn silence before the coming of the men of the I.C.I.

Opposite Cwm Ystalbach there are three huge furrows running down the flank of the Rhos Fawr. These are called '*The Three Riggles*'. '*Rhigol*' is one of the Welsh words of the district which have remained in English. Other words I used to hear half a century ago were *tarw*, *mochyn*, *cryman*, *ysgol*, *cornel*, *betin*, *mawn*, *clec*, *dôl* [bull, pig, sickle, ladder/school, corner, pared turf, peat, gossip, meadow], and dozens more, not to mention translations like '*at the edge of night*' and '*he rose up in his sitting*', '*he was full the door*', and so on. It is likely that these Welsh remnants are lost by now, but it is hard to be certain because of a tendency to be ashamed of them.

We came here again with the family about two months after that Sunday. On the banks of the stream a man was having trouble rounding up the sheep because of the daft behaviour of one of his dogs. We went down to help him. Later he came after us at the top end of the valley and to our amazement we heard him calling the unruly dog in Welsh: 'Come on. Tango, come on, Lad'.⁴² 'Well,' I said to him, 'I didn't know you spoke Welsh.' '*Nor do I, not much neither,*' was the answer, '*but this 'un only works in Welsh!*'

That day we saw something new in the history of the valley, that is, tractors turning the bracken on the slopes of Mynydd yr Eithin. Just finished turning twenty-five acres, the farmer told us, adding that he would get twelve pounds an acre from the government and that the ploughing cost ten pounds an acre. He intended to plough part of the Fron as well. There is good soil on these slopes, he said, and before long you will see excellent pasture where there is bracken today. I could easily believe him, because I could see extensive tracts of the heather and bracken land of the Forest and the hills around it turning green and tame during the past seven years.

We are now on the edge of the village of New Radnor again. We won't stay here today, but keep straight on at the top end of Broad Street on the

B4372 road. This continues to run along the edge of the Forest and we soon come to the village of Kinnerton.⁴³ Shortly before reaching the village, we pass Badlands Farm on the left-hand side. This is the old home of the Hoby family, the home of the great-grandfather of Sir Philip Hoby (1530–66), ambassador and scholar and the translator of *The Courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio*. The blood of Llywelyn Crug Eryr and Philip Dorddu flowed through the veins of these men.

We turned to the left opposite Kinnerton church to a narrow road that climbs across the foot-hills up a rocky lane towards Casgob. A few yards before reaching the first house on the right we turned up a steep, stony lane on the left. My aim was to try to take the car to the top of the Forest moorland. I hadn't been up the lane for twenty years and during that time the hill had been transformed by the industry of the foresters. I wasn't sure whether I was on the right track or not, but I drove on over a cattle grid and into the well-established trees. I could see the new road turning to the left, so new that it had no proper surface. So I took the old road that rose very steeply in front of me. The surface of this road is good enough for cars if you proceed with caution, and eventually you come to a crossroads in the middle of the trees. I hesitated for quite some time before turning left here. I knew instinctively that this was the right way, but I was afraid that it was too rough for a motor car. Anyway, as it was dry and firm I ventured between the ruts. At the top of the hill, with us still in the trees, I turned to a track on the right. That looked really frightful, but after a few yards we came out of the trees into open moorland. From there on we were on the old hard ridgeway that runs from the northern side of Bryn Bach to the west.

This road is close to two thousand feet above sea-level and from here there are wide views over the hills to Shropshire and Herefordshire. The mountain on the left was newly planted with countless rows of trees so that nothing will be able to be seen from there in the future, apart from an evergreen wall ten yards away. We left the car by a gate across the road and, following a wire fence on the left and going through another gate, we came to the headwaters of Cwm Ystalbach, whose jowls we had been near about an hour earlier. We sat in the dark heather for a little, enjoying the complete quiet. The shadows were beginning to gather in the clouds, and the slopes were going grey and cold one after the other, and shadows were flowing into dips and furrows we hadn't seen before.

By the time we got back to the car the wind had risen, a cold wind that drew tears from my eyes, so I was glad to be in the car again with the windows closed. We went through the gate and drove on over the flank of the Black Mixen⁴⁴ and past the headwaters of Cwm Mawr which flow

down between Glastir and Bryn Ednol towards Casgob. We were amazed to see the trees in their thousands, wave after wave flowing over the slopes like a merciless sea.

Further on a tractor stood on the peat beside the road as if it wanted to start turning the Black Mixen itself into another plantation. We left the car beside it and headed off over the mountain. Its name describes it to a tee. It is a desert place of heather and peat with a hillock of peat in the middle. There was a certain amount of talk in the local papers about the name of this mountain because the police had decided to put a radio mast here. The trouble was that the name of the mountain had been turned into English a long time ago, and the English name struck some people as a very disreputable name for the radio station of the policemen of Mid-Wales. The Black Mixen is the English name and the meaning of 'mixin' in the English of the region is 'dunghill', and, anyway, this is the only meaning of the word '*tomen*' for some of the Welsh-speakers of the county. So it was decided to coin a new, healthy name for the old Domen Ddu, and it was decided to call it Pen y Fforest. One could not expect anything better in a county where the name Bugeildy could be changed to Beguildy for reprehensible reasons, one of them the fear that schoolchildren of the new school there would be nicknamed 'bugs'. And to return to Pen y Fforest for a second, apart from the nonsense of the debate, the new name which was chosen for the Forest was already in existence on the Forest although it is not seen on maps today. It was the name of that part of the Fforest that was near Crug Eryr.

The sun was about to set when we turned back to the track through the wood. The ruts and potholes looked deeper than before and I was glad to regain the stony lane that led back to Kinnerton. But I felt proud that I had succeeded in getting my car to the top of the mountains of Clud.

Having reached Kinnerton once again, we turned down the narrow lane to the left of the church and came after two miles to the village of Evenjob.⁴⁵ David Williams, the father of Jane Williams Ysgafell, was from this village. She was the author of *A History of Wales*, which was published in 1869, and the editor of *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price (Carnhuanawc)*. We went across the crossroads in the village and took the road to Knill. The road runs beside Offa's Dyke for two miles and crosses it below the slopes of Caer Burfa. Beyond Burfa farm on the left is Barland, the home of Edwards, a well-known Moravian in the middle of the eighteenth century. By the time we have reached Knill we are in the Summergil valley, the valley which is the subject of Lord Rennell's book, *A Valley on the March*, and Presteigne is reached again after three miles.



Crug Eryr, Llanfihangel Nant Melan



In Presteigne



Pilleth Church from Bryn Glas



Dŏl-swydd, Pen-y-bont



Gwaunarglwydd and Rhos Llandegle



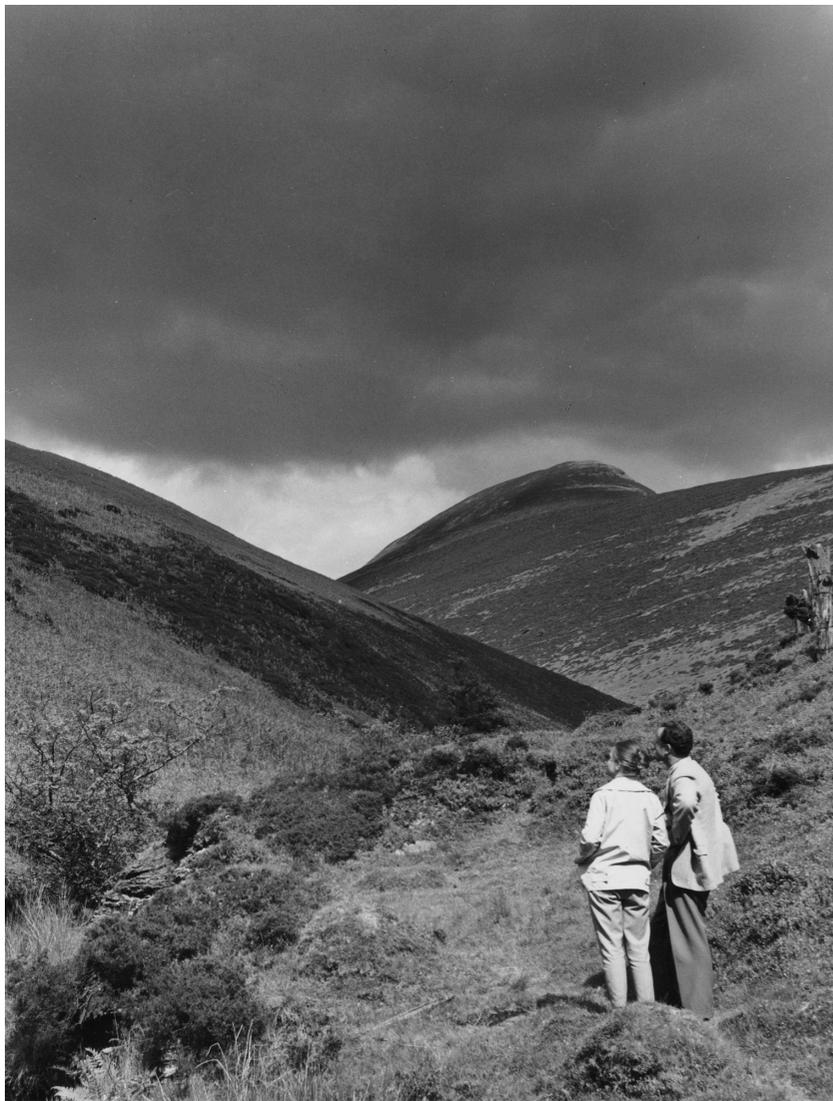
The Pales Meeting-house, Llandegle



Water-break-its-Neck



Harley Dingle from the Three Rhigols



Cwm Ystalbach



Knighton

Chapter VI

THE COMMOTE OF BUDDUGRE, THE HEART OF MAELIENYDD

In the last chapter we explored the areas of Radnor Forest and Swydd Rhiwlallt, the south-eastern part of the old *cantref* of Maelienydd. This time we turn to the northern part of the hundred and to the old commote called Swydd Buddugre. When you look at it on the map this *cwmwd* looks like a pyramid of high ground between the Teme in the east and the Ieithon in the west. The apex of the pyramid lies between the sources of these rivers and the edge of the Ceri Hills, and its broad base is marked, more or less, by the rivers Cymaron and Lugg. Although this part of Maelienydd is not as uniform and monochrome as it appears on the map, it does constitute an obvious and sensible unit and there are good roads around it and across it.

You can start your journey anywhere on these roads, but if it is important to start from a comfortable hotel and to return to it, Presteigne and Knighton are the best starting-points. As I travelled with the family from the first of these towns to the other I thought how little these six miles had changed during the last half century. I would almost say that tarring the road was the only important change.

Four miles from Presteigne you go through the pretty village of Norton. As you approach it you can see on your left a row of tall trees at the edge of the road, twelve of them, one after the other. How many times, I wonder, did I count them as I passed them when I was a child in the sunny days before 1914. They were planted by Sir Richard Green-Price one at a time on the birth of each of his children. Under the trees were the graves of his dogs and as a child I used to take a great interest in them. I expect they are still there in the long grass, as nothing changes here. That is, apart from Sir Richard's mansion. At the entrance a sign informs me that this has been turned into a '*country house hotel*'.

The village itself is as I have always remembered it with its tidy houses and its extensive gardens and its old trees. Just before coming to the church, which was rebuilt by Sir Gilbert Scott in 1868, you pass a house called The Gables on the left. This is the house of Dr Richard Williams, the owner of an excellent and unusual collection of arms and armour.

In his collection there are forty suits of plate armour, as well as a huge number of guns, hand-guns and other weapons, all of them rare and outstanding examples of the armourer's art. Dr Williams also has an

extensive and comprehensive library of books on every aspect of this complex field. I have never seen such an excellent collection in a private house. Dr Williams is one of the country's leading authorities on such things and like every authority worthy of the name he is a master of the fine details of his field of study, for example in his mastery of a fair degree of the skill of an armourer.

The collection fills the house to overflowing. Among the rarest treasures are several fat buff leather coats from Croescynon Isaf, Llanbister, Dr Williams's old home. These were worn under plate armour so that the skin wouldn't get bruised. You can see why these coats were needed when you realize that an ordinary suit of armour weighed about eighty-five pounds. Dr Williams cleans his collection once a year. A job like painting the Forth Bridge, I'd say.

Talking about the famous arms collection of the late Howard de Walden, Dr Williams said that Lord Howard never spoke anything but Welsh to his daughters at the dinner table in Chirk Castle.⁴⁶ 'I had to be very quiet,' he said sadly, 'as I know very little of the language.'

The road climbs from Norton towards Knighton for the first mile and then descends for the last two miles. At the top of the hill the road breaches Offa's Dyke. On the part of the Dyke that is over the fence on the left can be seen a polished granite monument which was erected in memory of Sir Richard Green-Price (1803–87), the first baronet, and the man who planted the trees I told you about. According to the monument he was a man '*whose services to the County of Radnor will long outlive his name.*' Since the service specifically noted on the memorial is that of promoting the railway to New Radnor and Presteigne, the pink granite ought to blush red a little, because these railways have been closed for many years.

Soon after you cross the Dyke, Knighton comes into view in the Teme valley below. The road through the town is the same as the one that leads to it, that is up-hill and down-dale. The middle of the town was built on a little hill and the streets climb steeply, narrowing towards the top where the castle once stood. It is said that the castle was built about the middle of the twelfth century and knocked down by Llywelyn Fawr [the Great] in 1213, by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1262, and by Owain Glyndŵr in 1402.

From the castle site a street runs down to the bottom of the hill on the other side. But Knighton is not a place to rush through. It's quite a lively little place and clean and tidy into the bargain. With a population of about eighteen hundred, this is the second largest town in the county. Like every other small town of its kind, Knighton has deteriorated. Once a number of crafts and small-scale industries provided a living for part of the population, but today work for young people is scarce. Perhaps 'deteriorated' isn't

quite the right expression to use when talking about towns like this one. They are less interesting and there is less going on than there used to be. This is reflected in the shops that have been turned into private houses in the narrow streets at the top of the town.

Despite this the town remains the market and shopping centre for the east of the county and for the nearby parts of Shropshire and Herefordshire. Its situation in the Teme valley between the healthy hill-pastures of Radnorshire, Clun⁴⁷ and Ceri means that Knighton is a well-known centre for buying and selling sheep of the breeds that are named after those places. Some of the county's most important sheep sales are held here.

Many of the houses in the middle of the town were rebuilt in the last century, and most of the others have been considerably altered. At least there is one black-and-white house remaining that hasn't been covered with render, opposite the clock tower in the High Street. There is a fashion for condemning the clock towers of our towns (and some of them deserve it) but Knighton clock tower is an interesting example of the taste or lack of taste of 1872. I am pleased that it is so monumentally solid. I would hate to see it replaced by parking-lines for two more cars and a telephone box in the tasteless style of 1962.

As I said, everything here is either at the top of the hill or on the lower slopes, that is, everything except the clock tower, which manages to be in both situations. From there you can see at the bottom of Church Street a church that looks interesting from the distance, but all I can remember about it is its Norman tower and the very interesting fact that it is dedicated to Saint Edward.

Before we leave Knighton, a word should be said about its Welsh name. It used to be pronounced Trefýclo, with the accent on the -y-; only strangers would talk about Tref-y-Clawdd. The Dyke itself runs through the town, leaving most of it on the eastern side. The river is the boundary today. The town is in Radnorshire and the ecclesiastical parish is in Hereford Diocese, and the railway station is in Shropshire. I don't know when Welsh came to an end here, but it probably lasted longer than is generally thought. The Reverend G. J. Freeman, the author of *Sketches in Wales*, was here in 1823, and in that book he wrote as follows: '*my friend . . . longed to hear a foreign tongue spoken fluently. He soon had an opportunity of gratifying himself in this particular from some idlers in the streets.*' According to the 1961 Census a little over fifty of the townspeople can speak Welsh today. I'm sure that not one of them, apart from a child or two, is a native of the town.

We left Knighton intending to follow the Teme back through Cnwclas⁴⁸ and the Bugeildy towards its source in the moorland on the Montgomery-

shire boundary. The Teme valley is beautiful. From here on, it climbs gradually for twenty-four miles, rising from six hundred feet above sea-level here in the town to twelve hundred feet at its top and where Cwm Gwyn rises from the last fields and loses itself in the open moorland. The road and the river wind their way between two rows of smooth green hills. There are fourteen of them on this side and about a dozen on the other. The valley isn't wide and the flat valley bottom where the rivet flows is usually no more than three verdant fields in breadth. Only in two places does it broaden out to about half a mile. Despite this it appears to be quite wide throughout its length because the fields climb so gently up the hillsides and because the little side-valleys open up between the hills every mile or so.

Cnwclas stands in one of the wider places, two and a half miles from Knighton on the B4355. The road runs along the wooded hillside of the Garth at first, but shortly before reaching the village it runs under the shadow of Craig y Don. According to the county historian, who changed Don into Donna, '*a sainted recluse*', in accordance with his practice of improving place-names, the young people of Knighton used to come here on Sunday evenings to a spring that issued from the rock '*to drink the water of this pellucid stream sweetened with sugar and to hold social and friendly converse with one another*'. They still come here 'when May comes with its green livery'.⁴⁹

Siôn Dafydd Rhys in his treatise on the giants spoke of Cornbwch Gawr [the Giant], the first inhabitant on the Graig. There was once a belief that there was hidden treasure here and people came to search for it from time to time. Hywel ap Syr Mathew, a poet of the sixteenth century, and a native of the area, sang an *englyn* to show how valuable this treasure was:

Enlli, Ffrainc drwyddi, Tir Rhôn – ac Orleans
 Arlech a Phabilon,
 Cymru, Lloegr ac Iwerddon
 A Groeg a dâl Graig y Don!

Bardsey, all of France, the Land of the Rhone – and Orleans,
 Harlech and Babylon,
 Wales, England and Ireland
 And Greece are the value of Craig y Don!

Some of the poet's family owned a little land around the Ysguboriau⁵⁰ farms, which can be seen opposite the Graig on the other side of the Teme. This is in Shropshire, although that part of the county is on the more beautiful side of Offa's Dyke, which runs over those hills towards the Clun valley.

You approach the Cnwclas past some new council houses on the right and an old public house on the left said to be the successor of the inn where Vavasor Powell was born, and Powell himself is so famous that there is no need for me to say anything about him here.

The village lies at the foot of a steep hill that rises up in the fork between Cwm Heiob⁵¹ and the Teme valley. On the top of this green hill, which gave the village its name, is the site of a castle that was built by Roger Mortimer in the middle of the thirteenth century. There is a tradition that there was a fortification on the Cnwc Glas long before that. Siôn Dafydd Rhys includes it in his list of Elystan Glodrydd's castles, and adds: 'And there was Arthur of old, and from there he married Guinevere,⁵² the daughter and heiress of Cogfran Gawr [the Giant]. And when Mortmer [sic] came, the descendants of Elystan lost their castle and they were captured by Mortmer . . . and had to pay him taxes.'

The green ditches on the top of the hill are dishonoured these days by sheds like those on the motte of New Radnor Castle, witnesses to local activity during the Second World War. I hope that someone will come and sweep them away as thoroughly as the foundations of Mortimer's castle were swept away. It is said that the iron road company took those stones away to make foundations for the railway embankment, and as infill for the huge pillars of that railway's viaduct, a viaduct which is as castellated in its architecture as any castle.

To a smaller group of people than the circle of historians, that is to students of the iron road, Cnwclas's main attraction is that long-legged bridge that fills the jaws of Cwm Heiob like an immense set of old-fashioned false teeth. There is no doubt that the village's most obvious feature today is the viaduct leaping across the Ffrwd-wen stream on its high pillars as Arthur once leapt over the Teme. It really is a wonderful example of the architecture of the iron road, a *'collectors' piece'*, you might say. What will be its fate when the line that crosses over it is closed by Doctor Beeching in accordance with his 'save-the-railway plan'? If the arches were filled in with bricks from the houses of Cwm Heiob, it could be turned into a dam and drown the valley in accordance with some other senseless plan in the future.

We walked leisurely up the hill towards the castle to see whether we could take a picture of the viaduct from the other side, when I noticed a young woman looking through a window at the edge of the road. To my surprise I saw that it was the face of someone who worked with us in Saint Fagans when the Folk Museum was being established, Mrs Sali Davies. She is from Ffair-rhos, and her husband, also from Ceredigion, is an official with Powys County Council. How lovely it was to be able to talk

Welsh with someone here in Cnwclas. Mrs Davies's little son looked at us amazed. Until now, in his short experience, it was only his family who spoke Welsh. The village is in Bugeildy parish, where in 1961 thirteen Welsh-speakers could be found.

We left the village, turning over the stone bridge across the Ffrwd-wen, and keeping to the right, skirting the castle hill. On the other side of the river rise the hills of Llanfair Waterdine parish. I just referred to Arthur leaping across the Teme. This is mentioned in a legend claiming to explain the name of the river. It is recorded by Siôn Dafydd Rhys, a man who spent a fair bit of time in this valley. He says that:

There is a place in the hill country of Shrewsbury⁵³ a place called Bron Wrgan, and that was the dwelling-place of giants. And in this place it was told how some of the brothers of Guinevere, the daughter of Cogfran Gawr, were locked up in prison by some of these giants. And they were greatly angry at being incarcerated. But Arthur saved them all by killing the giants and taking the head of the biggest giant and throwing it into the river to be a stepping-stone, for him to leap across the river to get to Cnwclas castle. And as he put his foot on the giant's skull as he leapt across the river, Arthur said, 'may the head grow' [*tyfed yr iad*] in the river instead of a stone.' And ever since then that river has been called Afon Tyfeidiad.

How easy it used to be to explain place-names! But we can be thankful to Siôn Dafydd Rhys for preserving for us a name which can no longer be seen on the map. Hurgin, two miles north of Llanfair church, is certainly the Bron Wrgan of the legend.

A mile further on you come to the hamlet of Llwyni.⁵⁴ Here you should cross the old stone bridge into Llanfair Waterdine parish. Although Llanfair is in Shropshire, since it is the birthplace of the poet Hywel ap Syr Mathew, and since he was born before the county boundaries were defined, I cannot exclude him from this book. Hywel was the son of the priest of Llanfair, which is the significance of the 'Syr' in his father's name. Syr Mathew ab Ieuan was one of the gentry, and according to Hywel, who was an authority on genealogy, he was ultimately descended from Elystan Glodrydd. He was the priest there from 1485 until 1520 and I think it likely that Hywel was born in about 1500. A later priest here was Walter Craddock, who acquired the living in 1539.

If you turn left at the end of the bridge, after a few minutes you come to the church. Opposite the church is the Red Lion inn, which can be recommended to the tired traveller, whether he wants tea or beer or a

comfortable bed. And, believe me, such comforts are amazingly scarce in these parts these days.

The old church was pulled down in 1853 and replaced by the present building. ‘*One of the most wicked cases of vandalism I have ever come across*’ was the judgement of the Reverend D. H. S. Cranage, the author of the standard work on the churches of the county. The church that was in the care of Syr Mathew ab Ieuan was a gem among the little rural churches. The inside was a masterpiece of carpentry. The roofs of the nave and the south aisle were held up by a row of fine oak columns. The tracery of the columns was hewn octagonally and their lintels carved with the heads of men and with flowers and leaves. From the middle of the carving of the lintels rose the posts that held the joints and rafters and stays of the roof. Between the posts meandered the serried arches of the southern aisle. There was a superb screen across the church between the chancel and the nave with Welsh and Latin inscriptions on it. Its framework and panels were carved with depictions of men, animals, birds and green things of the earth. Here the craftsman carved an *awdl* of praise to God for every living thing, a sort of translation into wood of the words ‘All ye works of the Lord bless ye the Lord, praise him and magnify him for ever.’

By now all that remains of the old glory is a bit of wood from the screen. Mercifully it was turned into a communion rail, and there is a famous Welsh inscription on it that was interpreted by Sir John Rhys in the *Cymmrodor* like this: ‘Sir Mathau and Meurig Pichgar of Clun raised this for ten pounds between them’.⁵⁵ It is almost certain that this Syr Mathau was the priest of Llanfair, the father of Hywel ap Syr Mathew.

Hywel died an old man in 1581 and was buried in this church on the twentieth of July. Lewis Dwnn was probably his best-known pupil, and here are some parts of the *marwnad* that he sang to his old teacher:

Troes Duw nos tros dinesydd,
 Trist i feirdd tros Deau fydd;
 Trais dirnad, troes Duw arnom,
 Daearu drych, dirwy drom;
 Dwyn milwr dawn y moliant,
 Oedd athro cerdd ethric cant;
 Hywel dewr, angel di-rus,
 O Syr Mathau, saer moethus,
 Saer cywydd fu'r gwawdydd gwych,
 Saer wiwdraul, syr yw edrych,
 Saer awlddysg ymysg moesgerdd,
 Saer englyn, cawrddyn cerdd.

Dwyn tapr cerdd, Duw'n topi'r cân,
 Dwyn torts, aeth dawn tyrts weithian;
 Dwyn cronicl dawn carennydd,
 Dwyn awen a phen y ffydd.
 Athro, ail Iolo waywlym,
 Haelddewr oedd Hywel dda'i rym.
 O dad a mam, radd amryw,
 Uchelwr oedd, uchel ryw.

Da weithiwr clod aeth i'r clai,
 Oes graen cawdd, ysgrîn cuddiai
 Cist derw gref, cas daear gron,
 Eu caer dderw y cerddorion,
 A'u hawenydd, a'u hannerch,
 A gwead swydd y gwawd serch.
 Ef aeth y stromeriaeth mawr,
 Oer yw'r wyl, ar yr elawr,
 Prifardd od, profa'r ddeudir,
 Pwysfeirdd teg, posfardd y tir,
 Pencerdd gwawd y tafawd dysg
 Prydyddion parod addysg.

Glain Eisag, golau lysoedd,
 Gwarant a ch'weirdant uwch oedd;
 Cannwyll dysg, cnewyll desgant,
 Cerdd glod i'r tafod a'r tant.
 Ei gamp oedd fwrw'i gompod
 Maniwel glwys manwl glod.
 Gwybu awgrim gwib wiwgraff
 A'i ars Seffr bron y seiffr braff.
 Gwyddiad pob syniad, pawb sôn
 Caing naddwawd cynganeddion.
 Aeth i'r bedd athro o'r byd
 Sythgoel fodd saith gelfyddyd;
 Y mae'n y pwll, mewn y pen,
 Y cyff rhywiog, coffr awen.

God brought night down over towns,
 Sad for bards over the South;
 A blow to perceive – God has wrought on us –
 The sight of a grave – a heavy punishment;

Taking away a soldier deserving of praise,
 Who was a bardic teacher better than a hundred;
 Brave Hywel, an unhesitating angel,
 [Son] of Sir Mathau, a skilful carpenter,
 A crafter of song was the excellent poet,
 With the fair value of a craftsman, a nobleman to behold,
 A crafter of odes and refined verse,
 A crafter of the *englyn*, a giant of poetic art.
 By bearing away the candle of poetry, God silences the song,
 By bearing away the torch, the very virtue of torches has ceased;
 Bearing away the chronicle of the virtue of friendship,
 Bearing away the inspiration, and the head of the faith.
 A teacher, a second Iolo of the sharp spear,
 Generous and brave was Hywel, using his power well.
 Of father and mother, of different ranks,
 He was a nobleman of the noblest kind.

A good worker of praise went to the clay,
 A time of terrible sadness, a screen concealed
 A strong oak coffin, a distress for the whole world.
 For the minstrels, their oaken stronghold,
 And their inspiration, and their greeting,
 And the work of weaving love poetry.
 The great astronomy has gone,
 Sad is the vigil, on the bier,
 An excellent chief bard, the two countries know this,
 Amongst fine, important bards, learned poet of the land,
 Chief bard of song, tongue of learning
 Of the poets, ready and schooled.

Eisag's darling, the light of courts,
 He was a pledge and a string tuned higher;
 A candle of learning, the essence of melody,
 Famed in song whether poetry or music.
 His feat was to use his calendar,
 A cultivated hand-book of finely-crafted praise.
 He knew the metrical rules with quick discernment
 And his Geoffrey's art the heart of the great cypher.
 He knew every idea, every word,
 The tune of carved poetry of metrical complexities.
 There went to the grave from the world a master

Who had the way of comprehending at once the seven arts;
 In the pit, in the jaws of the grave
 Is the able chest, a coffer of poetic inspiration.

Apart from the communion rail, there is very little left of the old church. Some of the seats and pews have been kept and as is the custom in the area the names of the owners are displayed on the pews: Graig, Trebert, Skyborrah, Bwlch, Brinmorgan, Melanagrog. Although Welsh died out here about the end of the eighteenth century, some of the old stories and traditions can still be heard today: for example, stories about a certain Dafydd Ddu,⁵⁶ who is sometimes called Dafydd Syr Ifan. Every time I return across the bridge to the Radnorshire side, I feel that this valley shouldn't have been divided between the two counties. The Teme is not a natural boundary, either geographically or historically.

About three miles up the valley from the Llwyni stands the interesting old house of Bryndraenog. It is mentioned in the poets' manuscripts as one of the mansions of the Torddu family, and at the time of Elizabeth it came into the hands of Morgan Maredudd, a patron of the bards and a friend of Dr Siôn Dafydd Rhys. I was not at all satisfied with the description of the house to be found in that wretched volume, the *Inventory of the Ancient Monuments: County of Radnor*, that is, that it is a house of the seventeenth century. So I was pleased to have the chance to see the house for myself some time ago. I went there with Mr Frank Noble, a schoolmaster from Knighton, who has done so much to teach the people of the valley something of the history of the area.

The house stands in the jaws of Cwm y Rhingyll up a track to the left of the road. We had a kind reception from the owners, Mr and Mrs Thomas, and one short look at the house was enough to confirm my doubts about the date given by the authors in the *Inventory*. It is true that there is a gallery in the hall in the middle of the house, and that the oriel bears the date 1636, and it is just as true and obvious that the gallery is an addition to a mediæval hall. The whole cut and gib of the house confirms this and I wasn't surprised about a year later to hear that Mr Thomas had discovered a decorated window of late mediæval construction in one of the walls of the hall. It is a wonderful window stretching from the floor of the hall up to the roof. Siôn Dafydd Rhys was living near Bryndraenog towards the end of the sixteenth century and he described it as one of the 'old houses' of the heirs of Hywel ap Madog of Maelienydd, and by now I feel sure that the present Bryndraenog was the black-and-white house which was praised in a *cywydd* by Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal in the fifteenth century. After referring to the star of Bethlehem and the star of

Owain Glyndŵr, Ieuan says that a shining star appeared when this house was built by Llywelyn Fychan:

Mae seren ym Melienydd,
 Morwyn falch o galch a gŵydd,
 Merch i frenin yr hinon,
 A iarllles haf yw'r llys hon.
 Golau dydd, mae'n glod iddi,
 I'w gweled nos i'n gwlad ni . . .

Llywelyn yw'r meddlyn mau,
 Fychan, fab Ieuan biau,
 Hil Ieuan braff hael o'n bro,
 Hil wythran Hywel Athro.
 Mawr yw gwawd hwn ym mrig tant,
 Meurig lin, miragl anant.
 Nid â mawl yn freiniawl fry
 Heb gildant y Bugeildy.
 Digrif, ym Siat hyd ataw
 Dyfod trwy Defeidiad draw.

. . . .
 Y mae nawdd yma i ni
 Yn ystrad o ffenestri.

There is a star in Maelienydd,
 A proud maid of lime and wood,
 A daughter of the king of fair weather,
 And a summer countess is this court.
 The light of day, is praise of her,
 To see the night in our land . . .

Llywelyn – my lake of mead –
 Fychan, son of Ieuan, owns her,
 Of the powerful line of Ieuan, benefactor of our region,
 Descended in eight generations from Hywel the Learned.
 Great is his praise on the harp-strings,
 Of the line of Meurig, mighty work of bards.
 No royal praise will ascend
 Without the top harp-string of Bugeildy.

Happy, for my Chad, that I go towards him
Through the Teme over there.

There is patronage here for us
In a vale of windows.

The genealogists agree with the poet that this was the home of Hywel Athro and Llywelyn Fychan. It came into the possession of Morgan Maredudd in the sixteenth century, and his descendants were living here until the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Much could be said about this interesting house and the people that lived in it, but I must not overload this book with things of the past. Having said that, I recall an example of the survival of a local tradition that is so remarkable that it must be set down here. It occurs in an article in the *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* by the late Mr William Barnett. He gives his reminiscences of life in the Teme valley in the eighties of the nineteenth century and talking about Knighton fair he says: '*Passing Bryndraenog Granny said prisoners were taken across the border to Ludlow and hung by a bishop.*' This is a notable example of how the work of Bishop Lee and the Marcher Court three hundred years earlier remained in folk memory.

Half a mile beyond Bryndraenog you come to another house that belonged to Morgan Maredudd, whom I have just referred to, Pantycaregl. It has been a farmhouse for centuries, but now you see a very new farmhouse in the middle of old barns and cowsheds. This is an interesting place for the Welshman who takes an interest in the literature of our country, because it was here in Pantycaregl, on the hospitable hearth of Morgan Maredudd, that Dr Siôn Dafydd Rhys was staying when he was writing his book on grammar and poetry which was published in 1592. And, to quote the author's own words, 'And the greater part of this Book was studied and thought over first in the house of the Noble M. Morgan Meredydd near the Bugeildy in Dyffryn Tafida in Swydd Faesyfed:⁵⁷ I had a great welcome in that place many times, and had such wonderful food and sustenance from the good man and his good wife.' It was a real loss to architecture and to the history of the valley when Pantycaregl old house went on fire and was burnt down in 1931.

Morgan Maredudd is a man who is not mentioned in any of the biographical books although he is a fair example of the conscientious and cultured gentry without whose lives and work in their patronage and succour of the Welsh language over centuries there wouldn't be a

biography in that language today. Although Pantycaregl was part of Morgan's patrimony, he spent most of his life in Llinwent five miles across the hills in Llanbister parish. He probably came to live in the Bugeildy about the year 1587 and Lewis Dwnn gives a short but valuable description of the old house as it was in 1591, when this poet sang the praises of the owner and his sons:

Plas i Gred fal Powls y gwraidd,
 Pantycaregl, pont cwyrtaidd,
 Plasau, selerau sail oedd
 Parlyrau, tyrau tiroedd
 Tŷ goleulamp to gloywlwyd,
 Tair llofft y sy'n y tŵr llwyd.
 Noddfa sydd i brydydd brau,
 Neuadd uchel nawdd iacháu,
 Ceginau, nid coeg annedd,
 Bwtri a phantri hoff wedd.
 Tŷ ni bu rhaid tan wybr well
 Teg ydyw fal tŷ Gadell.
 Ac yn y plas, addas oedd,
 Ar ganu, aur a gwinoedd,
 A dewr briglwyd ŵr braglan
 I'w gaerau glwys a gwraig lân.

A Christian mansion set like St Paul's,
 Pantycaregl, a polished bridge,
 Of mansions, cellars which were the foundation
 Of parlours, towers over the lands,
 A house lit by a bright lamp, a shining grey roof,
 Three upstairs rooms are in the grey tower.
 A refuge it is for a tired poet,
 A high hall, a sanctuary of healing,
 Kitchens, no mean building,
 A buttery and pantry lovely to see.
 A house whose better was never to be seen under heaven,
 Fair house like the house of Cadell.
 And in the mansion, it was fitting,
 After singing, gold and wines,
 And a brave grey-haired man, a man [offering] pure ale,
 To his cultivated strongholds and a lovely wife.

Morgan Maredudd is mentioned again because he and his progeny have such an important place in the cultural history of the county.

By now Pantycaregl is the home of a man who could be said to be a patron of Welsh education, Mr Edward Harris. I know Mr Harris and I like him, but I am a firm opponent of his on one point, that is, the spelling of his parish, Llanfihangel y Bugeildy. Perhaps the trouble about this a few years ago is still remembered.

Here is what happened. The County Education Committee wanted to build a new school in the Bugeildy on Mr Harris's land, but he refused to sell the land as long as the Committee kept to its intention of spelling the name of the school correctly and in Welsh. Mr Harris insisted on keeping the meaningless form 'Beguildy'. It was a pathetic battle. As one person from the parish said to me, '*Bugeildy has been spelled three ways, it seems, and some people was worriting as to which was worse, for the kids to be nick-named, little bigs, little begs, or little bugs.*' On such childish ground was the battle of Bugeildy school fought, and I'm sorry to say that the Education Committee, of all committees, yielded.

Soon after the handsome new school was opened, I was invited to go there to lecture for a one-day school. My subject in the afternoon was old farming methods in the area, and in the evening the subject was the history of the old culture of the Teme valley, and its contribution to Welsh literature. I have never had a better audience, or a better chairman either – and that was Mr Harris. I found that he was a likeable and gentle man, despite his views in the battle of the name. And, after all, his point of view is the same as that of the editor of *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, who, to judge from the spelling of his publication, is in favour of the '*Begs*'.

I got proof of Mr Harris's geniality and hospitality when we called in Pantycaregl one day in June 1959. The purpose of the visit was to enquire about the old house that was burned down in 1931. Mr Harris said that it was a large, three-storey house of ordinary local stone, except that the corner stones and some of those around the doors and windows were of carved stone. Under the eaves at each corner were stones carved with men's heads. At the back of the house was another head in *bas relief*. The windows had sturdy oak frames and in the middle of the roof was a great square chimney. Two pairs of stone stairs climbed up through the middle of the house, turning around the chimney in the thickness of the large middle wall.

The house was surrounded by a defensive moat which could be filled with water. I was shown the moat, which is similar to the one around Llys Ifor near Rhos Goch. Behind the house is the best example you could see of a gutter bringing the water from a stream about half a mile away. The

present house is entirely new except that the old entrance to the cellar which was under the parlour still remains. The carved heads have been put in the walls of the new house.

It is a very great pity that the County Commissioners of Ancient Monuments did not give a full description of this house, and many another house too, in their book. By now it is too late to carry out such a task properly. The black-and-white houses that were built on crucks are down and have disappeared in many parishes. While we were discussing these things Mr Harris said that there was a cruck house on his own land at the top of Cwm Rhingyll. Would we like to see it? And on the word he started up the Land Rover and took the four of us on a trip up the sloping fields up to the wild open land of the Rhos Hir. I was amazed to see at the top of the hill, in the middle of the heather, productive fields with good oats and green crops 1100 feet above sea-level. I noticed that in some places there is soil like the rich soil on some of the mountains of Lower Elfael.⁵⁸ It is the same soil on the plains of Hereford.

At last we reached the top end of Cwm Rhingyll up there between Beacon Hill and Rhos Hir. Part of the house had fallen down, but there was enough still standing on its feet, or on its crucks, to be more correct, to show that it was a pretty large house. There are five pairs of oak crucks still in existence, holding up the roof, and an old oak screen across the house between the kitchen and the dairy. The floor of the ruined upper end of the house is eight inches higher than the floor of the rest of the house.

The church of the parish of Llanfihangel y Bugeildy, to give it its full and pretty name, stands on a hillock in the middle of a handful of houses a quarter of a mile from Pantycaregl. As is the case with so many of the county's churches it suffered a great deal of renovation in the last century, but not everything old was swept away. The roof and the rood screen with painted Tudor roses on one side. The oldest piece of furniture in the church is a chest from the thirteenth century cut from the stump of an oak tree. It stands on the floor at the west end of the building. There are also two curious old oak benches here, their wood greyed by age. I noticed too that one of the stays of the choir is mediæval and that the communion rail in front of the altar dates back to the seventeenth century. The oddest thing here is an inscription on a chair at the side of the altar, '*De Courcy Parry The Anchor Inn Craven Arms Salop*'.

The Anchor is an inn on the other side of the Teme at the far end of Betws-y-crwyn parish. The isolated church of Betws is about a mile north-west of Bugeildy church as the crow flies, but about three miles as the motor-car climbs. It was probably once part of Llanfair Waterdine parish,

because old genealogists refer to it as 'Llanfair a'r Betws' parish. As in Llanfair, the names of the farms can be seen on the pews and some of them are names that can be found in the works of the poets. I noticed the name Trebrodier, today's Trebrodur, a fine old farmhouse, an arrow's shot from the Bugeildy, that you pass as you go to Betws.

The church has a fine screen and an oak roof from the fifteenth century. Betws is part of the old Welsh life of the Teme valley and it was wonderful to read a few Welsh words on a recent gravestone in memory of Elizabeth Morris, who died in 1949 and who is described in three strong words, '*Beautiful, Brave, Beloved*'. On the other side it says, '*Hefyd ei phriod, John Griffiths Morris, Awst 18, 1863 – Chwefror 11, 1952. Nos da*'.⁵⁹ On the way back to the Bugeildy I thought about the woman's grave up there and the three words on it that any woman would be proud to deserve. After reaching the main road again you soon come to Felindre. From there a narrow lane on the left leads in the direction of Maes-gwyn farm, where Vavasor Griffiths had his famous academy. I went there one day when every hedge in the entire wooded valley was white with May. Past Tansomalia farmhouse, a name I cannot explain, the road followed Nant Deuddwr back to the hills, until Maes-gwyn farmhouse could be seen over on the left sheltering in the side of Banc y Waren.

I was about to turn into the lane that leads to the house when a young man came up on a tractor. He looked very suspiciously at my camera and said hurriedly that there was nobody at home. Yes, he said, he had heard that there had once been a school or something of the sort at Maes-gwyn, but he himself didn't take any interest in that sort of thing. So I pulled the car into the side to let him past, took a picture of the place from the distance and turned back towards Felindre.

I have already mentioned how old houses are disappearing from the county. Every time I come to the Teme valley I see another house pulled down in order to widen or straighten the road. Uniform, naked council houses are gradually pushing in between the clusters of grey stone houses, and there has been a great change in the architecture of the area, like every other area, in fact. I know that this is out of necessity. We must have straight, wide, safe roads, especially after closing down the straight, safe railways on all sides. And the people of our villages really do need better housing. But does everything new and better need to be so appallingly ugly? More than stones and lime is lost when an old house is pulled down. Its name and its lineage can be lost, and by losing these you lose the warmth of history and there is one more cold gap on the map. What if Maes-gwyn, for example, had been on the edge of the road here in the valley and the road men had demolished it? A visible little piece of our

history would have disappeared from sight. A little later its name would have been deleted from the map, and soon it would have been deleted from memory, and in the end any certainty about it would have come to an end. The particular spot, the hearthstone and the gravestone, are indescribably important. 'It is not known where Arthur's grave is'⁶⁰ and because of that fact some people find it easy to doubt whether there ever was an Arthur.

Luckily Maes-gwyn is not the only historical place whose safety is ensured by its distance from the main road. As you approach Crugybyddar, one of the parish's four townships and according to the county historian '*the occasional residence of Uthyr Pendragon*', there is a lane on the right that leads across the Teme to Gorther, a farmhouse which is a successor to Gorddwr, the mansion of Gruffudd ap Maredudd Fychan, one of the Torddu clan, a house 'where you could find wandering poets from all Britain',⁶¹ according to Dafydd ab Ieuan Llwyd, a bard who received in Gorddwr 'feasts from full vineyards'.⁶² 'Beyond the river' is the meaning of Gorddwr and here is a place where you can cross the Teme without leaving Radnorshire because the boundary leaves the river here and turns up Nant Rhuddwr. Two miles up Cwm Rhuddwr, on a bank above the ford where Radnorshire, Montgomeryshire and Shropshire meet, is the site of Castell Bryn Amlwg, another of Elystan Glodrydd's castles, says tradition. The place is mentioned in one of the prophecies of Rhys Fardd:

Ym mhorth Castell Bryn Amlwg y dechreuant,
Dwy filltir dros Defeidiawg y cymynant,
Pedair mil a saith ŵr o bon rhan a leddir.

At the gate of Bryn Amlwg Castle they will start,
Two miles across the Teme they will slaughter,
Four thousand and seven noblemen will be killed.

Before going as far as Bryn Amlwg you cross a little stream, Nant Medwaledd, which runs through an isolated valley and past the farm of the same name. Like Gorddwr, Medwaledd has a history and a lineage. It is one of the old houses of Hywel ap Madog of Maelienydd, says Siôn Dafydd Rhys, and it gave its name to another of Bugeildy parish's townships. The name can be seen, too, in the poetry of the bards. Lewis Dwinn came here in 1578 to sing to Siôn ap Cadwaladr ap Hywel:

Mae adeilad 'Medwaledd
A dal i mi aur a medd,

Ym Mugeildy tynnu tant,
 Caud filwr ceidw ei foliant;
 Ym min Rhuddwr mae'n rhoddion,
 Mae'n dew saig ym maendai Siôn.

There is a building in Medwaledd
 That pays me gold and mead,

In Bugeildy plucking a string,
 You'd find a soldier who attends to his praise;
 At the edge of the Rhuddwr are our gifts
 There is rich food in Siôn's stone house.

The Teme valley is still and quiet throughout its length, but by the time you have reached the top of the valley the stillness can be felt even by the motorist. No doubt the narrowness of the valley has something to do with it. The steep, leafy fields are more obvious here and somehow seem to lean on you. Although the trees are thriving all through the valley, I don't think about them until I reach Felindre. Despite this, there is a sort of suggestion in the vegetation that we are climbing towards the hills.

Two miles after leaving Crugybyddar you start climbing across the flank of Banc Gorddwr to the open moorland on the Montgomeryshire boundary. You soon come to a signpost which is almost exactly on the boundary and less than a mile from the source of the Teme on one side and the source of the Ieithon on the other. I am always in my element when I come here 'to the bright uplands of Maelienydd',⁶³ as Llywelyn ab y Moel put it, between the uplands of the Teme valley and Glyn Ieithon. Here the moorland in its perfection and expanse of land and air opens up around you. From Banc Gorddwr you can look over a sea of hills like waves as far as the Brecon Beacons⁶⁴ and the Carmarthenshire Black Mountains⁶⁵ in the south, and, in the other direction, you can see Pumlumon, Cadair Idris, and other grey mountains in the north. And over all, the magic of ever-changing light and colour. I have seen from here a view that could have been painted by J. D. Innes, muscularly simple, blue, blue-black and grey, like the skeleton of some far-off enchanted land, and then, an hour later, the same view warm yellow and bright green and verdant and near.

But there is more to be seen here than the marvels of the distant expanses. We were sitting quietly in a little corner of the Banc on a bright day at the end of May when a curlew came right up to us, leaping through the coarse grass on its long legs. It came within three yards of us and was so close that we could see the plaiting of its brown and yellowish feathers

and the dark brown bars across its tail. I was surprised to see it so close and so bold, and I was also surprised to see how colourful its feathers were. I was used to thinking of it as a greyish bird. I was struck, too, by something funny in its appearance and behaviour. It had never crossed my mind before that a bird which is so dignified in flight and which has such an enchanting call could look rather funny on the ground. With its stiff gait and its solid round body, and its beak curling out from its little head, it made me think of a tiny little elephant.

We are now in the parish of Llanbadarn Fynydd, which was described by Samuel Lewis in his *Topographical Dictionary* as ‘dreary and wild’. Most of the parish is still moorland, and the enclosed fields are mostly in Glyn Ieithon and in the Gwenlas and Llaethdy valleys, which run into it. But the moorland is not unproductive and repays careful cultivation. In recent years extensive areas of the hill country have been ploughed and reseeded to make good pasture. As you descend towards the village, you can see a heathery mound on the heathery horizon on the left beyond Cwm Gwenlas. That is Castell y Blaidd,⁶⁶ an old defensive site whose history nobody knows. Jonathan Williams, the county historian, says that it was built by Rhirid Flaidd’s father, but, as usual, Siôn Dafydd Rhys maintains that it is one of Elystan’s castles. And when you think about it, it is likely that Elystan did own them all in his day. Llanbadarn Fynydd was a bilingual parish at the beginning of the last century. To quote Williams, ‘many old people still continue to speak, and more to understand, the language of their forefathers, yet, to the present race of young people in general, it is become unintelligible and obsolete’.

A church and a public house and a smithy (which has been turned into a petrol station), a handful of houses, and a river full of fish – that is Llanbadarn. You can get tea as well as petrol in the smithy and a bed overnight as well, or at least you could when I was there. While I was waiting for the kettle to boil, I went to the church. I was disappointed by the building itself, which was rebuilt in 1896 and which is beautified by an ugly and rusty corrugated-iron shed under the west window. All that remains of the screen is a fine carved wooden beam. Nearby stands a Victorian harmonium in an insanely decorated case, which is a fair example of the lack of taste of the people of that era. I saw another example of that lack in the churchyard, which is however not so amusing. It is a stone in memory of a woman who died in 1862 and who was ‘for upwards of eleven years Head Nurse in the family of G. A. Haig, Esquire, of Pen Ithon in this Parish’. Poor thing, her epitaph reads like a certificate to be shown when she applies for a job in the next world. Nearby I saw the grave of some family ‘of Teenybrennea’, not a very attractive certificate

for the good of either language. On the other hand I was pleased to see the name of the historical old house Llinwent spelt properly. Who, I wonder, was responsible for the horrendous form 'Llymwynt', which can be seen on the unspeakable '*fully revised*' 1948 one-inch map?

Llinwent is a name full of magic and romance to me ever since those far-off days when I used to ponder on the marble likeness of Elen Gethin in the church at home. But until summer 1958 I had never been very near to the place itself. I had seen from afar the valley between Castell y Blaidd and Moel Wilym where the house stood, but that was all. In that year, at any rate, we came here with Mr Frank Noble, Knighton, to search for the site of Llinwent, because by now there's only the site left. The best way to get there is to turn by the petrol pump at the smithy and climb up the rough, steep lane to the open mountain. Like so many of Maelienydd's important houses, Llinwent is up a narrow valley on the moorland. It's the old churches and the little new houses that you find in the valley on the banks of the Ieithon, but it's in the folds of the mountains above that the houses of the nobility used to be, houses like Gorddwr, Medwaledd, Y Trallwng Byr, Garddfaelog, Croescynon, Bronyganllwyd, Cantal, to name some of the houses of the Torddu family. It was probably the good, dry land of the uplands which caused them to settle there. 'Dry mountains and wet fields'⁶⁷ was the saying that Maelienydd people had for their *cantref*, and the fields were almost all in the valley below. And there on the higher ground were the old castles, too. The old prehistoric ones like the Gaer and Cefn y Gaer, and the more recent ones like Castell Cymaron and Castell Tinbod. It was the old mountain ridgeways that connected them with each other. They have nothing to do with main roads today. You can see clearly here in Maelienydd what I said before, that our roads today do not have the same function as roads in times gone by. To the inhabitants of most of the area up to now, the old mountain road is the everyday road. When they go down to the main road on the banks of the Ieithon or the Teme, they are going somewhere far away.

But to return to Llinwent. As I said, there was a steep, rough lane leading from the main road up to the Fron. (Since then it has been surfaced with tarmac.) The road is level enough after you reach the top of the hill, although the gates you have to open and close after you witness that we have here a road for horses' hooves rather than wheels. And indeed, after you have gone through the second gate, the road deteriorates into a mountain track which leads past Castell y Blaidd, whose circular green ditch can be seen on the left, and on towards the Teme valley. Here again, and in brackets as it were, it should be added that much work has been done on this track since 1962 and the Post Office workers have erected

poles along the heathery verges. Is this a sign that the world of horses' hooves is to be drowned by a kind of endless deluge of forestry?

Anyway, we came here to visit Llinwent, and we left the car beside the second gate and walked at the side of the ditch down to the valley on the right. A little further down we came upon the ruts of an old track which took us to 'brambles where once was greatness'.⁶⁸ Standing in this remote valley with the soft mist drifting down the slopes it is hard to believe that here was once a great mansion where generations of poets and singers were made very welcome. About the middle of the fourteenth century Iolo Goch came here to

. . . feibion Lleon llu,
Phylip goeth dewrdoeth Dorddu.

. . . the many sons of Lleon
Philip Dorddu cultured, brave and wise.

Phylip Dorddu ap Hywel ap Madog of Maelienydd had five sons, 'people of high authority and wonderfully hospitable'⁶⁹ according to the bard. Two of their descendants were outstandingly important in the cultural history of Maelienydd, that is the descendants of Hywel ap Philip of Bronganllwyd, who settled in Gardd Faelog near Llanbister, and those of Cadwgan ap Phylip of Trallwng Byr, who married a daughter of Llywelyn Crug Eryr and who settled here in Llinwent.

These noblemen, like the old princes of Maelienydd before them, were descended from Elystan Glodrydd. Idnerth, the oldest son of Cadwgan ab Elystan, was the forefather of the princes, but it was from his youngest son Hoidlyw Goch of the Teme valley that the Dorddu family descended, as well as the majority of gentry who nurtured Welsh life and culture in Maelienydd after 1282.

I stood on Llinwent's cold hearth and tried to imagine what their opinion would have been of the life and culture of the area today. I wonder what Dafydd Fychan, the grandson of Iolo Goch's patron, would think of this unpopulated tract around me.

Da gwyddwn ban oeddwn iau
Ba dir yn y byd orau

I well knew when I was young
Which land was best in the whole world

said Huw Cae Llwyd as he sang the praises of Dafydd Fychan about 1450,

Gorau lle, medd gwŷr y llys,
Tir Llinwent o'r holl ynys.

The best place, say the men of the court,
Is the land of Llinwent in the whole island.

There is still a memory in the area of the treacherous way this nobleman was killed, along with a friend from Llangurig, by one of his relatives after quarrelling about dividing up some lands; or I should have said that there was a memory until fifty years ago, I suppose, because by now most of the stories I used to hear have been forgotten. Ieuan Deulwyn referred to the treachery in his well-known *marwnad* to Dafydd:

Cwyno'r wyf, yn lle cawn rhent,
Cynllwyno pen cun Llinwent.
Dull a fu'n ei dwyllo fo,
Duw a allwyd ei dwyllo.

I complain, in the place where I am paid,
About the plotting against the chief master of Llinwent.
The means by which he was cheated,
His betrayal was condoned by God.

He also refers baldly to the 'revenge that came'⁷⁰ when the murderer was shot in Llanddewi Ystradenni churchyard by Elen Gethin of Hergest, the sister of the dead man.

Lewys Glyn Cothi sang the great *cywydd* in praise of Maredudd, the son of Dafydd Fychan's second marriage:

Nid gwell gwlad am dda rhad, rhydd,
No Melynys Maelienydd.

There is no better land for good and ready beneficence
Than the Honey Isle of Maelienydd.

Rhys, his son, 'owned the rent of Llinwent and its court'⁷¹ in his turn, and, according to an anonymous poet of the sixteenth century,

Nid rhaid porthor ar ddyrau
Nid ad cost ennyd eu cau.

There is no need for a porter at the doors
 There is no need to close them for a single moment.

This man had to wait for a time before he could follow the example of his father and forefathers in Llinwent. In the meantime the mansion came into the possession of the man who became in his old age a patron of Dr Siôn Dafydd Rhys, the Morgan Maredudd I have already mentioned, the great-grandson of Dafydd Fychan through his first wife. Llinwent is named by Siôn Dafydd Rhys among the holdings and old houses belonging to the heirs of Hywel ap Madog of Maelienydd, and he says of this mansion and of Cantal that 'they are two of the oldest houses in Wales, and many nobility have risen from these houses'.⁷²

Morgan Maredudd was worthy of his inheritance. From the year 1541, when he married Goleubryd ferch Ieuan, the poets received a great welcome here:

Af i Linwent Faelienydd
 I'r frodyr iach a'r ford rydd,

I shall go to Linwent in Maelienydd
 To the happy brothers and the liberal table,

said Huw Arwystl, and many others followed him here and to Pantycaregl during the fifty-two years that these two were together. Trefnant says that Morgan added to his mansion:

Rhoist ar dy blas urddas ŵr,
 Irwaith diwarth werth deuwyr,
 Plas at y sêr o'r cerrig,
 Call ei waith fal Celli-wig.

You added to your mansion the dignity of a man,
 A new piece of irreproachable work worthy of two men,
 A stone mansion reaching towards the stars,
 Cunningly constructed like Celli-wig.

He had sons and grandsons who were patrons of the poets in the Bugeildy and Maes-mawr in Cedewain. One of his sons, Rhys Fychan, died here in Llinwent in 1574, himself a poet and singer according to his *marwnad* by Hywel ap Syr Mathew:

Mitr a gwydr metrig ydoedd,
Mwsg aur y musig oedd,

Athro oedd waith Hiraddug,
Ods oddi ar Gambrids a ddug.

He was the mitre and mirror of verse,
He was the golden musk of music.

He was a master familiar with the bardic grammar of Hiraddug,
He brought excellence from Cambridge.

Sometime between 1582, when Morgan was Sheriff of Radnorshire for the second time, and 1590, when he was Sheriff of Montgomeryshire, he moved to Pantycaregl, and Llinwent came into the possession of his second cousin and son-in-law, Maredudd ap Rhys. The new owner was a son of Rhys ap Maredudd, who owned the place before Morgan Maredudd. As far as I know, his *marwnad* by Lewis Dwnn in 1604 is the last *cywydd* on record to be sung in Llinwent hall, although there is no reason to think that it was the last:

Torred pen Gwlad Felenydd,
Darfu'r glod ddyfod ei ddydd,
Am ŵr oedd ben mawredd byd
Yma trostyn' mae tristryd.

Pan aeth hwn, pennaeth hynod,
I eitha'r clai, ewythr clod,
Duo Llinwent oll ennyd,
Tros daear bell tristáu'r byd.

The lord of the Land of Melenydd has been struck down,
The praise has ceased, his death-day has come.
For a man who was the head of greatness in the world
Here sadness overcomes them.

When this man went, an exceptional leader,
To the depths of clay, fame's uncle,
All Llinwent darkened for a while,
Over far-off lands the world was sad.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century the mansion had become a farmhouse. Despite this it retained much of the atmosphere of its colourful past. The solid workmanship survived, as did the elegance of the windows and the belief that the house had once been a church. The immense length of the stone arch above the hearth of the hall suggested to the people of the new age, who in some ways had narrower horizons, that the house had once been a monastery. And, they said, there were ghosts in it.

That remarkable man, Edmund Jones of the Tranch, Pontypool, heard about these ghosts and he mentions them in his book *A Relation of Apparitions of Spirits in the Principality of Wales*. Here is the story from his own manuscript, which is more economical than the printed book:

In Llynwent in Radnorshire thought to be formerly an old Chappel & appearing to be so by its edifice the man and woman of the house were gone out & while at Supper 3 of the Servants heard as it were horses coming to the door & said "There, they are coming." The rest at ye table heard it not. Those that heard it went out to see & seeing nothing came amaz'd & sat by the fire. To their greater amazement they heard as it were people passing by 'em & passing to go upstairs which they telling, the others at the table laugh'd at 'em (viz) 2 of em – Not long after 3 of the family sickened & dy'd of the small Pox (viz) Mrs Bywater's brother in law, a young relation & a Servant man . . .

This probably took place about 1730–40, and by then, as can be seen, the name of the Llynwent family had changed as much as the house itself had changed. Despite their name, however, it is absolutely certain that the Bywaters were Welsh-speakers. It is recorded in the third volume of the *Cambro-Briton* that John Bywater received from his uncle in Pennsylvania a copy of *Cydgorddiad o'r Scrythyrau* [*A Concordance of the Scriptures*] by Abel Morgan, which was published in Philadelphia, an unacceptable present if he couldn't speak Welsh.

Most of the mansion was pulled down in 1782, and what was left was changed and adapted to a fair extent from time to time until the beginning of this century. In 1908 the house went on fire, and then about 1919 it was burnt to the ground. Nothing remains of it today apart from a piece of slate floor and the remains of the foundations around it. We stood there between the debris and the nettles where once flowers of poetry had grown. I have seldom been so heavy-hearted.

Near to the site of the house there are the remains of what might once have been a fish-pond or mill-pool. There, probably, stood the mill of which it was said that the sound of milling came from it in the depths of

night, terrifying anyone who heard it. The only building still standing is an old barn. It looks very recent from the outside because it is clad with corrugated iron. But under the new skin there is an old oak skeleton – posts and joists and crossbeams – and a floor of huge slates. Here at least was some atmosphere of continuity. A greasy, druggish smell drifted across from a bath of sheep-dip in the corner, and it was a living, wholesome smell after the deathly odour of the nettles outside.

Leaving Llinwent and climbing back from the valley towards the car, it occurred to me that the last disaster to strike the house was the corruption of its name, which had once been famous ‘from Anglesey to Monmouth’,⁷³ and that at the whim of some ignorant map editor. To the people of the area, it is still Llinwent (and also, more’s the pity, Linwent); but what is seen on the *ordnance* map is the bastard abortion ‘Llymwynt’.

Two miles after leaving Llanbadarn Fynydd you can see Maes-yr-helm chapel, a famous chapel of the county’s Baptists, on a slope on the other side of the Ieithon. Maes-yr-helm farm, where the cause started, is on this side of the river and on your left. At the top of the hill behind Maes-yr-helm farm stand the remains of Castell Tinbod. As you come from Llanbadarn Fynydd you can see clearly against the sky the only piece of the castle wall still standing. It seems that it was one of the Mortimers’ castles, although virtually nothing of its history is known. According to tradition, it was a Welsh foundation in the beginning; ‘Urien Rheged made Castell Tinbod’⁷⁴ according to Siôn Dafydd Rhys. It appears that there are the remains of an earlier fortification than Mortimer’s stronghold on top of the hill.

There is more than one way up to the castle. You can enjoy a leisurely climb past Maes-yr-helm farm or walk with ease from the ridgeway on the eastern side. As I was in a hurry the only time I visited the place, I took the shortest and hardest way. I went on along the main road for another mile until I reached the place where the rock rises up from the edge of the road. I went through a gate close to the fifteenth milestone from Newtown and started climbing the rocky wooded slope. While I was sweatily climbing, realizing that the shortest way isn’t always the best way, I heard the sound of buzzards mewing above the tree-tops, and before long it became clear that I was responsible for scaring them. I climbed at last out of the trees onto the windy grass above, and straightaway the angry birds swooped down in a very threatening way. Very rarely does one have the chance to get such a close look at these grand birds in flight. The map says that the height of the site of Castell Tinbod is 1332 feet and by the time I had climbed up to it I knew that this was true. It is a splendid and strong position for a castle. On the western side the land drops down

to the *leithon*, a slope covered with short grass to begin with and then a wooded precipice. The land isn't as steep in the other directions although that didn't detract much from the strength of the castle. There are extensive views from the top of the *motte*. To the west you look across *Glyn Ieithon* to the hills that rise up between the valleys of the *Crychell*, the *Clywedog* and the *Marteg*, and to a many-coloured chain of hills stretching along the boundary of old *Gwerthrynion* from *Nantmel*, past *Abbey Cwm-hir* as far as *Hirddywel* and its high pastures. To the south-east lies the colourful, ribbed expanse of *Radnor Forest*.

The castle used to stand on a little hillock of stone that had been hewn out of the hill-top like an upside-down basin. Much, if not all, of the castle was built from the stones that were taken out from the ditch, as you can see from the debris that has slowly fallen from the walls back into the ditch from whence it came. The only part left standing is a piece of the north gate which stands out against the sky like a stone finger.

By now it is a quiet, out-of-the-way place, in the world of the crow and the buzzard, and the only fighting taking place here these days is between these birds. As I turned back down the hill above the *leithon* I saw six crows fiercely attacking two buzzards above the branches of the trees below. I hope it was the two that had been so unwelcoming to me, because it was the crows that carried the day. That was the only time I have ever seen birds fighting beneath my feet!

After going back down to the main road I came three quarters of a mile further on to a lane on the left by a telephone box. This is the easiest way up to *Castell Tinbod*. After passing *Maes-llan* farm at the top of the hill, keep to the left and after a few yards take the lane also on the left. You descend to the bottom of a little valley and then climb steeply to *Crugyn* farm. You have to leave the car there and it's best to ask in the house for the way across the fields.

The phone box I mentioned is in *Llananno* parish and immediately after passing it you come to the parish church hidden below the main road on the right. It looks new and insignificant, but, although the one-inch map doesn't bother to print the name of its parish, here is a church you must on no account miss. Inside it is the county's greatest masterpiece of screen construction, one which is unsurpassed in the whole of Wales.

We get back into *Llanbister* parish a mile after leaving *Llananno*. The village stands on the left a few yards from the main road and you should turn here to get a look at the moorland you had a glimpse of from *Castell Tinbod*. By now the church is the only building of note in the village and it is more interesting than most of the county's churches. It stands on a rocky shelf on the side of *Cefn Llanbister*⁷⁵ and is beautifully sited above

the valley floor. It was the mother church of Maelienydd, but it is its unusual architectural features that strike the visitor. To start with, its strong square tower is at the east end of the building, contrary to the usual practice. And this is the only church I have seen where you have to climb a flight of steps up to the floor of the building. And the first thing you see inside is a large total-immersion font for adults, which was put there by a priest who held unusual ideas about baptism.

Two other priests whose names are still remembered were Joshua Thomas, who was here between 1746 and 1758, and David Lloyd, who was vicar from 1789 until 1838. Thomas translated a devotional work by John Scott into the muscular Welsh of the time, and published it under the title *Y Fuchedd Gris'nogol* [*The Chris'tian Life*] in 1752. Lloyd was a literary figure too but he wrote in English, although he was born in Croescynon, which had been a place that nurtured the Welsh muse. But, according to Gwallter Mechain, he was an Englishman in every respect except name and blood. In 1792 he published a long poem, *The Voyage of Life*, and a second impression came out in 1812. He gave a copy of his book to Gwallter Mechain, and to thank him for this the latter composed a *cywydd* for him, although he said in a letter that a Welsh poem was not suitable for someone so Anglicized. Here is the beginning of it:

Bardd Ieithon i'r Saeson sydd
Yn barodol fwyn brydydd.
Ow! na buasai'i awen
A'r gwaith yn y Gymraeg wen!
Gwnaeth ddarlun mai hun yw'n hoes,
Dinerth *Mordwyad Einioes*.

The Ieithon's poet, in the eyes of the English,
Is a fluent, gentle poet.
Oh! If only his inspiration
And his work were in the beautiful Welsh language!
He drew a picture of life as a dream,
An impotent *Voyage of Life*.

David Lloyd was a fine musician and it said that he assisted Ifor Ceri when he was busy collecting folk-tunes. The two violins and the bassoon displayed in the church probably belong to his era, but the musicians' gallery is much earlier, bearing a date of 1716.

It is said that the first church here was founded by Cynllo himself and the old parish contained 26,000 acres, but about the end of the seventeenth

century the new parish of Abbey Cwm-hir was formed from the part stretching to the west on the other side of the Ieithon. The heart of the present parish is the two tracts of moorland, Rhos Faelog and Rhos Felenydd, truly lovely places, especially at the end of May or in early autumn. The sky overhead is as wide open as if the grassy banks below it were a blue sea. Indeed, after climbing the steep hill past the church and reaching the open moorland, I feel as if I had left a kind of beach in the valley below.

I remember feeling as if I had left the present age behind me as I climbed this hill one day in the spring of 1958. I was on my way to watch the re-creation of one of the oldest ceremonies of Cantref Maelienydd, the ceremony of appointing the Collector of the King's rents in the Manor of Swydd Buddugre. At first the Swydd was one of the *cantref's* commotes, and it is believed that this custom has survived from pre-Norman times. Every year up to 1923, on the second Monday in January, the freeholders of the manor would gather in a special place on Ty'n-yr-ynn farm in the north of the parish to elect one of their number to be the Collector for the year. The rent to be collected was very small indeed. It was a sort of tax raised on the grass and water on each farm and small-holding in the manor, and the king received a total of nineteen pounds, eighteen shillings, and seven pence. An insignificant sum these days, but in the Middle Ages you could have bought sixty oxen with it.

The Collector was elected in a simple competition. The candidate who would undertake the work for the lowest price got the job. I heard of someone fifty years ago collecting the rents for two shillings each, and succeeding in making a profit of eight pounds for himself. An adequate payment at that time, when wages were reckoned in shillings. At any rate that Collector had to walk the hills for a fortnight before he had collected the lot. The Collector was expected to gather another ancient tax at the same time, that is the tax that was imposed on the corners of certain fields. This tax was called *Arian Clwt y Gyllell*,⁷⁶ and it varied from one to forty groats.

These taxes came to an end in 1923, as a result of its being believed that an act would be passed to abolish feudal taxes of every sort. Anyway, in 1958, because these customs had been discussed in Mr Frank Noble's W.E.A. class, it was felt by some people in the area that the freeholders should be called together once again, for the last time, so that the ceremony could be filmed and put on record. When I heard about this, I suggested to the television company T.W.W. that material for a programme could be collected on that occasion. And that is why I was driving up the hill past the church one April morning with a camera-man at my side, on our way to Ty'n-yr-ynn farm.

It was a trip of five miles, past a public house on the moor called the Pound Alehouse, a tavern which has been dry for years, and up the narrow lane leading towards Felindre. A short way beyond Ty'n-yr-ynn, where the road ascends to the open mountain, a crowd of people and two policemen awaited us. The meeting-place was a hole called *The King's Rent Hole*, which had been cut out of a field close by on the side of the Foel. When we arrived Mr Wilson, Ty'n-yr-ynn, was busy finishing opening up the hole, which he had filled in, for the last time as he had thought, over thirty years earlier. The traditional duty of the farmer of Ty'n-yr-ynn was to keep the hole tidy, and as recompense for that he was not expected to pay the King's rent. It was a hole about six feet across and four feet deep, and a path like a gutter led into it from the bottom end. In plan the whole thing was rather like one of the old field kilns that were used for drying corn many years ago.

By a quarter to twelve noon, at the appointed time, everything was ready. The aim was to re-enact what had taken place forty-five years before, when Mr Richard Price had competed with one of his neighbours, Mr Swancott, Llananno. These two had brought four other tenants with them as surety.

It started by Mr Swancott, who had been the Collector the previous year, giving the official receipt for that year to Mr J. J. Price, Llanbister, to read publicly. By doing this the sureties for that year were released. After the reading, the bidding for the job began. As was customary, the previous Collector made the first bid. Taking off his hat, Mr Swancott walked slowly along the path to the hole, saying loudly: *'I am come here to take His Majesty the King's rent for one year at two shillings on all married occupiers, half price on single occupiers and widows, and on all bytakers, the occupier living inside the manor, and full price on all occupiers living outside the manor.'*

On the last word he reached the middle of the hole and turned to face the path. He had to wait until another candidate came with a lower bid, or until midday. Today, as on that day over forty years ago, Mr Richard Price accepted the challenge, and walked into the hole reciting the same formula as his predecessor, but offering to collect the rents for eighteen pence each. After he had reached the middle of the hole, Mr Swancott stood back, leaving Mr Price there. There was no other candidate, so at twelve o'clock on the dot Mr Price's four sureties walked along the path towards him. They were William Nicholls from Felindre, David Davies, Tansomalia, John Brown, Agincourt, and James Price, Llanbister. Taking their hats off, they took hold of each other's wrists, arranging their hands on top of each other, so that there were 'four hands on four hands',⁷⁷ according to

tradition. At this another freeholder came into the hole to act as the King's Witness. He put one of his hands on top of the others' hands and the other one underneath so that there were now ten hands together, and calling to the sureties he asked, '*Will you, David Davies, undertake to see that the rent is paid to His Majesty the King if Richard Price should fail to do so?*' After getting Mr Davies's answer, he asked the others in the same way. With the promises of the sureties this ancient ceremony came to an end, and the gathering dispersed for the last time. Some climbed over the Foel to the hill-farms, others followed Mr David Davies, Tansomalia, past Maes-gwyn towards the Bugeildy. Before we followed the others back towards Llanbister and Glyn Ieithon my companion panned his camera on them as they went off in every direction. In their best clothes they had the look of mourners turning for home from a lonely mountain churchyard, and when I turned back towards the hole the farmer of Ty'n-yr-ynn was already busy with his spade, looking as if he were closing a grave.

As I said, the heart of Llanbister is Rhos Faelog and Rhos Felenydd. They lie on either side of Nant Gamddwr valley and are covered by a network of little roads, roads which are much better today than they were a few years ago. The road that runs from the Pound Alehouse over Rhos Faelog to Llanbadarn Fynydd is an interesting one. As I travelled along it I noticed how the grass had been improved by being cultivated during the war. Indeed, an extensive area of it is now covered with an excellent green overcoat. A little further on, the road drops down to one of the green hollows that are characteristic of these moors, quickly climbing back up again on the side of the Moelfre. Below the road on the left is a row of little fields with the remains of low dykes and green mounds in them. These are the remains of a vanished village, a village that was called 'Moelfre City'. I don't know whether this totally unsuitable name is meant to be sarcastic, or whether it is a translation of 'Dinas Moelfre'. I am sure, at any rate, that this is one of the interesting places of a parish which is remarkable on many counts. I last came by here in June 1962 and, questioning a farmer I had met at the Groes on top of the hill, I learnt that there were the remains of the foundations of sixty to eighty buildings inside the boundaries of 'this city'. Most of them were turf houses, *tai unnos*,⁷⁸ that had fallen into ruins and gone back to soil in times long forgotten, said the farmer. Despite this he could remember a time when about eighty people lived in other houses within a quarter of a mile of where we stood. 'By now,' he said, 'there are only ten of us.'

A mile to the west, like a mast rising over the horizon, Castell Tinbod pointed a rocky finger towards the white, windy clouds. 'Giants used to live over there,' said the farmer pointing to it, 'or at least that's what

the old people used to say.' Between us and the fortress high up over there, but out of sight in a dip, lay Draenllwyn-byr, which is now an insignificant farmhouse. Its name was Y Trallwng Byr in the Middle Ages when it was in the possession of Philip Dorddu, and, although my companion did not know it, that place was the nursery for another sort of giant.

As I said before, more than one farm on the face of this parish has a name which was once famous, and not unknown to students of our literature today. Apart from Llinwent and Y Trallwng Byr, one could name Croes Cynon, Cantal, Bron-y-ganllwyd, Brwynllys and Gardd Faelog. Gardd Faelog was as famous as Llinwent. It stood at the south-western corner of Rhos Faelog, two bow-shots away from the main roads in Glyn Ieithon. It was the mansion of Maredudd Fychan, and a gathering-place for bards over three centuries. To here came Llawdden, Ieuan Srdwal, Lewys Glyn Cothi, Llywelyn ab y Moel, Gwilym ab Ieuan Hen, Morgan Elfael and Lewis Dwnn, not to mention others.

By today the old mansion has disappeared, leaving the odd well-carved stone in the soil to be discovered to the amazement of those who know nothing of the history of their own parish. Its place has been taken by a farmhouse and its name has been changed to Lower Caer Falog on the map, and Lower Cyfalog on the lips of local people.

For my own part, I cannot pass this place without being excited and gladdened by some of the poems that were sung here when Llawdden was family bard to Maredudd ap Fychan of Maelienydd. Here Gwilym ab Ieuan Hen sang the wonderful *cywydd* of praise which follows:

Heaf glod, hy wyf a glas,
 Hael, o dir Mael, derm Melwas;
 Myn y Pab, mi a wn pwy!
 Maredudd gymeradwy,
 Feirdd aros, Ifor ddeurudd,
 Fychan, wayw rhyfeldan rhudd.

Mynychu mewn naw achos
 Arfaeth glân yr wyf i'th glos;
 Mynych roi, mewn awch yr wyd,
 Maredudd, ym yr ydwyd.
 Sylfaen ym mlaen Maelienydd,
 Sôn fawr amdanad y sydd,
 Wŷr Meurig, wewyr marwar,
 Llwyd, o bai mewn llid a bâr.

Troes Duwlwyd rhag trais d'elyn.
 Trwsiad dy hendad dy hun;
 Gwisgaist, nêr Llan gyfannod
 Bister glaer bais dew o'r glod!
 Hi a luniwyd, hil Ynyr,
 Wrth dy gorff, warth deg o wŷr.
 Llywelyn, ganeidwyn gwawd,
 A'i lluniawdd, wellau iawnwawd,
 Mab teg, ar osteg aur wystl,
 Y Moel, eurwr mawl Arwystl;
 Llawdden, cadwai fwynwen, fu
 (Hael wyd) yn ei hoeledu;
 Swrdwal daer, saer awdl dirion,
 A wniâi, heb bai, wyneb hon.
 Ni ddetyd pwyth a ddoto,
 Ni bydd crin gwaith ei fin fo..
 Nid pôl nodwydd, wrth foli,
 Gwilym, ar ei hirwrym hi!
 Da yw ei gwaith, o wawd gwŷr,
 Detholiaid yw ei theilwyr.
 Casul o eiriau cyson,
 Cysegrodd prifeirdd heirdd hon.
 Tebyg, wŷr Feurig farwn,
 Yw dy bais, o dyb a wn,
 I fantell, pes dyellynt,
 Ti a gai gerdd, Tegau gynt;
 Yn amser rhi Caerllion
 Prif oed dydd y profwyd hon:
 Ber oedd i bawb, ber heb au,
 A digon llaes i Degau.
 Bwyllwr beirdd, felly yw'r bais,
 Yn ieuanc yt a wniâis;
 Rhyfedd gennyf o gwedda
 I ddyn ni bo hael o'i dda;
 Ni chudd ond a ro ruddaur,
 Ni chae'n iawn oni chawn aur.
 Drud yw dy ddwbled, M' redudd,
 Drud, er hyn, dyro d'aur rhudd;
 Ugeinpunt, enwog impyn,
 I ti a gosties hyd hyn.

Mae un cybydd, myn Cybi,
 Morda' gwlad Fael, ar d'ael di;
 Ni rôï ddimai, llai yw'r llog,
 Ar y gwystl, na rôï, gostog;
 Nis cais ar werth, ni pherthyn,
 Ni wedda pais da i'r dyn.
 Anaml a gais dy bais di
 A luniwyd o haelioni;
 Ymachludd heb ymoch'lyd
 Yn y gerdd a wnâi i gyd;
 Yn y glod, ddefod ddyfal,
 Y genni di, gwyn ei dâl.
 Mae yt fawl, amod da fydd,
 Yma lonaid Maelienydd.
 Pan y'th gad, Mair i'th adael,
 Myn gwaed Duw, ymy gad hael.

I scatter the praise – I am bold and fresh –
 Of a generous man, from the land of Mael, his reign like that
 of Melwas;
 By the Pope, I know who!
 Maredudd is to be applauded
 Attending to bards, his two cheeks like Ifor,
 Son of Fychan, his lance red from fiery war!

Coming here on nine occasions
 With pure intention I come to your court;
 You are keen, and much bestowal,
 Maredudd, do you confer on me.
 A foundation stone in the mountains of Maelienydd,
 Much talk there is about you,
 Grandson of Meurig Llwyd – ferocity of white-hot coals –
 If he is angry and inflamed.
 Holy God protected you from the violence of your enemy.
 Ornament of your own grandfather;
 You wore, O lord of famous Llan-
 Bister, a thick radiant tunic of praise!
 It was fashioned, O one of Ynyr's line,
 To fit your body, to put to shame ten men.
 Llywelyn – shining blessed song –
 Fashioned it, shears of true praise,

Fair son, when the pledge of gold called for silence, Y Moel,
 the gilder of praise of Arwystl;
 Llawdden, who guarded the girl,
 (You are generous), it was who pinned it;
 Fervent Swrdwal, fashioner of a fair ode,
 Was stitching faultlessly its surface.
 He does not undo a stitch he makes,
 His pointwork will not be puckered.
 Gwilym's needle is not dull as he praises,
 on its long seam!
 Good is its work in praise of men.
 Its tailors are a select band.
 A chasuble of constant words,
 Consecrated by handsome chief bards.
 Your tunic – O grandson of Meurig the baron –
 Is, as far I know, like
 The mantle – if they were to understand –
 Of Tegau of old – a song you shall have.
 In the times of the king of Caerllion
 It was a wonderful time when she was put on trial:
 The mantle was too short for everyone, most definitely short,
 But long enough to cover Tegau.
 Sustainer of bards, such is the surcoat
 Which I sewed for you as a young man;
 I am surprised if it fits
 A man who's not generous with his wealth;
 It only covers him who gives red gold,
 It does not close properly unless we have gold. Dear
 Costly is your doublet, Maredudd,
 Costly, yet give your red gold;
 Twenty pounds, famous scion,
 Has it cost you up till now.

There is one miser, by St Cybi,
 A Mordaf of the land of Mael, in your neighbourhood;
 He wouldn't give a halfpenny, less the interest,
 On a pledge, the serf;
 He won't have it on sale, it is not fitting,
 A good tunic is not right for the man.
 Seldom does he try for your tunic
 Which was fashioned from generosity!

He concealed himself without hiding
 In the poem completely;
 In the praise, a constant custom,
 That you give rise to, blessed its payment,
 There is praise to you, it is a good bargain,
 Behold here the full measure of Maelienydd.
 When you get it, may Mary spare you,
 By the blood of God, may you give generously to me!

After Llanbister the road twists like a corkscrew through the green valley and two miles further on, on one of its frequent bends, you pass Bronllys farm up on a slope on the left. It used to be called Brwynllys, and here, fittingly enough, Bedo Brwynllys came to sing the praises of one of his patrons, 'a man on the slope beside the Ieithon'.⁷⁹ The road turns around Cefn Bronllys Wood and on the next bend you reach Aber Camddwr in the jaws of Cwm Camddwr. I don't know whether this is the Aber Camddwr that is named in *Brut y Tywysogion* [*Chronicle of the Princes*] as the location of a battle.

A little further still after passing through the *bwlch* between the Gaer above you and Tomen Buddugre⁸⁰ across the river, you reach Llanddewi Ystradenni village. It is a lovely little place, but having looked around pretty closely I'm not sure that places like Llanddewi should be called villages at all. It is true that there are a shop and a public house and a school and a church and a village hall and a splendid old farmhouse – but these are the skeleton of a village. Somehow the place has no guts. Or at least none that a stranger can discern. As in most of the county's villages, people travel to the school and the church and the hall and the public house, instead of living close to them. So Maesyfed is a county of parishes rather than villages. The only villages to be compared with those of other counties are New Radnor itself, Glasbury, Newbridge, Llangynllo and Clyro. If it is a Welsh characteristic for houses of a parish to be scattered over its acres like sheep, then there is no county more Welsh than this one.

But not Welsh in language. Not here in 'Lanjewy', as the sweet-sounding name of the parish is pronounced by most of its inhabitants. It seems that the oldest form of the name Enni was Nynhid, and when he names Dewi's churches in his hymn to the saint Gwynfardd Frycheiniog speaks of 'The Vale of Nynhid and its generous freedom'.⁸¹ According to Mr R. J. Thomas, Nynhid is the same person as Non, Dewi's mother, and so Dewi and his mother are commemorated in the name of the parish.

There is nothing else special attached to the church today. It was restored, to use the word of the time for transformed, in the year 1890.



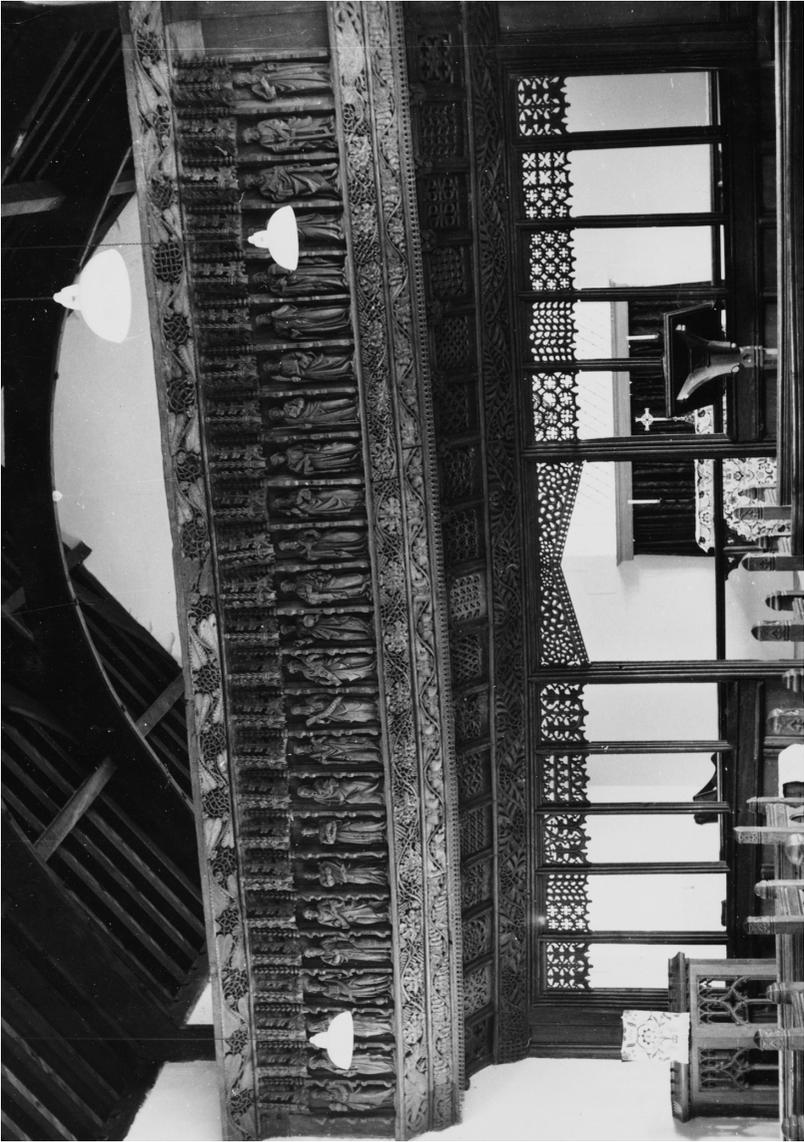
Cnwclas Viaduct



Maes-gwyn, Bugeildy



The site of Castell Tinbod



Llananno, the screen and rood-loft



Llanbister Church



Electing the King's Rent-collector



Glyn Marteg



Rhos Felenydd



Rhaeadr Bridge



Marteg

One part of the old building remains, a little doorway underneath a stone arch closed up with stones and left like a fossil in the south wall. It may be this door that Elen Gethin strode past to face Siôn Hir, after riding from far-off Hergest with a bow in her hand, and revenge in her heart. There is a fine memorial stone near the altar to Andrew Phillips, the last of the descendants of Philip Torddu to live in the hall, who died in 1701. On it, quietly flaking away, are interesting coats of arms (their vanished colours ought to be restored) along with the solemn exhortation:

. . . *goe Reader try*
To live like Phillips & like Phillips die.

The old hall of the Phillips family is opposite the church. By now, it is a farmhouse although the remains of the former glory can be discerned. As with the other houses of the Torddu family it is said that it is disturbed by spirits. If I remember correctly there was a B.B.C. broadcast from the house a few years ago. I have also heard that it was the legends about this house that led Glasynys to write the story *Y Plas a gythryblid gan Rywbeth*.⁸²

Like the families of Llinwent and Brwynllys, the Phillipses of Llanddewi were descended from Cadwgan ap Philip Dorddu. One of them, James, or Siâms, Phillips, married the daughter of Celynnog, Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, and that is probably why the bard Rhys Cain and his son Siôn visited Plas Llanddewi.⁸³ Rhys came here in 1609 to sing the praises of Siâms Philips and his wife

Am roi'ch da mawrwyd diwael
Ifor yn wyd o fro Mael,
Da gwelai'ch bardd, hardd yw hyn,
Da gwelai bawb, dy galyn.

For giving your great and wonderful things
You are an Ifor to us from the district of Mael,
Well did your poet see, these are fine,
Well did all see to follow you.

A little later Siôn came to sing the *marwnad*:

Troes Duw friw dwys, trist fu'r dydd,
Trwm lonaid tir Maelienydd . . .
Oer oedd wyl arw ddialedd,
Achwyn y byd uwch un bedd . . .

Ffrwyth di-wyg oedd ffraethdeg iôn,
 Ffylib frenhingyff haelion.
 Troes Duw alar, trist wylynt,
 Trwyddo gwaed y Torddu gynt;
 Llu o'i ryw fo'n llwyr o wÿdd
 Llinwent heb awr llawenydd . . .

God brought intense pain, sad was the day,
 It was a heavy blow for the land of Maelienydd . . .
 Sad was the vigil because of grievous revenge,
 The whole world mourned over one grave . . .
 A faultless fruit was our fair, ready lord,
 Ffylib of the royal house of benefactors.
 God wrought sorrow, sadly they wept,
 Through [his veins] ran the blood of the Torddu [family] of old;
 Many of his kin who are completely of the line
 Of Llinwent now have no joy.

The heir, James Philips the second, was High Sheriff of Radnorshire in 1631. He died in 1633, and there is a *marwnad* to him by the same poet, which uses in places almost the same words:

Safodd drwy sir Faesyfed
 Syndod fegis cryndod Cred,
 Mae'n y wlad maenol lydan
 Oes gur gloes marw Sgwier glân.
 Aeth Mab Mair a'i chrair a'i chrib
 A'i philer, Siamys Ffylib . . .

Un air ydoedd un rediad
 Un iawn dwf un henw â'i dad,
 Un lendid yn ei lawndir
 Â'i daid oedd i'w dai a'i dir . . .

Llawn wae o'i fynd, llew un fodd,
 Llin Ffylib llawn a ffaeliodd;
 Trist iawn y treiswyd ennyd
 Trwyddo gwaed Torddu i gyd . . .

Lle'r âi'n ei arch llwyr wae ni,
 Llyna ddiwedd Llanddewi . . .

Throughout Radnorshire there came
 Amazement like the shaking of Christendom
 There is in the country a broad estate
 A time of grieving anguish for a virtuous squire.
 The Son of Mary took its darling and its crest
 And its pillar, James Philips . . .

He was of one line and one succession
 Of the same true stock and the same name as his father,
 Of the same purity in his well-stocked lands
 As his grandfather towards his estate and land . . .

Full of woe at the departure of one like a lion,
 The line of Philip has failed completely;
 Very sadly has been violated now,
 Through him [flows] the blood of all the Torddu [dynasty]

Where he went into his coffin we were overcome with woe,
 Behold the end of Llanddewi . . .

And that, perhaps, was the end of the singing for the nobility in Radnorshire. At least that is the most recent *cywydd* to a Radnorshire nobleman that I have ever seen in the manuscripts. And yet, as nobody looked after this district's manuscripts in the second half of the seventeenth century, there can be no certainty about this.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the hall came into the hands of a family of Hammers, who gave the county sheriffs in 1710 and 1722. In 1726 the house was bought by Edward Burton of the Fronlas, Llandegle, a most remarkable man, who left the house and the estate to a stranger from Shrewsbury, about whom he knew nothing, because he had the same name as himself.

Although there was nobody here to look after the old learning at the end of the seventeenth century, there were some from the parish who were in the vanguard of the work of saving souls from the sinfulness and godless ignorance which every revivalist discerns outside his own group and his own heart. The Baptists were active very early here. A man called Peter Gregory was their leader and he lived in Cwmfaerdy farmhouse on the boundary of Abbey Cwm-hir. The Arminians of the west of the county used to meet here in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. One of the most prominent ministers of the Cwm church, as it was called, was Roger Walker, who was born in the city of Hereford in 1685. Walker married a

daughter of Nathan Davies, Henry Gregory's successor in the Cwm church, and, to quote Joshua Thomas, 'although Mr Walker was a natural Englishman, yet he succeeded, with the help of his godly, clever wife, and for the sake of the Welsh-speakers, in learning Welsh, so that he was able to preach in both languages. I have never heard of anyone but him who did this.' Joshua Thomas adds that the church was a mixture of English and Welsh-speakers from the beginning, and that preaching had to be in both languages. And, fair play to Roger Walker, it wasn't his fault that the church turned English in the end. Soon after 1722 he settled in the Rock, a house in the south of the parish towards Pen-y-bont, which had been given by Stephen Price as a meeting-house.

We left Llanddewi past the schoolhouse. I came here in 1958 with my colleague Mr Vincent Phillips to listen to Mr Richard Price (whom I have mentioned already) telling us the story of his life on local farms at the beginning of the century. It was April 1958, about the time that the King's Rent ceremony was recorded, and the enthusiastic schoolmaster, Mr Ieuan Lewis, suggested that Mr Price's interesting reminiscences should be recorded on tape. So Mr Phillips brought his recording equipment and we had an interesting and entertaining time on Mrs Lewis's welcoming hearth – and she herself is a Welsh-speaker from Carmarthenshire.

Two and a half miles after leaving Llanddewi you can see a steep lane on the left near a few houses. The Rock chapel is about half a mile up this lane, and, after you've climbed to the top of the rock, you can see how apt is the name of the chapel. As we arrived, the chapel house caretaker was pruning a hedge with a sickle. Talking to him, I gathered that the cause is not flourishing as it once did, but there are grounds for thinking that there was never a great deal of success here. In the beginning the same minister looked after the Rock and Dolau chapel, Nantmel; but after the death of Roger Walker in 1748 a Welsh-speaker was chosen to look after only the Welsh church at Dolau, and from then on it wasn't very prosperous here on top of the rock.

I climbed up and down the steep graveyard searching in vain for Walker's grave, of which Joshua Thomas gives the inscription, which begins:

*While on the earth I was, upon this Rock.
I daily strove to feed my Saviour's flock.*

After returning to the main road you quickly reach Crossgates, a name which keeps alive the memory of the tollgate which used to be at this crossroads. By now a grassed roundabout has taken the place of the gates,

making this Radnorshire's second roundabout so far. The first is in Llandrindod, and I might as well note here that there are no traffic lights in the county. A wonderful place, isn't it?

From Crossgates you can turn through Llanbadarn Fawr to Llandrindod, or through Nantmel to Rhaeadr; but on this trip we turned left in the direction of Pen-y-bont. As we passed Pen-y-bont station, which is on the line that runs from Swansea to Shrewsbury, it came into my mind that the word 'station' would mean as little to the next generation as the name Crossgates does to us today. That is if Dr Beeching has his way and closes every railway between the Vale of Glamorgan and the coast of Flintshire. Half a mile beyond the station, I turned down into a lane on the left, keeping to the right by a red-brick chapel. You soon reach Dolau Jenkin farm, a house that Howel Harris used to call at on his way to Llwynitch in Llanbister. And to judge by the English rhyme quoted by John Hughes, Liverpool, 'Hwlin' and his friends weren't welcome in every place:

*Hwlin and Newell and Siencyn and Sheen
And many fine names which we have never seen
To suit their convenience, the places they pitch'd
Were Hodel, Cefncynfoel, Cwmrhingyll, Llwynitch.*

I don't know anything about Siencyn, but Newell was the man who 'was saved'⁸⁴ after listening to Harris in Dôl-swydd, Pen-y-bont, and Sheen, of course, is the Antinomian from Glasgwm. Hodel is a farm near Kinnerton; Cefncynfoel is in Llanddewi Ystradenni parish; and Cwmrhingyll is the lonely ruin we saw on the mountain above the Bugeildy. Harris preached here in Dolau Jenkin in both languages on the seventh of November 1748. We will be following in his footsteps for a few miles yet because our way leads along the Mynydd Bach, a nursery of the old nonconformists between the Ieithon and the Cymaron. These rivers unite here by Dolau Jenkin. It should be explained that there is no foundation for the completely artificial name on the 'fully revised' 1948 one-inch map, that is, some river 'Aran' that runs through a 'Cwm Aran'. Cymaran was the name of this little river from the days of the Mab Cryg, who named 'the main rivers between the Wye and the Severn'⁸⁵ in a poem of the fourteenth century.

A hundred yards past Dolau Jenkin you cross the Ieithon on a new iron bridge built in 1961. A few yards beneath the bridge is an old ford, and I guess that this is the Rhyd Goch⁸⁶ that is mentioned so much in the old vaticinary poetry and prophecies. It is certain that the ford at Pen-y-bont isn't the red one because that was always known as Rhyd y Cleifion.⁸⁷

I tend to think that the river's most famous ford is referred to by the name Llanfihangel Rhyd Ieithon, and this ford is the nearest one to that church.

However all that may be, I came to the ford through the river-meadow on the right and found that it was a white ford, because so many white-thorn bushes leaning over it were covered with flowers. The speckled cattle of Brynhunllef farm came down to the ford and drank tidily, looking at the flowers in the mirror of the water. 'Eight times,'⁸⁸ said the poet,

Wythwaith Rhyd Goch ar Ieithon.
A liwia'n waed gan flaen onn.

Eight times the Red Ford on the Ieithon
Will be coloured with blood by ash spears.

It is hard to accept this in this quiet green and white place.

I said something to this effect to the farmer of Brynhunllef when he came to fetch the cattle. 'Yes, it's lovely and quiet here now,' he said, 'but you should be here on Sundays! People park here and the noise of their transistors nearly drives us mad up at the house.' I drove on up the steep hill past Brynhunllef,⁸⁹ which couldn't have a better name on noisy Sundays in this radio age.

It wasn't long before I reached the top of the Mynydd Bach or the Little Hill as it's called now. It will have a new look as well as a new name before long. Tractors were busy ploughing the wild land on both sides of the road. On the left-hand side a multi-share plough was drawing wide, light brown furrows across the rushes and the gorse on Craig-y-nant land. On the right-hand side machines were spreading white clouds of chemical fertilizer over Pen-lan's newly-ploughed land.

Old Edmwnd Jones, Tranch, relates a story about Pen-lan farm. A certain Richard Jones lived there in Edmwnd Jones's time, and it appears that he and his family were disturbed by a sort of supernatural being who used to appear magically in the form of an animal or a gorse bush. One day it appeared in the likeness of a man in front of Richard Jones's brother, who 'saying to him *Nosdawch*⁹⁰ was answered in a strange language . . .' The main interest to me in all this is that Welsh was the natural language of the Pen-lan family in the middle of the eighteenth century and that any foreign language was supernatural.

I drove on leisurely between hedges that were white with may, and fresh little meadows that were rippling in the breeze like blue-grey water.

Over on the right the western slopes of Radnor Forest stuck out from the blue like the flank of a whale.

After you pass the signpost for Llanddewi, Cefncynfoel is on your left. This was one of Howel Harris's meeting places named in the rhyme. Pant-y-ffin, Robert Newell's home, which was registered as a meeting-house in 1793, is not far from the road on the right. A little further on I came to a road on the right which, according to the signpost, leads to Coxhead. As it also leads to Castell Cymaron, I wanted to turn here. But before I did, I carried on past the red-brick chapel of the Methodists called Heartsease. A notice-board outside mentioned '*Great Meetings*', but I went into the graveyard to search for a gravestone with a Welsh inscription on it that I had heard about, but I couldn't find it.

A little further on, you come once again to open ground which is part of the moorland in Llanbister that I mentioned. I see signs of continuous improvement of this land every time I pass, and I hope it is never turned into forestry. It is far too good for that. We stopped to look at a new little field of oats at the edge of the road by Cwm-yr-henllysg, when its owner came across to us. He said that the fields were rough ground, part of the moor, two years before. He went on to say that he now had a telephone in the house and hoped to have electricity before long. 'It's a pleasure to live in the country these days,' he said.

I wasn't very willing to turn back towards Heartsease and Castell Cymaron, so great was my liking for the moorland. It is about two miles from the signpost to the castle. It is easy for a motorist to pass it without seeing it. The narrow road climbs out of the patchwork of hedges and fields and then goes down to a dip in the moorland. The site of the castle is on the right towards the bottom of the hill on a little rocky mound above the confluence of Aber Nant y Gelli and the Cymaron. The motte, like the motte of Castell Tinbod, is carved out of the living rock, and on the north side there is a great bailey surrounded by ditches. As at Castell Colwyn and at Cwrt Ieuan Gwyn, a farmhouse stands neatly in the bailey, a light grey farmhouse, part of it lap-boarded as is the custom in the county. The wife of the house gave me ready permission to wander where I wanted. The castle mound stands in the angle between the little stream of the Gelli and the little stream of the Cymaron. It rises very steeply from the river, but from the other directions it does not look an ideal site to defend. Indeed you can descend to it from the rough ground on the south-west. Despite this, the other fortification on the top of Warren Bank half a mile to the west suggests that this out-of-the-way corner has a long history as an administrative centre. In the *Brut* it is recorded under the year 1195 how Roger Mortimer came here and drove away the two sons of

Cadwallon of Maelienydd. It is likely that there was never anything here stronger than a wooden castle. Castell Pren,⁹¹ by the way, is the name of a farmhouse a little over half a mile to the west, another suggestion, perhaps, of the importance of this corner at one time.

From Castell Cymaron the road climbs over open common called Coxhead Bank, and you soon come to Llanbister Road, which is on the line from Llandrindod to Knighton. About a mile further on you pass the road that turns back under the railway towards Llanbister. A hundred yards or two up that road was the workshop of Aaron Lewis, a good cart-maker, who died in 1930, over seventy-five years of age. He was a specialist in the art of making *whilcars*,⁹² a sort of mixture of gambo and sledge which was designed to carry hay or for work on steep slopes. Aaron Lewis made an outstanding example for the National Museum of Wales in 1929, his last piece of work, I think.

The road and the railway run together for a mile and a half and then go their separate ways. The road descends to Llangynllo village, but the railway climbs in a very inconvenient way off to the side, putting Llangynllo station on the slopes of a hill a bare mile and a half from the village. The village itself snuggles around the church in a green hollow. There is a middle with a public house and a petrol pump and a memorial. There is also a short street with houses on either side, something unusual in the county's villages. I have been here ten times over the years and every time the sun was shining and the trees were leafy and the air was fragrant.

Here in the Lugg valley was one of Maelienydd's most famous mansions, Weston.⁹³ It stood on the right above the river half a mile below the village. The poets used to come here to sing the praises of Hywel Fain's descendants, but by the beginning of the last century the hall was, in the words of Jonathan Williams, '*fit only for the occupation of a pauper*'. Today you will find there a modern cottage in the middle of green mounds on the banks of the Lugg. 'Gwestun rock is under the gravel'⁹⁴ – the word of the bard is a fact by now, and the generations who dwelt there are 'all hidden in Cynllo's sanctuary'.⁹⁵

As I said, it was Hywel Fain's line who lived here. Hywel was with Henry the Fifth at the battle of Agincourt, and he was an officer for Henry the Seventh in Maelienydd. He was descended from Elystan Glodrydd and he and his descendants were as important in the Lugg valley and the eastern parts of Maelienydd as Philip Dorddu and his family were in Glyn Ieithon and the rest of the *cantref*. The Dorddu tribe was descended from Hoedliw ap Cadwgan ab Elystan, but, like the princes of Maelienydd, Hywel Fain was descended from Madog ap Cadwgan. But these were

not two separate tribes, independent of each other. Their blood was intermingled from the start. According to Lewis Dwnn, Angharad, the wife of Hywel Fain, was herself one of the Torddu family and the sister of Dafydd Fychan of Llinwent and of Elen Gethin of Hergest. I hope I am not tiring the reader with my frequent references to these people who are not even names to the majority of Welsh people now. It was these people and their like who nurtured learning and religion and order in these parts for centuries. No one better has succeeded them here in the Lugg valley.

Weston isn't all that has disappeared from this parish. Wade-Evans says that this was where Llan y Bryn Hir was, but it is not known which of the hills was Y Bryn Hir.⁹⁶ Cynllo's church in the middle of the village has been modernized. Morgan Evans (pseudonym: Cynllo Maesyfed) was priest here from 1807 until his death in 1843. He was a friend of W. J. Rees, Casgob, Ifor Ceri and Ieuan Glan Geirionydd, and like them he was most zealous in fostering the eisteddfod.

Until the middle of the last century many of the county's churches had little orchestras. As we have seen, some of the musical instruments have been preserved in Aberedwy and Llanbister to this day. There was an orchestra here in Llangynllo too, and a harp which was played in this church is kept in the Folk Museum. It is the work of a *pattern-maker* of the parish, John Morgan by name. I heard from one of his family that he was as good at making pianos and harmoniums as he was at making harps. Making musical instruments was a family talent and Evan Morgan, John's brother, made pipe organs.

The harp was a popular instrument in the county until relatively late, especially around Llandrindod. I should imagine that it was the visitors to the wells that supported harpists there. I noticed the name 'Ben. Jones, Llandrindod' in a list of harpists at the Welshpool Eisteddfod in 1824, which can be found in one of the manuscripts of Ioan Cynllo in the National Library. Amongst the singers is recorded 'Rob. Evans Penbont'. This is probably the same person as 'Rob. Evans Maesyfed' who is named in another list. The county's last harpist, as far as I know, is John Lewis Roberts, who was buried in Llan-hir in April, 1928.

The easiest way from Llangynllo to Knighton is the one that runs through the Lugg valley, but this time I decided to try the road over the hill through Heiob.⁹⁷ I turned down from the village square and followed the road that goes up towards the station. After half a mile I turned right into a road that climbs up the hillside to the top of the Fron Goch. The road is pretty rough after you reach the top of the hill at a height of 1200 feet, but I saw plenty of evidence that the hill top is as productive as others in this

area. I passed fields of oats and green crops, but when I came to a field with placid cows leisurely chewing the cud, I just had to stop the car. I went up to them and stood looking over Llangynllo below and across Radnor Forest. This was a moment which is still fresh in my mind: the green field, the lark above in the heat, the sound of a combine harvester in the fields of the Beili below, and the quiet brown sweet-breathed cattle, right by me.

I turned into the next road on the right, a tarmac road which plunges down between the Fron Goch and Bryn y Beili to Cwm Heiob. This is a productive valley with a church and a school and a few scattered houses. Llanddewi yn Heiob was once its name, but it is likely that this was one of the parishes where Welsh disappeared early. A declaration by the church wardens in 1683 says that the Welsh Prayer Book was lost and that the parishioners understood English. They didn't claim that they spoke it, but that was probably the situation by the third quarter of the eighteenth century. This little corner was wide open to English influences, especially English religious influences, very early on. The inn house where Vavasor Powell was born is less than a mile from this church.

As far as I have observed, everyone who knows much about Vavasor Powell is either enthusiastically for him or just as strongly against him. I am certainly not one of his admirers, and so I tend to see his influence or his shadow behind everything in the area that I don't approve of!

We have here a church that was rebuilt in 1890 in the shade of an old black yew, and I expect I would have passed it by had I not needed to get out of the sun into some dark spot to change the film in my camera. The door was locked but the key was pretty obvious in a lamp in the porch. An engraving of W. J. Rees, Casgob, wearing an eisteddfod medal, hangs on the wall in the vestry, because that diligent man looked after this parish as well. Pictures of the old church are displayed near the door. A fifteenth-century screen has been preserved from the old church but has been extensively repaired. On the south wall is a monument to some child who died in 1796. It is a painted board the like of which I have never seen anywhere else.

When I came out of the church a postman was collecting mail from a box in the churchyard wall. I asked him about this and that in the parish as if I were a foreigner in order to discover whether the influence of the churchwardens in 1684 and of Vavasor Powell had Anglicized every tongue in the area. But his Herefordshire English had a completely Welsh fluency and his pronunciation of the place-names was perfect.

A minute or two after leaving Heiob I went under the huge high bridge at Cnwclas and turned back towards Knighton, having once again made a complete circuit of the old Maelienydd that Lewys Glyn Cothi sang about:

Nid gwell gwlad am dda rhad, rhydd
 No Melynys Maelienydd;
 Yndi bu, gwawd yw eu bod,
 Rif y wadd o ryfeddod.
 Yndi'r oedd, hyn adroddir,
 Neithior yr hen Arthur hir,
 A'r hen Gaer Ochren, oedd rydd,
 Y sy 'mlaen Rhos Melienydd.
 Wythwaith Rhyd Goch ar Ieithon
 A liwia'n waed gan flaen onn.
 Ni châr Melienydd araith
 Un Sais nac un as o'i waith

.
 Gorau gwlad ei gwŷr a'i gwledd
 Melienydd es can mlynedd.
 Mwy o lyn ym Melienydd
 Nog yn saith eigion y sydd;
 Melienydd fydd ym chwaer faeth,
 Melienydd sydd ym luniaeth.

You can find no better land for bountiful free goods
 Than the Honey Isle of Maelienydd.
 In it – praise be that they are there –
 Was a host of wonders.
 In it – this is told –
 Was held the wedding-feast of tall old Arthur
 And the old Caer Ochren, generous it was,
 Which is at the top of Rhos Maelienydd.
 Eight times does the Red Ford on the Ieithon
 Become coloured red by ash spear-heads.
 Maelienydd does not love the speech
 Of a single Englishman nor a whit of his work.

.
 The best land for its men and its feasting
 Has Maelienydd been for a hundred years!

There is more drink in Maelienydd
Than in the seven seas;
Maelienydd is a foster-sister for me,
Maelienydd is my sustenance.

Chapter VII

GWERTHRYNION

It is now time for us to turn to the west of the county, to those areas that once consisted of the old commotes Gwerthrynion and Cwmteuddwr. Gwerthrynion can be broadly described as the part of the country between the rivers Wye and Ieithon. The other area consists of a single parish, Llansanffraid Cwmteuddwr, and that comprises the remainder of the county lying between the Wye and the Claerwen to the west of Rhaeadr.

Rhaeadr is perhaps the most convenient centre for anyone who wants to explore these areas. It will be our centre at any rate. I expect that this town is better known, by name at least, to Welsh-speakers in general than anywhere else in Radnorshire. Everyone has heard of John Thomas, Rhaeadr Gwy, and although people try to avoid the lost and sinful eastern parts of the county, it is hard for anyone who travels in Wales at all to avoid coming through the town at some time or other.

Although Rhaeadr, like every other place in this county, is attractively situated and lies in lovely surroundings, by now the town is pretty ordinary looking. Once, to judge from the old pictures I have seen, and, indeed, from my memory of it half a century ago, it was a town with an atmosphere and character all of its own. It still had at that time the look of a place that had grown out of the hills and the woods around it. But today, now that so much of what was old and simple, original and characterful, has gone, it isn't easy for me to describe it properly. Every time that I come here, I notice that something else has disappeared – a row of cottages, an old stone building with a stone roof, an old wall, an old garden. It is true that something else takes the place of everything that disappears, but somehow it is something empty and noncommittal, like a petrol station or a car park. I know they are things that are essential for modern life, but they are things that have not yet learnt how to come into being without destroying.

The town was built around a crossroads, and the main streets which cross each other are named after the four corners of the earth, north, south, east and west. It is very common to name streets like this, I know, but they are names that lead you out of the town rather than welcoming you in. That is the effect of these geographical names on me. And yet, and I hasten to say this, Rhaeadr is a welcoming and hospitable town. Although I'm not enchanted by the bricks and stones of the town, I like the people who live here very much.

Where they tried to kill me,
 A miserable sad story, may there come to the town
 Flames of fire through nasty Rhaeadr Gwy!

After the passing of six centuries this collection of outrageous words is as powerless as if it were Latin, but there is one immortal line in the song that time has not robbed of its power: ‘*Cas, cas, cas, cas, cas, cas, cŵn*. [Nasty, nasty, nasty, nasty, nasty, nasty, dogs]’.

Well, I’m sure either that the poet was as nasty as his words or that this friendly town has changed greatly since that time. My experience is more like that of Lewys Glyn Cothi, although I haven’t been on the back of a horse for a very long time:

Llawer ŵyl Gynllo, a red
 I’r un man yr wy’n myned.
 Mi af yn gynt ar fy march
 Hyd Rhaeadr no’r padriarch!

Glyn Eiron i’r dynion da
 Ytyw Rhaeadr fal Troea;
 Paradwys i bob prydydd
 Yw tai y rhain a’u tir rhydd;
 Eu cartref, neb pob dyn oedd,
 Awn i yfed i nefoedd!

On many a Saint Cynllo’s day
 I return to the same place.
 I go faster on my horse
 To Rhaeadr than the patriarch!

Glyn Eiron to the good men
 Is Rhaeadr like Troy;
 A paradise for every poet
 Are these people’s houses and their generous land;
 Their home, every single one,
 We go to drink to heaven!

Although the Wye is not such a rippling channel as it was in the days of Twm o’r Nant, it is foamy enough below the bridge when the river is in full flood. As I crossed the bridge I thought how often crossing a bridge takes us suddenly into a new atmosphere. The bridges at Cardigan,

Aberystwyth, Carmarthen, Brecon, Newcastle Emlyn – when I think of these and many others I realize how often I have crossed into novelty and strangeness. Like a new parish or county; or the different character of a village that has grown up outside the town walls; or the continuation of an old world that the walls had been built against. And more often than not you have to cross the bridge to get to the smithy and the station.

You get some of this beyond-the-bridge-ness here. You cross to the station and to the parish of Llansanffraid Cwmteuddwr, to an estate of new houses where a sign on a pole informs you that this is the tidiest village in the county, and to a cluster of old houses like the Triangle inn, which keep some of the flavour and character of the old town.

It was in Llansanffraid church that Lord Rhys signed the Strata Florida⁹⁸ Abbey charter, but nothing is to be seen today of the church that he saw. The present church was rebuilt in 1864 and although there is an *englyn* above the porch I doubt whether much Welsh can be heard inside. In the church there is a tablet in memory of a mountain climber famous in her day, Miss Emmeline Lewis Lloyd of Nantgwyllt, ‘*the eighth woman to ascend Mont Blanc*’. Nantgwyllt mansion has been under the water for sixty years and I shall tell you about that later on.

The people of the town take advantage of the river and its beauty, and a pleasant park has been developed on its banks above the bridge. At the south end of the park you can see the motte where Rhaeadr Castle once stood. It was erected by Lord Rhys in 1177 and rebuilt in 1194, but in the same year it was destroyed by the sons of Cadwallon of Maelienydd, and once again in 1231 by Llywelyn the Great.

Gerallt Gymro tells a story about this castle. He says that a certain woman stole a famous hand bell called Bangu from Glasgwm church and gave it to her husband, who was a prisoner in chains in the castle. She thought that the virtues of the bell would free her husband. But instead, the relic got into the hands of the castellan, who kept it for himself. But, according to Gerallt, that night, as God’s vengeance, the whole town was burnt down, apart from the wall where the bell was hanging.

The church which stands beside the castle site is a completely modern building. There isn’t much of architectural interest in the town’s chapels as they are today either, although a number of interesting men have served in them from the days of John Thomas, the author of *Caniadau Seion* [*Songs of Zion*] and *Rhad Ras* [*Free Grace*], and Jonathan Powell, author of *Llawenydd yng Nglyn Wylofain* [*Rejoicing in the Vale of Tears*], up to the days of Kilsby Jones. The Reverend Thomas Jones (father of Judge D. Brynmor Jones and the headmaster, Viriamu Jones) was a native of the town, ‘a man whose story was stranger than any legend’⁹⁹ according to

the author of *Hanes Eglwysi Annibynnol Cymru* [*A History of the Independent Churches of Wales*]. To me, at any rate, the strangest thing in his story is his attitude to Welsh. And the most interesting thing is the fact that he worked from 1829 to 1834 in Esgair Moel woollen mill, Llanwrtyd, which has been moved to the Welsh Folk Museum.

In the golden age of the iron road a Welshman couldn't stand on the stations at Afon Wen or Three Cocks or Glandŵr without seeing someone he knew. And in the golden age of nonconformity, they say, you couldn't live in Rhaeadr without seeing almost every preacher in Wales. It was a sort of preachers' junction, a gateway to the North and to the South.

I was thinking about this the other day when I saw an old stone house near to the Lamb being pulled down in order to add to the town's parking spaces. Because the Lamb was the preachers' inn more than any other public house in town. To quote from *Hanes Annibynnol Cymru* [*The History of the Welsh Independents*], one of my authorities on the secrets of the ministry, here 'hundreds of preachers were welcomed on their way from South to North and from North to South.'¹⁰⁰ Here in the Lamb old Dafydd Williams, Troedrhiwdalar, wrestled on the floor with the housemaid who had been secretly egged on by another minister to take off his wet socks. There is no doubt that this inn was more fun in the days when the reverend gentlemen called in than it is now.

Today, of course, sheep are much more important than ministers in Rhaeadr. It is they who keep the town going to a great extent, and, fittingly, there is a great temple to them in the middle of the field. '*It's the emptiest car park I've ever seen,*' said an English visitor to me about the Smithfield. Rather a blasphemous mistake about a place where about fifty thousand sheep and many thousand cattle are sacrificed. Gwerthrynion is divided into two convenient parts for the explorer by the A44 that runs from Rhaeadr towards Crossgates. To the south, that is on the right-hand side, the country is on the whole a continuation of what you find in Upper Elfael; but on the north side the views are more like those of Maelienydd.

We left Rhaeadr with the intention of doing a circle round the southern part first. The road starts by running along the northern foot of Gwastedyn. On the southern slopes of this mountain a number of important gold Celtic ornaments were found in the year 1899. The hill is, to judge from the map, speckled all over with prehistoric remains. On the other side of the road on the slopes of Castle Hill I took a peep at what remains of the old house of Neuadd-lwyd. We have in the Folk Museum a particularly interesting old carved bed from that house.

And, to tell the truth, most parts of this road are pretty uninteresting. The most notable thing about the next mile is its straightness. It runs like

an arrow and it is probable that the construction of the Birmingham water pipe-line, which runs alongside it, has something to do with this straightness. After another similar mile we come to the Dolau, that is, an old farmhouse on the right and a Baptist chapel on the left. The Dolau is important in the history of nonconformity in the county, and I'm really glad about that today, when the road is somehow more uninteresting than usual. I turned into the chapel as if it were an oasis.

The present chapel was built in 1767 and extended in 1826. I have said in an earlier chapter that this chapel and the Rock were both under the care of Roger Walker at one time, and the service was bilingual in his day. After Walker's death the Dolau was turned into a completely Welsh chapel. In 1771 David Evans, Cilfowyr, came here. To quote his biography by John Jones 'from Newtown'¹⁰¹ (but a native of this parish, Nantmel), 'He was one of the first of the Baptists . . . who preached the gospel through North Wales, and the first of all to administer the ordinance of baptism by immersion in the Isle of Anglesey'.¹⁰² He died in 1790 and was buried near the chapel under a gravestone with an English inscription on it. The language of gravestones is not a true witness to the language of the departed in this county.

Let us return to the biography, which you can find in *Seren Gomer* [*Gomer's Star*] for 1829, partly because any piece of work in Welsh from this county is a rare thing. It tells us of the minister's second son, Dafydd, who was born here in 1772:

Ymroddodd ei hun yn fawr i'r oferedd o ddawnsio, a chwarae cardiau, ac yr oedd ei ymlyniad wrth y drygau hyn gymaint fel yr aethai filltiroedd oddicartref trwy dywyllwch y nos i'w ceisio.

He gave himself up to the vanities of dancing, and playing cards, and his attachment to these evils was so great that he would go miles from home through the darkness of night to take part in them.

Anyway, the rogue got 'religion' in the end and became a minister where his father had been. It is said that he disciplined members of the church severely. He taught them that copper coins in the collection were pretty disreputable:

Yn y casgliadau cyhoeddus ni welid byth gopr ar y ddysgl; oblegid os byddai rhai o'r gynulleidfa yn rhy dlawd i roddi dernyn chwech eu hunan, byddai dau yn uno i wneuthur hyny.

In the collections you never saw copper on the plate, because if some of the congregation were too poor to give a sixpenny piece themselves, two would join to do it for them.

Dafydd Evans married Rebecca Walker of the Dolau in 1800. ‘Through his labour,’ said John Jones, ‘began the cause in Kington. This town was more godless than most.’¹⁰³ So, I’m afraid, it still is, despite the efforts of Dafydd Evans.

Here in the Dolau, before he became a famous preacher, Samuel Breeze kept a school during the year 1793–4. According to Jonathan Williams, the county historian, Nantmel became bilingual around 1820 and English was starting to win ground from Welsh. Welsh was practised in the chapel until 1840, anyway. In No. 91 of Humphreys’s *Llyfrau Ceiniog* [*Penny Books*], which were written about 1845, there is a reference to a priest:

rhywle rhwng Rhaiadr a Llandrindod, eto yn fyw, yn nechreud
gweinidogaeth yr hwn nid oes *dim Saesoneg* yn cael ei arfer trwy yr
holl fro, ond yn awr nid oes *dim Cymraeg*.

somewhere between Rhaeadr and Llandrindod, still living, at the beginning of whose ministry there was *no English* spoken throughout the locality, but now there is *no Welsh*.

It is true that bilingualism spreads and extinguishes like a gorse fire, but this is too sweeping. Another John Jones in his *History of the Baptists in Radnorshire*, which was published in 1895, says that Welsh was the usual language in Newbridge when he was a child, but ‘*now . . . Welsh . . . is not understood in these places, except by a few aged people.*’ According to the 1961 Census, out of the 652 parishioners of Nantmel 31 could speak Welsh.

About a mile after leaving the Dolau you can see the parish church sheltering beneath Cefn Nantmel on the left. A signpost says with precise exactitude that the building is an eighth of a mile up the lane beside the school. And I can say with similar exactitude that the church was rebuilt in 1792, and I wouldn’t have walked a hundred and twenty yards to see it, if it hadn’t been that it was here that John Williams, the author of *A Dissertation on the Pelagian Heresy*, served. I read this when I was fifteen years old, when I would read any book on any subject. Another book written by him, that I will never read, is *Nautical Odes . . . designed to commemorate the achievements of the British Navy*. John Williams is remembered today mainly because he was the schoolmaster at Ystrad Meurig.

According to Joshua Thomas, it was in this churchyard that John Price, Maesygelli was buried. He was the co-author of another unreadable book, which was printed in 1658, that is *The Sun Outshining the Moon*, which is a defence of Hugh Evans the Baptist against John Moon the Quaker. I heard that Price's co-author, William Bound, debated in public with Moon and another Quaker, Alexander Parker, at Esgair Rhiw on the slopes of Gwastedyn near the Geufron.

Soon after passing Nantmel school you can see Maesygelli, John Price's home, on the left. To use the precise language of this parish, it is about two hundred yards from the main road. There is another piece of straight road here, and then after turning the first corner you can see the narrow lane on the right that leads through the little parish of Llanfihangel Helygen. It also passes the corners of history, because in a few yards we pass Caerfagu farmhouse, a house that inherited the name of the vanished mansion of Gardd Fagu. Gordd Fagu was the older form of the name according to Siôn Dafydd Rhys, who listed it among the holdings of the old houses of Hywel ap Madog of Maelienydd. Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr talks about 'Clawr Fagu' in the twelfth century and no doubt it is this locality that is referred to. Cynddelw was singing to the family of Madog ap Maredudd of Powys after that prince's death and it is obvious that it was because his daughter, Princess Efa,¹⁰⁴ had married Cadwallon ap Madog of Maelienydd that there is mention of that *cantref* and the Ieithon and this quiet, unprepossessing place:

Godwrf a glywaf am glawr Ieithon hir
Hydr y wir ar Saeson
Teulu Madawg mur dragon
Mal twrf tormennoedd Kynon.

Godwrf a glywaf am glawr Maelienydd
Mur elfydd Eilan Gawr
Teulu Madawg mad anawr
Mal teulu bann Benlli Gawr

Godwrf a glywaf am glawr Fagu Glyw
Glew Fadawg bieufu
Trinfa cyfa cynyddu
Trydydd tri diwair deulu

I can hear a tumult in the land of the long Ieithon
Truly brave against the English

The family of Madog a bastion and a dragon
Like the noise of the hosts of Cynon

I can hear a tumult in the land of Maelienydd
A bastion like Eilan the Giant
The family of Madog a good defence
Like the family of Benlli the Giant

I can hear a tumult in the land of Bagu Glyw [the Warlord]
It belongs to brave Madog
Who defeats the enemy ever increasingly
The third of three loyal families

Gardd Fagu kept some of its old importance until the seventeenth century. The genealogies of its inhabitants can be seen in the manuscripts of the bards, and it was from this house that sheriffs were chosen in 1569 and from 1642 until 1646.

The lane leads on over a little stream called Dulas, and after twisting and turning for a mile brings us to Llanfihangel Helygen church. The church is on the left-hand side after turning a very nasty corner, and it is easy to pass the building without seeing it. At least, it was hard to see it on that day because the hedge in front of it was so high and leafy. Llanfihangel Helygen and the neighbouring parish Llan-hir were Carnhuanawc's first curacy. He served here from 1811, when he was ordained by Bishop Burgess, until 1813. So great is my admiration of Carnhuanawc that I cannot pass this church. But this bare, undecorated building deserves attention, apart from any personal connection. Outside it is as bare as a cowshed but the interior is really interesting. The square choir-stalls and the high pulpit belong to the seventeenth century, and it is amazing how the lovely simple furniture escaped from the hands of the Victorian renovators.

The most famous place in this parish is probably the Roman fort, Castell Collen, but it is more convenient to talk about it later on. Llanfihangel is a little parish with a population of forty-seven at the last Census. Things are a little better in the other part of Carnhuanawc's curacy, Llan-hir, which we reach after another mile. Thirty-one people could speak Welsh in this parish in 1961. Llan-hir church was built in 1893 and the only antiquity in it is the font, but there is in the churchyard something rare in the county, that is a gravestone with a Welsh inscription. It isn't easy to find it, but it is against the church wall on the south-east side of the building. It is in a bad state now, but here is what could be read on it twenty years ago:

Mary Weal
 Died 1802 aged 78 years
 N.B. Been in the Armada
 Mae amser i ryfel
 Ac amser i heddwch
 Ac y bydd amser i orphwys

Mary Weal
 Died 1802 aged 78 years
 N.B. Been in the Armada
 There is time for war
 And a time for peace
 And there will be time for rest

It is said that the Armada was a sailing ship!

Here was buried the last harpist of the area, John Lewis Roberts, Oak Cottage. He was one of a famous family of harpists from Newtown and he was born in 1853 near to Machynlleth. He came here to live about 1902 and was buried here on the third of April, 1928, by the Reverend D. J. Arter, a Welsh-speaker who could appreciate the special talents of the old harpist. Here too Hugh Pritchard, once a renowned Methodist councillor, was the bell-ringer.

There is a certain amount of uncertainty about the spelling of the name of this parish. It is called Llan-ir by everyone apart from those who have seen the form Llan-hir in print. Llanyre is the English form. Llyr is the patron saint, and Llan-llyr yn Rhos, it is said, was the old name. However that may be, the local pronunciation is very old. Here are a few lines of an anonymous *marwnad* from the end of the sixteenth century to a man from the parish:

. . . Dwyn Ffyllib ddiennlib ddoeth,
 Gwyn ei ben, gwae ni beunoeth,
 O'i ddygiad ddwywlad ddolur,
 Eurllew, a wnaeth oeri Llan-ur.

Philip, wise and never spoken ill of, is dead
 Fair of face, woe is us constantly,
 At his passing two countries mourn,
 The golden lion, and Llanur has gone cold.

There is also a begging *cywydd* by a certain Ifan Maredudd ap Rhys, who is called 'the lion of Llan-ur worthy of public praise.'¹⁰⁵

Although Castell Coch is in the parish of Llanfihangel Helygen it is easier to get to it from Llan-hir. About half a mile in the direction of Llandrindod (which can be seen across the Ieithon opposite us) a lane leads across the fields on the left towards Cwm farm, and there on a little ridge near one of the many windings of the Ieithon can be seen the tumps and ditches of this Roman fort.

There was a certain amount of digging and investigating here over fifty years ago and the foundations of the headquarters were uncovered in 1911. The knowledge gained at that time has been added to by a series of investigations which were made during the years 1954–7 on behalf of the Radnorshire Society by Mr Leslie Alcock. The fort was established about AD 75–80 in the time of Flavian, and at first it was defended by a ditch and walls of turfs and clay. The site was abandoned, it appears, for a short time, and reoccupied about 98–117 under Trajan. During this period the ditch was deepened and the walls and gates were faced with stone. During the latest excavations here they came across the foundations of a very large bath-house outside the fort.

Returning to Llan-hir we went on towards Newbridge, but after a mile, keeping to the A4081, we turned to the right. After a short journey the road descends across the wooded foot of Dôl-y-fan hill and here we are again in the Wye valley. For a mile the road and the river run together through the gap between Dôl-y-fan and Rhiw Gwraidd on one side and Banc Ystrad Wen on the other side in Breconshire.

There is scarcely anything better on earth than trees – in the right place. And this is surely a good place for them. As luck will have it, it is almost always the middle of spring or the middle of autumn when I travel this road. And this is one of the roads where I can always experience either the prodigal excitement of the one or the rich silence of the other without being bothered about what comes in between.

Before long we see rhododendron bushes between the trees and the foot of the hill, and a special look about some of the trees, both of these signs that there is wealth and comfort hiding nearby. This time it is Doldwod mansion that is out of sight behind the walls of the garden. It is sure that this sentence will not be exactly correct by the time this book is printed, because there is great activity taking place on the road here, and lots of widening and straightening. And no doubt the mansion will be just as hidden as it is now. James Watt, the inventor of the steam engine, chose to settle here and enjoy the wealth he had amassed. Part of the present mansion was built by James Watt the second at the beginning of the nineteenth century and it was completed by another of the family in 1876.

From here on the valley widens out for a little and the Wye uses its freedom to snake from one side to the other, almost like the Ieithon. More can be seen from the river here than formerly because when the road was widened the hedge was removed. It is said that it was on this stretch of road that Wordsworth met the man who suggested Peter Bell to him.

By now we have come again to the wide parish of Nantmel, whose southern borders reach the banks of the Wye, and a signpost shows that the next road on the right leads back to the middle of the parish near the Dolau. This road runs over the Ysfa between Gwastedyn and Rhiw Gwraidd, going close to Llyn Gwyn, the largest natural lake in the county. The name Ysfa is interesting. It is most likely the same as the Breconshire word *rhesfa* and Glamorgan's *ysfa* and means a piece of common near a farmhouse on to which the cattle of the farm can be turned.

Despite that, it wasn't sheep but a flock in the ecclesiastical sense that was on my mind as I left the main road and turned towards the Ysfa. Readers of Kilvert will remember his description of the amazing to-do when the foundations of a chapel-of-ease to Nantmel church were put down here on the common in April 1870. Since that time the common has been enclosed and large parts of it have been afforested, and it is doubtful whether Kilvert would recognize the place as it is today. But Saint Mark's church, as the chapel-of-ease is called, is a perfect mirror of its time.

It is a tidy little building of carved stone and its external appearance doesn't attract your attention or deserve it. But it is a feast of red and blue brick inside. We went in expecting to see the walls rendered and painted like a Sunday School. But instead of that the entire interior was faced with a shell of red bricks, edged and cross-lined with blue bricks. That is, the inside was exactly the same sort of thing as that of many a chapel or school that was put up in the same period. And it must be acknowledged that this brickwork is attractive enough in its own way. The woodwork is pine and it is all varnished, and there isn't in my opinion a more ugly wood in the world. The most remarkable part of the woodwork is the three arches on posts that bridge the chancel like a poor imitation of a screen. From the middle of the central arch hung a sickle with its blade cunningly concealed by a plaited work of ears of corn. I don't know whether it was some sort of corn-dolly or a decoration left over after Harvest Festival, but it had a remarkable effect on me. It did away with the feeling that you generally get in small churches and chapels that no one comes to them, and indeed that no one has ever been to them. The sickle brought the fields and their work into the church. It gave a certainty that the neighbours and children of those who were lying in the graves outside had been here and they would come again and light the oil lamps and the candles and kneel and give thanks.

The last time that I passed this church I wanted to visit Caerhyddwen farmhouse over on the lower slopes of Gwastedyn and I wanted to get a good look at it before the forests closed around it. Like so many of the old houses of the county part of it was stone and one wing was wood. It was obvious from the holes and grooves that had been cut into the framework of the wing that this part of the house had been lath-and-plastered in the old way. Close to the house was a cottage, and the woodwork of some of the windows belonged to the sixteenth century. And on the farmyard was a long, low house built on crucks, now a cow-house. Fifty years ago the county was full of interesting old houses like this one, houses that the people of the Board of Antiquities should have noticed and described in their annual report. It is too late by now to undertake that work because any report would be misleading, or rather the conclusions that were drawn from a study of the few remaining houses would be misleading.

I said above that the country between Rhaeadr and Llandrindod is on the whole very like Upper Elfael. It is, at any rate, a superficial resemblance, and that can be seen as you walk cross-country to places like Caerhyddwen. The valley floor of both areas is between five and eight hundred feet above sea-level, and the mountain-land rises to about fifteen hundred feet. But here in Gwerthrynion the land is not half as good as in Elfael and the bogs and rushy fields are more prominent. There are more hazel trees in Elfael and more birch trees here. In Elfael there are more sunken roads and lanes, but here they are on the surface of the land. The rock lies differently in the two localities, as well. The hills between Edwy and Ieithon look like a man lying untidily on the flat of his back with his nose and his chin and his knees sticking up, but between Wye and Ieithon they are more like a man lying drowsily on his stomach. It is things like that, I suppose, that create the image of a locality and give it its particular atmosphere and colour and virtue.

After reaching the main road again we turned past the Vulcan Arms towards Rhaeadr. The old Vulcan has developed into a very modern pub by now with rows of coloured lights and all. I once spent a very comfortable night here, and I was amazed by the comprehensive menu. A little further on, where the road and the river are squashed tight together by the lower slopes of Gwastedyn on this side and Corn Gafallt on the other side, we come opposite the village of Llanwrthwl.

It wouldn't be a bad idea to cross the river here and trespass for a mile or two onto Breconshire land. The valley is beautiful here and I think that you get the fullest view of it from the other side. After you've crossed the river you have to keep to the right past the church, and fork once again at the top of the village where there is a sign to the Elan valley. The road

climbs up a steep hill and immediately after passing a new house you suddenly have to turn right. This turning is sharp and steep. You get a wonderful view down the Wye valley from the top of the hill, and further on you get a view of Gwastedyn and its quarries rising steeply from the river bank. You can get a better view of that corner of Radnorshire from here in Breconshire. Corn Gafallt is the mountain on the left, as we twist and turn around it. This is the mountain that Nennius said had a rock on top with the paw-mark of King Arthur's dog Cabal, which he left when he was hunting the Twrch Trwyth!¹⁰⁶

To come nearer our own time, this is the native patch of the interesting rural poet John Davies (known as Brychan) who published some of his work in *Y Fwyalchen* [*The Blackbird*], *Llais Awen* [*The Voice of the Muse*], *Y Llinos* [*The Linnet*] and *Y Gog* [*The Cuckoo*]. His parents farmed the Bwlch Coch over the top of the mountain although it was in the Clyn over in the direction of the Elan valley that he was born.

Although the surface of the road is good there are gates across it every now and again. As I closed one of them after me I heard a voice beside me saying that it would be a good thing if everyone closed gates in the same way. The owner of the voice was sitting in the base of the hedge and I turned to have a chat about thoughtless people from the towns who don't know the purpose of a mountain gate. The talk quickly turned to more important things. The river Wye and fishing to start with; his brother-in-law was at the time with the Wales fishing team in Scotland. And from Welsh water we went on to talk about the Elan and Claerwen reservoirs and far-off Tryweryn, flooded to supply Liverpool with water. As I listened to him I thought that there is no subject about which the Welsh are as unanimous about as the subject of Tryweryn and similar places, and yet we are totally powerless to stop any rapacious English city. And finally, like many people in these parts, he regretted that he couldn't speak Welsh.

I drove on past Aberdeuddwr where the Elan flows into the Wye. From here on the Wye leaves Breconshire and the boundary between the two counties coincides with the Elan for a little. After a mile I turned across Dôl Afallen and back into Radnorshire once again. I came to the B4518, which runs up the Elan valley, by Aberceithon farm and as I turned towards Rhaeadr I saw someone on a steep field beside the road sowing from a basket. I went up to him and found that it was Mr W. P. Owens, Aberceithon. He was spreading manure in the old way, but not from a lack of machines. A red tractor blushed quietly on the top headland watching Mr Owens's dexterous throwing. The land here is light in texture and colour and the furrows were as clean in the sunshine as newly-combed

hair. I took a picture of this skilled and pleasant man before turning back past Llansanffraid Cwmteuddwr church to Rhaeadr town.

It was a fine May morning when we left Rhaeadr to explore to the north of the A44. I said that this road divides old Gwerthrynion in two. I also said that this commote could be very roughly divided between Wye and Ieithon and that is pretty true about the part of it we've seen up till now. But since we are about to set off exploring north of the A44 we must define the borders more precisely. The north of the commote lies between the Wye and the Clywedog. To the east of it between the Clywedog and the Ieithon is part of Maelienydd called Swydd Ieithon.

We turned up a narrow lane on the left at the end of Rhaeadr. This leads to Abbey Cwm-hir, a village which is like Rhaeadr in one thing at least, that is that roads run to it from all directions. The best road for its views, at any rate, is this one from Rhaeadr. By travelling this road you can see the hills and the moorland, and even the forestry at their best. If it's sunny, best of all, apart from the comfort of driving with the sun at your back.

It is a narrow lane throughout, and at first not much can be seen because the hedges are so high on either side. In the fields beyond the hedges you can see a number of houses whose names are in the genealogy books of the old poets. There is Llwyncwta on the left about a mile from the town. One of Thomas Jones the painter's grandmothers came from this house. After another mile a road leads on the right past the Faenor towards the Dolau and Nantmel. The Faenor was once an important old house where the poets were welcomed. The poet Trefnant came here some time in the sixteenth century to sing a *marwnad* for the husband and wife of the Faenor. As far as I know, none of this poet's work has been published:

Duw oeres gwlad draw sy glaf,
 Och Wirdduw mwy ni chwarddaf;
 Marw Siôn a'm oeres i,
 Tristed Gwerthrynion trosti.
 Gwae fi glywed drwy'r gwledydd
 Gŵyn Siôn, organ y sydd,
 Duw aeth â Siôn galon gwalch
 A'i ddofaidd briod ddifalch.

Pan ddaeth cennad Gloydad glwys
 Eb awr oed o baradwys
 I ddyfyn y ddeuddyn dda
 Trist in y troes Duw yna.
 Ef aeth Gwenllian f'annwyl

I gweirio'i fedd, gwae fi o'r wyl.
 Ni thariodd awr, fawr farwn,
 O'r seithfed dydd, yr hydd hwn.
 Dilyn priodas deilwng,
 Diweddu'r blaid dydd oer blwng.
 Ar ôl mab bu'r wylo mawr,
 Terfynodd deutu'r Faenor.

God has made a whole country go cold and mourn,
 Oh, great God, I shall never laugh again;
 The death of Siôn has made me go cold,
 The whole of Gwerthrynion has become so sad.
 Woe is me to hear through all the countries
 Wailing for Siôn, like a great organ,
 God took away Siôn, the heart of a hawk,
 And his gentle spouse was desolate.

When a message came from the holy, bright Father
 Speaking at the allotted time from paradise
 To summon the two good people,
 God made that place sad for us.
 My dear Gwenllïan went
 To tend his grave, woe is me at this ceremony.
 She did not tarry an hour, great baron,
 From the seventh day, this hind,
 Following a worthy marriage,
 Their union came to an end on a cold, cruel day,
 After the son there was great wailing,
 Both sides of the Faenor came to an end.

Cadwallader Morgan was one person from the Faenor in a later age, a well-known Quaker who emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1683. We don't want to turn to the Faenor today and we carry on up the narrow valley between the bank of the Lan Goch and the Disgwylfa. We soon see that the foresters have been busy here creating a new desert.

We turned down on the right by Fforest Sarnau gate and then climbed a steep bank. The excellent views that can be had from this mountainous road have changed some of their characteristics over the years. As I looked over the *cwm* at the slopes of Moel Hywel [Hywel's Bare Hill] I thought how unsuitable the name of that hill would be before very long. Already parts of it are as spiky as a porcupine's skin.



Clawren near Cilewent



Aberelan, before it was drowned in Caban Coch reservoir. *Welsh Folk Museum*



Shearing in Gro-uchaf, 1898 *Welsh Folk Museum*



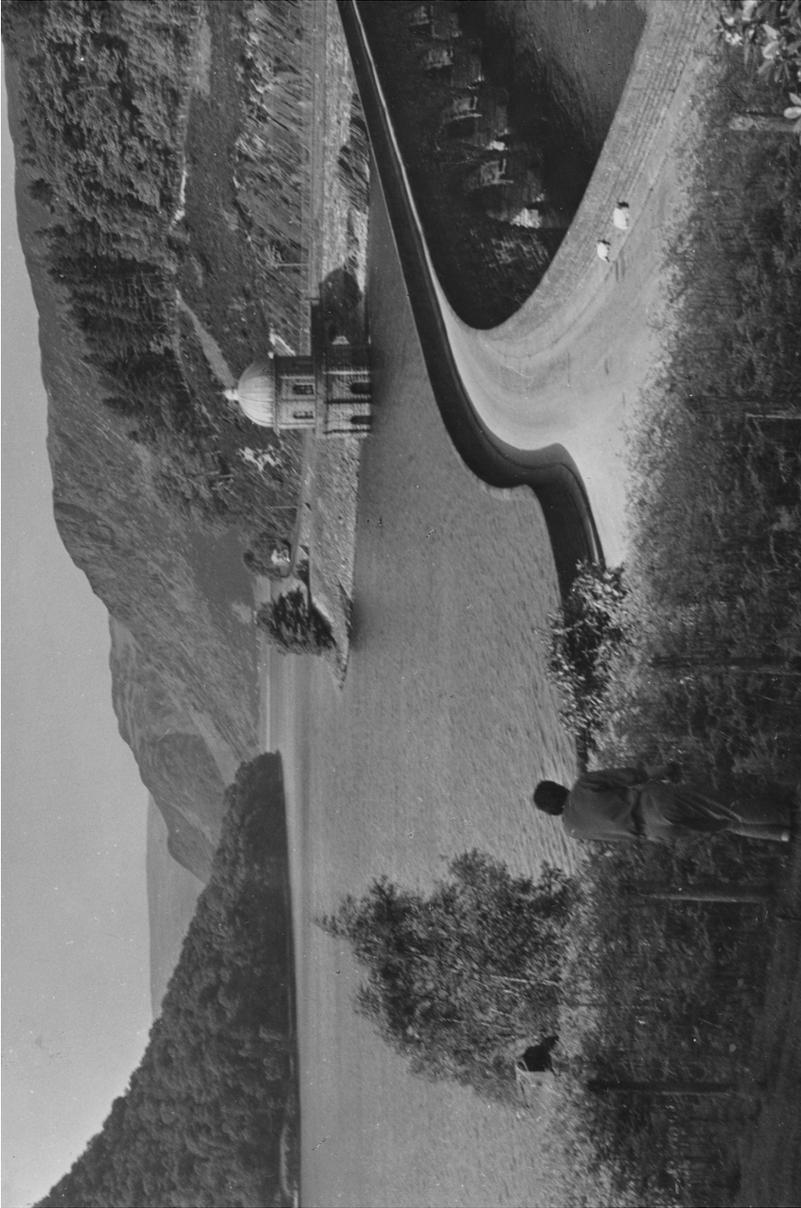
Claerwen Dam



Graig yr Allt Goch reservoir



Cwm Elan House, shortly before it was drowned *Welsh Folk Museum*



The waters above the house



Nant Gwynllyn, Cwmteuddwr



The Maen Serth



Pontarelan

The road climbs between wires to the top of the hill and up to the *bwlch* between Cefn Camlo and Banc Cwm Hir. From here you can see wonderful views. A chain of mountains and endless-looking moorland stretches towards the north – Y Garn, the Black Mixen, Brondre Fawr, Hirddywel, Gwaun Lluest, and the misty solitudes of Dethenydd. Like a multicoloured sea the waves roll one after another as far as the Severn Valley twenty miles away. And even further away you can make out the grey shadows of other chains. We have spent many hours from time to time looking at these wonders.

There is a silence here that is as immense as the view. Nothing can be heard but the murmur of the wind and the short sound of the sheep grazing close by. One can only hope that these views cannot be destroyed, despite being regarded with disrespect. But I very much fear that the day will come when the glory of this area will be hidden under a dark green concealing curtain. Part of the glory of the locality was the trees that grew in the Cwm Hir, varied, useful, beautiful trees. But the close monotonous planting of today is busily turning every hill into a green scrubbing-brush. At the top of the *bwlch* the road crosses the boundary into Maelienydd and descends steeply to the Cwm Hir. A mile after passing the turning for Bwlchysarnau you reach the village. This is a village whose name is known to all because of the tradition that it was here in the Cistercian abbey that the body of Prince Llywelyn was buried after he was killed in Breconshire in 1282.

The *cwm* itself is exceptionally beautiful, with the Clywedog winding through the middle of its green, wooded valley floor. To the north rise the slopes of the Great Park and to the south the *cwm* is closed in by the steep wall of Llywy. The meadows are speckled with handsome trees – beech, sycamore, birch and pine – and here and there on the banks of the Clywedog are wild cherry trees. But I observed that electricity poles had been planted, ugly and impudent, through the middle of the valley floor within yards of the abbey remains. We have to have electricity everywhere; but is it necessary to jettison common-sense (it won't do to talk of good taste) when arranging the posts?

We came into the village between the public house and the church. You used to be able to get a tasty meal of ham and eggs, but we failed to get any food at all this time. The church, which was erected in 1866, is a grey and purple Victorian creation. Further up on the left you come to a mansion built by an Englishman called Wilson in the thirties of the nineteenth century in the 'style of the age of Elizabeth'.

Opposite the mansion a path leads down through the trees to the remains of the abbey. The abbey was founded in 1176 by Cadwallon ap

Madog, prince of Maelienydd, with provision for sixty monks, but the building whose remains can be seen today is thought to date from the end of that century. The nave of the church was two hundred and forty-two feet long, and it was by far the largest church in Wales.

Every tradition is questioned in its time, and some people have tried to disprove the belief that it was here that Llywelyn ein Llyw Olaf¹⁰⁷ was buried after the disaster of 1282. However that may be, I haven't seen any reference to the anecdote in Panton MS II, which strongly suggests that there is a tradition that the Prince's men were within five miles of this abbey immediately after he was killed. Here it is:

Coffadwrieth am ladd Llywelyn ap Gr. ap Lln. y tywysog diwethaf
ar Gymru –

Dywed i wyr Gwynedd galon galed
Mai fi yw Gronwy gwirfab Ednyfed pe buaswn i byw gyda'm llyw
nis lleddesid cyn gynted

Hyn a draethwyd wrth wasanaethwyr Llywelyn ap Gruff: ap lln. pan
oeddynt yn ymolchi ym Mhystyll y Geiniog yn ymyl y Prysgr Duon
yn sir Faesyfed wedi dianc yn ol ladd eu meist'r mewn lle a elwir
Aberedwy mewn pwyntment a merch. Hwnnw oedd tywysog
diwethaf yn Nghymru. Ysbryd Gronwy ap Ednyfed Fychan a
draethodd y geiriau hyn.

In memory of the killing of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd ap Llywelyn,
the last prince over Wales –

Tell the hard-hearted men of Gwynedd
That I am Gronwy the true son of Ednyfed. If I had lived with my
leader he would not have been killed so soon

This is what was said to the servants of Llywelyn ap Gruff: ap
Llywelyn, when they were washing in Pistyll y Geiniog¹⁰⁸ near the
Prysgr Duon in Radnorshire after their master had been killed in a
place called Aberedwy in an appointment with a girl. He was the last
prince in Wales. The spirit of Gronwy ap Ednyfed Fychan said these
words.

I don't want to touch on the problems raised by this story, but I add that
Pistyll y Geiniog and the Prysgr Duon are about five miles from this place

as the crow flies. The Prysg Duon is an isolated farm in the parish of Saint Harmon at the bottom of the *cwm* between the Domen Ddu and Mynydd y Pistyll. Because of the local pronunciation of the word ‘Ceinion’ the belief arose that the name of the well was Pistyll Gynon, and it has that saintly aspect on some maps. I was told that the well is by now in a plantation above the house.

I don’t know whether the founder of the abbey, Cadwallon of Maelienydd, is buried here. He was killed by Roger Mortimer’s men in 1177 when he was on his way home from the king’s court under safe conduct. Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr sang a dignified *marwnad* to him. Here are a few lines from it:

. . . Ni byddaf dawel, nid mau tewi,
Am Gadwallon mawr, gwawr gwrhydri,

. . .
Gŵr a wnaeth gwaedlif gwaedlafn gochi
Gŵr a wnaeth gwaedlan gwaed gan Deifi.
Cymysgai greu gwŷr â gwyrdd heli môr.

. . .
Gŵr ail flaidd, gwraidd, gwrhyd Nwython,
Gwrawl gleddyfawl gwrial gwron,
Prif arglwydd, bro lwydd, bro Din Eithon,
Priodawr clodfawr Clud ac Aeron . . .

. . . I shall not, I cannot be silent
About great Cadwallon, a giant in courage,

. . .
A man who made a red stream of blood with his bloody blade
A man who made the Teifi a bloody river-bank of blood.
He mixed the carnage with the green salt of the sea.

. . .
A man who was another wolf, valiant, a ruddy Neptune,
Manly with his sword, a valiant warrior in battle,
Chief lord of a prosperous region, the region of Din Eithon,
Rightful owner of Clud and Aeron . . .

The only one of his family known for certain to be buried here is one of his grandsons, Cadwallon ap Maelgwn of Maelienydd, and *Brut y Tywysogion* [*The Chronicle of the Princes*] says that he died in 1234.

Although the abbey is a large building it does not appear to have ever been very successful. Owain Glyndŵr came here, causing great destruction,

so that there wasn't much here to dissolve in 1536. The greater part of the church was destroyed. A row of outstanding capitalled pillars and fine arched work were taken away to be incorporated into Llanidloes church, which was being renovated at the time. And as Professor Glanmor Williams said in his excellent book on the history of the Welsh Church, the abbey's most famous relic, a picture of Jesus, was sold to Strata Florida, and yet, in spite of all this, when the Civil War broke out there were sufficient strong buildings here to form some sort of defence on the side of the king. But in 1644 Sir Thomas Middleton and his roundheads came here and captured it without much trouble. From then on the remains quietly fell into ruin quite apart from the times when its stones were taken away as if from a quarry. It was one of these times when the mansion above it was rebuilt.

S. J. Southall in his book *Wales and her Language* says that he knew an old woman from the Cwm Hir who remembered the place in the year 1810 when it was bilingual. She quoted the beginning of a hymn which was popular here at that time:

Sôn am farw, sôn am farw,
Glywir yma, dacw draw.

Talk of dying, talk of dying,
Can be heard here, and over there.

The Welsh language was about to die too. By the middle of the century there were scarcely three or four people in the valley who could understand the two lines above. By 1961 there were nine people in the parish who could speak Welsh and we can be sure that they were not locals.

We left the Cwm Hir the way we came, past the public house and the school, then turning to the right up Cwm Clywedog towards Bwlchysarnau. After a mile we passed Cwm Ysgawen farmhouse at the end of a lane on the left. This was the home of James Lewis, a hymn-writer and musician who flourished in the middle of the nineteenth century. He was a farmer with wide interests and he corresponded with Rees, Casgob, and Ifor Ceri. I suspect that Dafydd Lewis, a famous ballad-singer, was a member of the same family.

The road slowly climbs up the *cwm*. You pass Fishpool farm, where there are remains of an old fish-pond below the road, and before long the road ascends to the moorland once again. Just before reaching Bwlchysarnau I noticed that one of the fields at the side of the road was

dotted with fine-looking Frisian cows, a sign that the traditional animals of the hills had changed. Over on the other side the arable land had been freshly limed, and dust like white fog was following the tractor, another change, and for the better, on the hillsides.

Bwlchysarnau is a crossroads hanging on a narrow ridge. Five roads climb up here like the ribs of an umbrella. Squashed in between them are a farmhouse and a chapel and a school and a churchyard, and a handful of houses looking as if they had just slipped down the steep hill from the direction of Gwaun Marteg. I have been here ten times at least but up till now have never seen a living soul either on the crossroads or the road. The roads run from every direction across the moorland, lazily dipping and turning, meeting together here with no traffic and no noise. That is the special magic of the place. It is wrapped in the unbroken quiet and stillness of this lovely locality. There are people nearby, but they are out of sight. I have never seen a door open here or spoken a word to anyone. And that is why the place hangs in my memory as an image of a village rather than a real village.

We are near the end of Maelienydd here. As we travelled from the Cwm Hir the boundary of Maelienydd ran about a mile to the west. Here in Bwlchysarnau the boundary turns away to the north-west across Gwaun Marteg below. A quarter of a mile from the crossroads the name of the farm Ffos-y-ffin [boundary ditch] reminds us of the fact. But before we cross it again we want to visit Llaethdy once more, another little village which is as memorable in its own way as Bwlchysarnau.

So we took the road that leads to the north-east over Mawnog y Beili and Gwaun y Llust. It is a high road between the head of the Marteg valley to the west and Glyn Crychell, a river that is mentioned in the Laws of Hywel Dda, on the east side. An extensive part of the moor on the right-hand side of the road has been cultivated in recent years. I saw a good crop of oats here in 1961, considering the altitude, and the cattle that are bred here have a healthy look.

These hills have always been famous for their pastures. The most famous of them is Hirddywel beyond the headwaters of the Marteg two miles west of this road. The boundary of Montgomeryshire crosses its bare ridge. Its name was changed some time ago on the maps to 'Rhyddhywel' thereby hiding a part of the history of the area. It was once a famous mountain: 'From the Berwyn to great Hirddywel'¹⁰⁹ said Llygad Gŵr when he noted how extensive was the country that bewailed the death of Hywel ap Madog. The well-known pastures of the locality are mentioned in our literature. Here is Lewys Glyn Cothi talking about the cattle of Dafydd Goch ap Hywel from Saint Harmon:

Blaen Marchdeg ei wartheg oedd
 Yn eu lliwiau yn lluoedd;
 Rhai 'mlaen Gwy fwyfwy a êl,
 Rhai ar ddaear Hirddywel;
 Mil fry'n amlwiaw y fron,
 Teirmil deutu i Armon

At the headwaters of the Marteg were his cattle
 In their colours, in multitudes;
 Some went to the headwaters of the Wye,
 Some on the land of Hirddywel;
 A thousand up there making the hillside multicoloured,
 About three thousand to Garmon.

By now the river is called Marteg and it is new trees that are there 'in their colours, in multitudes'. Watcyn Fychan from far-off Hergest had cattle here according to Llawdden, who desired some of them:

Mae'n Hirddywel fugelydd,
 Ychen siop iwch yno sydd.

There are herdsmen in Hirddywel,
 There are store-oxen for you.

Leland talks about these good pastures: '*Ther be left al maner of catail al winter, and prove welle*'. And while discussing their fertility Oliver Matthews of the Ysnêd, Bishop's Castle¹¹⁰ says that the king's stud mares were kept there. It was about this area and the quality of the cattle that were bred on the moors that Gwallter Mechain wrote a letter to William Rees, Casgob, in August 1812, a letter that ends by announcing that Clarke's reports on the agriculture of Radnorshire and Breconshire were '*gross libels upon the Counties*'.

Please forgive me for wandering like this behind the curtain of neglect and vegetation that conceals so much of the history of these poor-looking regions. If anyone happens to be here on the road between Bwlchysarnau and Llaethdy on a sunny, fresh green day with the skylark singing above, he will feel that it is, for all its failings, overflowing with delight. But if he happens to be here when the land is hidden by another curtain, 'the concealing curtain of the land of Hirddywel'¹¹¹ as an unknown poet put it, I advise him to keep to the road in case he

Cael ennaint ceule annwfn
Cawdel Hirddywel chwerw ddfwn

Gets soaked to the skin in the hollow of hell
In the deep bitter mess of Hirddywel

like Hywel ap Syr Mathew one Christmas Eve long ago.

Three miles after leaving Bwlchysarnau you come to David's Well, a name given to a spring of brimstone water and a few small cottages scattered around it. Ffynnon Ddewi was its name when Samuel Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary* was published in 1833, so that I am very suspicious of the opinion of the Commissioner of Antiquities of the county that the name 'David' is '*that of a comparatively recent exploiter*'.

The spring itself is in a little field beside the crossroads and the telephone box. I wouldn't have looked for it if it hadn't been for my wife. Indeed, if it were not for her I wouldn't have seen many things that I had heard of years before. My tendency too often is to say that this or that is in such-and-such a place, and her response is always to demand to see it for herself. And through searching for this insignificant spring we got to have a chat with a farmer who was passing. We got a speech rather than a chat, a torrential, scathing speech about the foolishness of whoever planted trees across Red Lion Hill nearby. There was no need to say more than 'Amen', because this was another hill that is too good to be turned into another evergreen brush. I have heard that this Red Lion is *Rhyd y Lleian*¹² and since Red Lion Cottage is beside a ford across the headwaters of the Crychell, I wouldn't be surprised if that were true.

There is a mile between Ffynnon Ddewi and Llaethdy and, although the road doesn't go down much, it loses its mountainous character completely as it passes between thick, tidy hedges. Llaethdy is as special in its own way as Bwlchysarnau, especially if you come here at the end of May or in June. You come from the mountain breezes to the verdant abundance of the hedges, and before long you come to a wonderful green spreading sycamore tree at the edge of the road. The tree spreads out like a parasol and below it in a hollow below the road is a cluster of grey stone houses and colourful gardens in front of them.

This is a private little village. The short road in the middle of it is a cul-de-sac and the houses form a square around it and face each other across the gardens. One side is filled by a Baptist chapel, the chapel house and a stable, the whole thing one long, narrow building under a single low roof. And it is such a tasteful, simple rural building! Opposite it is the post-office and the shop. The village has such a small and closed-in

appearance that I always feel that I have no right to be here. Today I feel this so strongly that I have to go to the shop and buy something, chocolate or soap or sugar, anything at all to give me an excuse for being here. But the shop door at the end of the garden was locked and no one came to open it although I made enough noise. And so I retreated to a sunny windowless wall and leant against it amidst the smell of flowers and looked at the remarkable green tree up there against a white-hot sky.

Llaethdy belonged to Abbey Cwm-hir in the Middle Ages. Its name suggests that it was a *maerdy*¹¹³ or a *hafod*¹¹⁴ at that time. Indeed it is still similar in plan to a farmyard. Who, I wonder, is to blame for the name ‘Llaithddu’ that you get on the maps, including the one-inch map ‘*fully revised 1948*’ as it claims? It must be some English idiot with a dictionary who suggested that unsuitable adjective as a noun for the name of this lovely little place.

The road leads on from Llaethdy to the top of Glyn Ieithon and to a district I have described in an earlier chapter. Because of this I turned the car and returned to Bwlchysarnau. No doubt some people would rather go on for two miles and then turn right and run down Glyn Ieithon as far as Llananno bridge. You can cross the river there and travelling westwards across the Crychell and the Ffrwd-wen reach Bwlchysarnau once again.

From Bwlchysarnau we turned down the steep hill into the Marteg valley and the parish of Saint Harmon. On the left Nant y Ffin denotes where the boundary once ran between Maelienydd and Gwerthrynion. On the right Gwaun Marteg upland stretches to the north up to the slopes of Mynydd y Pistyll and Brondre Fawr. Today, as I said, it is a huge plantation. I wonder how long the houses will stand against the approaching tide of trees? Will anyone ask for their names when their walls are down, and their fields under the leaves? Some of them are really old. I went to see a few of them, led by Mr John Lewis of the Radnorshire Agricultural Company. He is a native of the parish. I particularly remember Brondre Fawr nestling under the hill of the same name. It is an old stone house with a red-brick extension. The old oak frame can still be seen in places and below it all are great kitchens and cellars.

Returning to the main road, we soon cross the Marteg. On the left about a quarter of a mile from the road stands Pen-lan cottage, the birthplace of Edward Meredith Price (1816–98), musician and hymn-writer. He gave the name of his old home to one of his well-known tunes. He named other tunes after two of the parish’s chapels, Sychnant and Nant-gwyn. Other well-known tunes he wrote are St. Garmon, Lichfield and Howards.

Apart from the hot day in June 1963 when Mr John Lewis took me around the parish, it has been raining every time I visited the place. So in my experience the part of the parish called Pant-y-dŵr is a pretty wet place. You reach it four miles from Bwlchysarnau. It was pouring it down one day in 1959 when we came here with the intention of seeing Nant-gwyn and Sychnant chapels. I was hoping too to find the site of the long-lost hall of Philip ap Rhys, son-in-law of Owain Glyndŵr. We were not very successful. To start with, the doors of the chapels were locked. But in the narrow lane that runs past Sychnant we were fortunate enough to meet Mr Iorwerth Evans of Cenarth Mill.¹¹⁵ We heard a lot about him and his family. He has eight children, all of them reciters and singers who compete in eisteddfodau the length and breadth of the country.

Mr Evans was kind enough to open Capel Sychnant for us. It is a simple and lovely building that was put up by the Methodists in 1825. Welsh was the usual language of the parish at that time, and that was the language of the chapel until about 1870. Mr Evans said that Welsh services were held from time to time until 1900. Welsh was also the language of Nant-gwyn, the Baptist chapel, until 1860, and it was the language in the Wesleyan chapel in Saint Harmon village until 1870. The language of the parish church didn't change until 1853, and even after that it returned every month until 1860. I never heard a word of Welsh here although it is said that twenty-seven people in the parish could speak it at the time of the 1961 Census.

Mr Evans disagreed with me about the site of Philip ap Rhys's house. I myself believe that it should be searched for on the land of Bryn Cenarth, but he was in favour of a nearby farm called the Pwll. Anyway by now it was raining so heavily that we didn't get to either of them. I had to wait until 1963 before putting a foot on the farmyard of Bryn Cenarth, and it was Mr Evans's cousin, Mr John Lewis, whom I mentioned before, who took me there.

He brought me from Rhaeadr and led me around his native parish. He took me to the Gors, an old farmhouse where Mrs Davies showed me a preaching-chair from the middle of the eighteenth century that had once been in her old home in Safn-y-coed, Cwm Dernol, on the boundary between Cwmteuddwr and Montgomeryshire. We also saw something new, that is new grass, and we could only compare the hope of the new grass at the Gors with the despair of the new trees at the Waun. From the Gors we went to the pretty, whitewashed Wesleyan chapel beside the village inn. Above the pulpit are the following words: '*Welley's Chapel. Erected 1807. Ebeneze Imanue Jehovah*'. The new Latin of the age, I expect.

And so we went from place to place to Bryn Cenarth farm at the foot of Cefn Cenarth. The present farmhouse is of recent red bricks like so

many houses in the parish, but the wife of the house told me that the old house had been turned into a cow-house and a barn a long time back, and transformed about two years before. Despite this you could still make out something of the old long, narrow building. Some of the old rafters and joists were lying close by, but they proved that the old building didn't date back to the time of Philip ap Rhys.

Yet his mansion was somewhere close to that place, a mansion that was frequented by the bards. Lewys Glyn Cothi sang how the hall at Cenarth drew him as the north drew a compass needle. He sang the praise of Philip and praised and then mourned his wife, Gwennllian, daughter of Owain Glyndŵr:

Y wraig a oedd aur ei gwallt
O ryw hyddod y Rhuddallt.

The woman with golden hair
The colour of the stags of the Rhuddallt.

He sang a *marwnad* to two of the five sons. Llawdden also sang a crop of poems here, he being one of the

Tair mil a red at Armon
I weled hael y wlad hon.

Three thousand who hasten to Garmon
To see the generosity of this country.

He had from Philip ap Rhys the freedom of 'his house, and his shilling along with his affection'.¹¹⁶ But for me the best *cywydd* to be sung here is the wonderful *cywydd* of praise by Ieuan Gyfanedd. The *Bywgraffiadur* [*Dictionary of Welsh Biography*], unfortunately, puts this poet a century too late and turns the patron into a man from Gwynedd too! To calm the spirits of both of them, here is the song:

Ffyllib, frenhingyff haelion
Ap Rhys, wyt yn peri sôn
Amdanad, cariad ein cân,
A llawer am Wenllian,
Urddas it a'r dduwies hon,
Arthur enwog Gwerthrynion.

Anheddu'r wyd yn nhyddyn
 Y glod, ti a merch o'r Glyn;
 Eistedd yr wyd yn wastad
 Ar ystôl y gwŷr o stad;
 Nid âi o gynnal dy dir
 Haf a gaeaf yn gywir
 Beirddion a phawb a arddai
 Dy dir, bendith Dduw'n dy dai.

Erddais o fawl, urddas fydd,
 Erw lydan yng ngorwledydd;
 Cyfeiriais it, cyfar sôn,
 Cwysau o foliant cyson.
 Llyfnodd, canodd, datgeiniaid
 Erw o gerdd o raw a gaid.

Ef a ddarfu hëu hon
 Ganwaith â bendith gweinion.
 Egin oedd, benaig ynys,
 Dy fawl erioed, fal i Rys;
 E hedodd, megis hadyd
 O wenith, bendith y byd;
 Mae ynys it, mwy no sain,
 O'ch head a merch Owain.
 Hëwyd y byd hyd y bedd
 Â chanu i'r ferch o Wynedd.

Tai gwenith y bendithion
 Yw'r tai fry ger tor y fron;
 Gorau gŵr wyd â gwraig wen
 Ei blas am bob alusen;
 Dy neuadd di a wniwyd
 Â cherdd dda, ei charu'dd wyd;
 Da y gŵyr, nid ag irwydd,
 Seiri gwawd fesur eu gwŷdd;
 Cyfodi gwaith seiri serch
 A wneir heddiw, nai Rydderech,
 Ac i fry, clochdy eu clod,
 Y bore y bydd barod.
 Hen fych, i roi'n honno fedd
 A chan, a'r ferch a roed i Foesen,

Byw yn hir y bu Noe hen,
 Hŷn fych di a Gwenllian
 Ar dir y glod ar dor glan.

Philip {of the royal line of generous patrons}
 Ap Rhys, you cause talk
 About yourself, the love of our song,
 And much about Gwenllian,
 Dignity to you and this goddess,
 The famous Arthur of Gwerthrynion.

You dwell in a house
 Of praise, you and a daughter from the Glyn;
 You sit perpetually
 On the throne of the men of rank;
 Without cease your lands were kept
 Summer and winter truly
 Bards and everyone who cultivated
 Your land, God's blessing on your houses.

I cultivated praise, there is dignity,
 Of a wide acre in the provinces;
 I sang of you, and spoke of ploughing,
 Furrows of constant praise.
 Singers furrowed and sang,
 An acre of song of the spade was had.

He used to sow this [poetry]
 A hundred times with the blessing of his dependants.
 He was a shoot, lord of a realm,
 Of your praise, like Rhys;
 It spread, like the seed
 Of wheat, the blessing of the world;
 There is a realm for you, more than this poem can express,
 From your sowing and the daughter of Owain.
 The world was sown as far as the grave
 With singing to the woman from Gwynedd.

Wheat-houses of the blessings
 Are the houses up by the top of the hill;
 You are the best man with a fair wife

His mansion for every act of charity;
 Your hall was sewn
 With good song, you love it;
 They well know, they are not inexperienced
 Craftsmen of praise to match their lineage;
 Raising the work of craftsmen of love
 Is done today, kinsman of Rhydderch.
 And on high, bell-tower of their praise,
 In the morning it will be ready.
 May you be old, to put mead in that
 And a song and the daughter who was given to Moses,
 Lived long did old Noah,
 May you and Gwenllian be longer
 On the land of praise and on the river-bank.

I looked across the sunny fields towards the pool and up towards the Fron. Here somewhere 'by the top of the hill'¹¹⁷ stood the hall of Philip ap Rhys, another of Wales's lost homes that was a nursery for nobility and a haven for *cerdd dant*.¹¹⁸ But nobody here knows anything about it now.

We are now close to the Montgomeryshire boundary that runs across the moorlands past the mountain-tops that are mentioned in folk-tale and song. Two and a half miles to the north-east stands the old house of the Prysgr Duon, where Llywelyn ap Gruffudd washed in Pistyll y Geiniog. The same distance to the north-west you come to the loneliness of Cefn yr Aelwyd, where, according to Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr, Cadwallon of Maelienydd fought, breaking a spear in his rage and making the broken weapon red with the blood of the enemy. There, too, according to an unclear song in the *Llyfr Du* [*Black Book*]:

Am Gefn yr Aelwyd bwyd balawon
 A mynaich yn fynych yn farchogion

At Cefn yr Aelwyd food for wolves
 And monks were often warriors.

There is a choice of two ways back to Rhaeadr. You can cross the iron road in Saint Harmon, and passing the church and the skirts of Moel Hywel you soon come to the town. The best way, for me anyway, is the narrow lane past the chapel that follows the Marteg through its rocky *cwm* at Aber Marteg in the Wye valley. The road runs through the most beautiful corner of the parish.

Before turning this way we went to see the church, which was rebuilt in 1908. We went mainly because of its association with two saints. Francis Kilvert is one of them. He was vicar here for a year in 1876. Garmon, of course, is the other saint. Here, according to the story, he preached against the sins of Gwrtheyrn¹¹⁹ for forty days. Here, in the time of Gerallt Gymro, was kept the staff of Curig, a relic hidden in gold and silver. According to Gerallt, and the excellent translation of Professor Thomas Jones, whom I have quoted several times before, it was

effeithiol at wared yn llwyr a dileu'r chwarennau, a'r manwyion
chwyddiedig sydd ar arfer tyfu allan ar gyrff dynion.

effectual in getting totally rid of and eliminating swollen glands and
erysipelas which grow out on men's bodies.

However, the only mediæval thing in the church today is the font. The day will surely come when the 1908 church will be of real interest to the visitor, but that day has not dawned yet.

We left the village past the lovely whitewashed chapel. Not far from the chapel up a lane on the right is the Berth farm, home of the late Jonathan Pugh, farmer and *bardd gwlad*.¹²⁰ A translation of a *bardd gwlad*, I should have said, because he knew only very little Welsh. He was a great-grandson of John Williams (1769–1837), another local hymn-writer, who farmed the Shetinau nearby. The road runs at the foot of Mynydd y Clas, to use a name which encompasses all the high ground on the right. After a mile you can see a narrow *cwm* opening out between Cefn Llety Hywel and the rocky slope of Mynydd y Perthi. A stream called the Marcheini Fawr rushes down the *cwm* towards the Marteg. Two miles up the *cwm* on Cefn Drysgol are the remains of a mediæval chapel that I will mention later on. This is the wildest part of the Marteg valley, between the shoulder of the mighty Gamallt across the river and the rocky slopes above our head on this side. These slopes have a variety of names; Wyloer is the name on the map, but I have heard people say Wylorn, Corniog and Rhiw Rhoad. From the road there are excellent views towards the hills of Cwmteddwr in the west. Below the road the Marteg shines against the rocks. After putting the car out of the way, it is difficult to know which to do: to go down and follow the stream over the smooth rocks and watch the trout in the pools, or to climb past the debris of the rocks and the peaceful, fearless sheep on the thin soil. There is a great stillness here that is broken only by the murmur of the wind in the *cwm* below and by the mewing of the buzzard above.

No one who comes to Marteg Bridge¹²¹ wants to rush past it. The Marteg flows down under the bridge into the Wye at a place where three beautiful valleys meet. The Wye does not yet have the characteristics of a big river. It has a stony bed, and the water curls and froths between the stones and loiters black in the pools. You can see every colour and shape in tree and bush on the banks, squashed in between the steep, rocky hillsides. The second *cwm* descends between Carreg y Gwalch and the high many-coloured hill of the Llofftydd Gleision, and Nant y Sarn cascades white through it from its black source in a high bog down to its sparkling mouth below the Nannerth meadows. Last is the *cwm* that we came down with the Marteg. Perhaps this is the most beautiful spot on the Wye.

Below the road a quarter of a mile up the river is Bwlch-gwyn Isaf, a house that was built by Frederick Foxton, a friend of Thomas Carlyle. A little further up on the right a rough track leads up the mountain to the Bwlch-gwyn farm, which is on the *bwlch* between Mynydd y Perthi and the Garreg Lwyd. Mr John Lewis took me up this track one June to look for the site of Capel y Drysgol.

As Mr Lewis's car strode out over the stones and shook in the ruts I was glad that my own car was standing quietly in the car-park in Rhaeadr. Apart from that, I also had the freedom to look back across the river as we climbed and see the beauty of the glen from another direction. We came at last to the steep farmyard of Bwlch-gwyn where we were welcomed by the Mr Proberts and their wives. I realized once again how easy it actually is to improve the wild lands of this county. Until very recently, the land at the top of this *bwlch* was pretty poor, but by now wide areas of the heather moor have been turned into good pasture. Today the sheep graze on green highlands that used to be the dark refuge of the grouse. Leaving the car at the top of the *bwlch* we walked over wide acres, newly enclosed and ploughed. Remembering the rocky ribs of the sides of this mountain, I was surprised by the appearance of its summit. The healthy appearance of these new high pastures is not always a true mirror, of course. There are mineral deficiencies in the soil, more often than not, and this can soon be seen in the cattle. But improving on nature is the farmer's job.

A short step over the wire fence at the far end of the newly ploughed land and we were in a sea of heather and looking down on the top end of Cwm Marcheini. The *cwm* isn't wild and rocky here as it is in the lower parts, but is far more lonely. We descended into the depths of the *cwm* and then walked up the southern slope of Drysgol, which is in places like a yellow soggy sponge. We came to the place where, according to the map, the chapel once stood, but the ruined walls which are there now are not mediæval work. Nothing is left of it apart from a few foundations of the

house, a great sycamore and the bases of the vanished field hedges, sinking into the moorland like the bottoms of ships sinking into the sea. It's not only a farm that has died here. Further over, in the *cwm* of the Marcheini Fach, we saw the remains of an old mineral mine. On the bank of the stream was a level whose roof had fallen in and little heaps of rubble. I hate ruins of all kinds. I cannot discern any 'romance' in them but rather failure and sadness and death. I was glad to climb back to the top of Bwlch Gwyn and its new pastures and its hope.

Chapter VIII

CWMTEUDDWR

Cwmteuddwr is a contraction of the name Cwmwd Deuddwr [Commote of the Two Waters] and there is no basis for the form 'Cwmduddwr' which is used officially in the place itself these days. The Wye and the Elan¹²² are no doubt the two waters referred to, because Aberdeuddwr is the name of the point where these two rivers join near the town of Rhaeadr. Generally speaking nothing is known for certain about the history of the commote; today its boundaries coincide with those of the parish of Llansanffraid Cwmteuddwr, the largest parish in the county.

The most wild-looking parish as well, but it is possible that it wasn't always so. Two opinions about this have been expressed by two men from Rhaeadr. It was for its fruitfulness and the abundance of corn and the excellence of its livestock that Jonathan Williams praised the parish in his county history. But '*an absolute desert*' was how Thomas described this part of the county in his *Cambrian Itinerary*, which was published in 1801, and he added that the inhabitants could scarcely produce sufficient heather, barley and oats to keep alive. The explanation of this difference is, perhaps, that men were just as eager then to see what they wanted to see as they are now.

But desert or not, and we must remember that an extensive part of the fruitful valley bottom of the Elan is now under the water, we must agree on the beauty of the place. This is surely the best known part of Radnorshire. When a chain of lakes was constructed here at the beginning of this century in order to gather water for Birmingham, the kinds of views which attract almost everyone were created. At the same time good new roads were made so that you can travel easily through these views.

But as this new beauty was created, the old beauty was destroyed, and this was in the opinion of many people a much greater beauty. The old Elan valley was an exceptionally pretty valley, narrowing and widening alternately, with the river through its middle similarly falling in narrow waterfalls and broadening blue between the fields. It was a river like blue beads on a white thread. But there was more here than just the beauty of nature. Here and there were farmhouses and cottages and productive fields, the workshop of a plough-wright and cart-wright, a mill, a church, a chapel, a school, two dignified mansions in the shadows of ancient trees, and a Welsh-speaking community. When the waters flowed over the fields

and rose into lakes on the hillsides, more than a valley was drowned: a rural culture was drowned.

Driving from Rhaeadr past the lakes of the Elan valley and the Claerwen valley, and back on the old coach-road from the direction of Cwmystwyth, means a journey of twenty-nine miles. This is a very popular trip; but anyone who wants to taste the special character of this region should sometimes leave the car and climb the hillsides and walk the moorland.

You can take the road over Rhaeadr Bridge and past Llansanffraid church. After going under the railway bridge our road turns to the left. (The old Cwmystwyth road is on the right and it is down this that we will return to the town.) The lower part of the Elan valley is verdant and pleasant and the road runs through it on the Radnorshire side of the river. On the Breconshire side rise the northern slopes of Corn Gafallt, a mountain on whose summit you can find one of the 'wonders of Britain', that is the marks of King Arthur's hunting dog.

You can find the site of another antiquity, much easier to check, in a field opposite the Elan Valley Hotel, which we will shortly reach, that is the low mounds where Capel Madog, a mediæval chapel, once stood. A little further on and we come across a signpost pointing to something quite new, that is the new Elan village, a village which was built in place of the old one that was drowned. It stands in a beautiful little spot at the foot of the Allt Ddu, a natural wooded hill of oak trees on the lower slopes of Corn Gafallt. Higher up rises Coed y Cnwch, and above that you can see Graig y Cnwch, lumpy under its heathery covering. This is where the famous fox was raised which was hunted over eleven parishes by the hounds of Nant-gwyllt. About a mile up the road between the Allt Ddu and the Cnwch is the Clyn, the birthplace of John Davies (Brychan).

It is worth turning down to the left and crossing the river although that means penetrating some twenty yards into the land of Breconshire. You get here a sort of broad suggestion of what was lost further up the valley - grey stone houses in gardens and, between them and the stony river, a green sward with branching trees as a roof over it. We came here one fresh September day. People were sitting in the speckled shadows of the trees picnicking on the edge of the water. There were sheep lying here and there under the trees as white and still as the rocks of the river below. It could all have been painted by Courbet or Manet.

After returning to the road you soon reach the first dam, the Caban Coch dam, rising like a wall over one hundred and twenty feet above the bed of the river. The valley is very narrow here between Craig y Gigfran on this side and Craig y Cnwch on the other, and it was this natural

narrowing that decided the site of this lowest dam. Nature could scarcely have done the job better because directly above this place the valley becomes very much wider. The work was started in 1894. Two thousand workers came here and by July 1904 the reservoirs at Caban Coch, Pen-y-garreg, Graig Goch and Dôl-y-mynach were completed and opened by King Edward the Seventh. Building started on Claerwen dam, the last of the series, in 1946 and that was opened by Queen Elizabeth in 1952.

Some time at the end of the last century, before there was any mention of drowning the valley, a young mountaineer from Switzerland came to spend his holidays in Nant-gwyllt House. The late H. M. Vaughan says in his book about squires of South Wales that this man was amazed when he first saw the mountains of Cwmteuddwr. 'Great God!' he said, 'the Almighty forgot to put their heads on them!' What, I wonder, would he say today if he saw them after Birmingham has taken their feet? You only have to compare Craig y Cnwch below the dam and the part of it to be seen above the surface of the water to realize how much greatness has been lost.

Of course there was much to compensate for this loss, because Caban Coch reservoir is a wonderful lake. The road winds around the new foot of Craig y Foel and you get views on the left over the lake to Graig Fawr and Bryn y Gro on the Breconshire side. Straight in front of us there is Rhos y Gelynnen rising from the water, with graceful old trees on its lower slopes and dense new plantations on its top. It is Rhos y Gelynnen and the hilly country behind it that separate the Elan and Claerwen valleys. These valleys are shaped like the letter Y, and that will be the shape of our journey through them. We are now travelling up the leg of the letter, that is, the lake formed by the united waters of the two rivers. The lost meeting of the two waters is in the middle of the lake about a mile above the dam. I have sometimes heard from the old people about the houses that once stood where the water is now. The first is the house of Beno the tailor close to the Caban dam. Further on we are opposite Melin-y-gro and a little further still we pass Nant-gwyllt church and the school. By the time we reach their sites the road is starting to wind around stunted oaks and bracken on the lower slopes of the Foel and we soon reach Garreg Ddu Bridge.

Here the Elan valley forks off to the north but before going in that direction we cross the bridge and turn left to the Claerwen valley. There is a hidden dam under this bridge and its purpose is to ensure that there is sufficient water above it to supply the needs of Birmingham, because it is here, by the Garreg Ddu, that the water starts on its seventy-three-mile journey to that city.

After crossing the bridge the road turns through the trees on the side of the lake. The trees on the edge of the road and below it are what remains of the drowned woods Coed Aberelan and Coed y Gelynnen. After a mile we cross a little stream, which flows down a cleft in the slope on the right. This is Nant Gwyllt, the stream that gave its name to the mansion. The mansion stood on its left bank at the foot of the hill below us in the water by the spot where the stream flowed into the Claerwen. Opposite the house but on the other side of the Claerwen was Gro-uchaf farmhouse, and further down the river stood Gro-bach and Gro-isaf. The late Mr Jansen Davies gave the Welsh Folk Museum a picture which was taken on shearing day 1898 in the Gro-uchaf (and which is printed here. Mr Davies was the baby that is seen in the picture).

Although it is under the water it is probable that Nant-gwyllt House is still standing. Mr Herbert Vaughan says in his book on squires of South Wales that there was an agreement that the house was not to be demolished. Pictures of it show that it was a long low house with a plantation of old pines and larches behind it and a lawn in front sloping down the Claerwen. There had been a house here for centuries. Hywel ap Siôn ap Hywel bought the place and the land around it in 1578, and here his *marwnad* was sung by Lewis Dwnn in 1597. As far as I am able to understand the complicated family trees of Cwmteuddwr, it is from him that the Powells of Cwm Elan are descended, and from the marriage of one of his female descendants to one of the Lewises of Gladestry came the Lewises of Nant-gwyllt and Cwm Elan. In 1824 Thomas Lewis of Nant-gwyllt took the name of his mother, Lloyd, as an additional name, and until the house was drowned it was the Lewis-Lloyd family who lived here.

Some people have tried to locate Peacock's Headlong Hall here. Far more certain is the connection with the poet Shelley, who stayed here with his wife Harriet from April to June 1812. He also stayed in Cwm Elan House with his cousin Thomas Grove, who had bought the house and rebuilt it. It was the sad fate of these two mansions that inspired Francis Brett Young's novel, *The House under the Water*, but, according to the author himself, neither of the two houses should be associated with his 'Nant Esgob'. 'Indeed,' he said, '*apart from the fact that two houses were actually submerged . . . and that two valleys wherein rivers brawled and salmon leapt have become lakes of a unique and solitary beauty. . . there is not one word of truth in the story.*' For a description of Nant-gwyllt House as it was at the end of the century, you cannot do better than read the chapter on it in Herbert Vaughan's book.

Apart from the family of the house, almost everyone in the valley was Welsh-speaking, and some of them were monoglot Welsh-speakers. The

Lewis-Lloyd family was to all intents and purpose English as regards language, like the majority of squires in South Wales around the beginning of the century. However that may be, the Lewises were pretty good Welsh-speakers until about 1800, and many a rural poet and harpist received a welcome in the house. I have already referred to the famous hunt made by John Lewis's hounds. There is a song which was composed on that occasion by a local poet, and which was sung down in the drowned mansion, to the forgotten tune '*Monday Morning*':

Cydweswch o'r bron,
 Rai mwynion a manwl yn gwbl i gyd,
 Clywch ddatgan helwriaeth un helaeth o hyd
 Am y lwynog main llon,
 Un creulon ai amcanion, un o'r rhai glewion, mae'n glir,
 A chŵn Sgweir Lewis, ŵr dawnis ar dir.
 Cewch hanes y siroedd heb ble hefyd a'r plwyoedd,
 Mynyddoedd a chymoedd y rhedodd ar hyd,
 A'r cŵn 'leni' i dilynodd, yn rhyfedd iawn rhywfodd,
 Drwy ffoeni dyffrynnoedd nhw' i gododd i gyd.
 A oes gŵn yn unlle mo'u bathau drwy'r byd?
 Brycheiniog dychwelwch yn gadarn, a chodwch,
 Yn gynnes cyd-genwch, mawrygwch mewn hedd
 Gŵn Sgweir Lewis, ŵr hylaw, mwyn, hwylus,
 Dyn doniol a dawnus, mwyn weddus ei wedd.
 Chwi ddylech ei glodfori nes boddi'n eich bedd.

O grugiau y Cnwch,
 Yn fflwch heb fawr fflychio codai'r cadno mawr cry';
 A Rorri rorio âi canto fe'n gu.
 Ac felly'n y blaen
 Yn gyfan fwyn gafod, gwych benod o'u bodd,
 A Ffinder oedd ffondia' nesa' i'r blaena'n rhoi bloedd.
 'Si-ho,' ebr Miwsig a Sowndwel gu ffyrnig,
 A Ffamws arbennig, nid diddig ar dir,
 A Fflora a Chymli, dan lolian, a Lili,
 A Danser er hynny yn tynnu y tir,
 A Preimar a Bliwmon yn gyfan drwy gur,
 Triwbel a Throwser a Roman a Lider,
 Yn swnio'r oedd Dinger mewn llawnder a lles,
 A Fforman a Chlowdy yn lanwaith eleni,

On'd da ydy' henwi y rheiny'n un rhes?
 Dyna'u henwi nwhy'n union yn gyson os cês.

Ond nesa' chwi gewch,
 Gwrandewch 'nawr drwy degwch, dyallwch chwi'n well,
 Ffordd rhedodd y llwynog llofroddiog ei gell.
 Creigiau'r Cnwch y mae'n glir,
 Yn eglur mewn gwagle, rhyw foddau yn ddible,
 Oddi yno i Gorn Gafallt 'r wy'n dyallt 'r aeth efe,
 I Ryd Crychdu wedyn a Chefn Gwastedyn,
 I'r Gorsddu yn llinyn 'r âi'r tennyn ond te?
 Trwy ddyffryn y Faenor nid oedd e'n cael hepgor,
 A'r cŵn oedd yn agor am drysor i'r dre',
 Sef Rorri a Ffinder a Miwsig heb ble,
 Yn beraidd a pharod yn wiwglod, yn gafod i gyd,
 Dan ymlid i Gamlo, Cefn Pawl 'r aen' dan bowlio,
 Yn gadarn am gydio, yn rhiwlio ar hyd,
 Braff gŵn Sgweir Lewis, rhai hwylus i gyd.

Llanddewi i Llywy'n dda,
 Yn gyfa gan gofio rhaid lliwio pob lle,
 Cwmfaerdy, Dyfaner, am fwynedd 'r oedd efe,
 I'r Abbey Cwm-hir,
 Mae'n eglur o'r Gogledd a Gwynedd i gyd,
 Lle hynod i'w henwi a bennu mewn byd,
 I'r Wenallt ar redeg, i'r Cwm Du yn burdeg,
 I Gefn Garn landeg yn chwaneg i chwi,
 I fyny Foel Howel fe edrychodd yn uchel
 Rhag hudo fe o'i hoedel mewn gafael yn gu
 Gan gŵn y glân Sgweir, pen llawnder pob llu.
 I lawr 'r aeth ar redeg oddi yno i Farteg
 Ar hyd-ddi hi'n landeg, yn burdeg i'r byd,
 Heibio'r Coed Gleision fe 'nelodd e'n union
 Am Greigiau'r Allt Gochion, rhai geirwon i gyd,
 Ar hyder cael odfa rhag lladdfa mewn llid.

I'r Wylorn heb wad
 Yn drwyad' i dreio eu diffygio heb ffael,
 Ond Ffinder a Rorri yn ddigel fynnai' i gael.
 'R hyd y cefnydd yn hy
 I Graig y Neuddu, mwyn noddfa, dyweda' heb wad,

Dyma Miwsig a Sowndwel a'u cenedl i'r gad!
 Nhwy redsant hwy'n ffyrnig i fyny i Langurig.
 Dyma Ffamws arbennig, nid diddig ar dir,
 A Fflora a Chymli yn dilyn y rheiny,
 Rhai gweddus yn gweiddi am ei glymu fe'n glir.
 Dyma'r cŵn mwya' pendant dan warant yn wir.
 Trwy Gwm-march, Glynbrochan a Dyffryn Glynhafren
 A Chefn Maenhinon, Pumlumon heb ble,
 I lawr i Aberbiga, Llanidloes a'i odle,
 Trefeglwys trwy fagle rhyw foddau âi fe,
 Dyma Gŵn Sgweir Lewis, rhai hwylus heb ble.

Oddi yno i Lanbryn-mair
 Mae'r gair 'r hyd y gwledydd beunydd yn bod
 'R âi cŵn Sgweir Lewis, rhyglyddus ei glod.
 Y Cadno oedd yn bod
 Yn hynod pryd hynny, bron ffaelu â ffoi,
 Fe roddai lef uchel fel gwyddel maen gwae.
 Heb atal 'r aeth eto oddi yno i blwy' Carno
 Ac oddi yno'n ochneidio ac yn wylo'n bur wael,
 Gan ddywedyd 'Fel yma fe dderfydd amdana,
 Fe'm llorpir i'n llarpiau mewn golau heb gêl.
 Bydda' i gan Rorri a Ffinder a Miwsig fel mêl'.
 Ac felly y cadno gâi'i ddiweddedd yng Ngharno
 A Rorri yn ei rwygo ac yn llarpio'n bur llon,
 A Ffinder o ran dicter nhwy fwytawn ei hanner,
 A Miwsig o ran mawrder a llawnder yn llon.
 Ple gwelwyd mewn talaith fath helaeth â hon?
 Trwy un plwy' ar ddeg
 Yn landeg ar redeg neu chwaneg i chwi,
 Rhedan' cŵn Sgweir Lewis, rai hwylus mwyn hy,
 Trwy ran o dair sir.
 Mae'n eglur gŵn gwiwglod, rhai hynod eu hoen,
 Mi allwn feddwl heb amau fod eu pennau mewn poen.
 Llanwrthwl llawnwrthiau, a Namel hen amau,
 Llanddewi, mae'n olau mewn brintiau o'r bron,
 Llananno, Llanbister, Saint Harmon trwy burder
 Nhwy redasant yn eger mewn llawnder yn llon,
 Llangurig, lle gorau diheintiau ydyw hon,
 Llanidloes, llwyn odiaeth, Trefeglwys, lle helaeth,
 A Llanbryn-mair odiaeth iach doreth ar dir,

Carno, plwy' cornfawr, lle hwylwyd ei elor
 Heb dŷ nac ysgubor na gwibor ond gwir
 Brycheiniog, Maesyfed, Trefaldwyn, tair sir.

Dymunwn mewn hedd
 Bob rhinwedd i'w rhannu a'u bennu mewn byd
 I'r Sgweir a Madam yn gyfan i gyd.
 A'i etifeddion 'r un modd
 A Rhywfodd yn rhyfedd mewn rhinwedd yn rhes
 A bendith Dad cyfion, rhai llawnion er lles.
 Duw doro di lwyddiant hoff union a ffyniant,
 Boed miloedd yn rhoi moliant dan warant yn wir
 I'r Sgweir gwych foddau a Madam lân olau,
 Rhwydd roddai rinweddau rhai gorau heb gur,
 A bendithia 'i blant union, rhai tirion ar dir,
 I gadw cŵn gwiwlon i ddifa pryf gwylltion
 Rhag lladd defaid dofion dwys union heb sôn,
 Rhag difa'r ŵyn gweinion, yn llon efo'u mamogion
 Yn beraid a phurion, yn llon dan y llen,
 Wel, dyma 'nymuniant mewn mwynder, Amen.

Gather together everyone.
 Both great and small, everyone together,
 Listen to the tale of a hunt, a very long one
 For the thin, fierce fox.
 One with cruel intent, one of the great ones, that's clear,
 And the dogs of Squire Lewis, a gifted rider.
 You'll get the story of the shires as well as the parishes,
 Mountains and valleys that he ran along,
 And the dogs that followed him this year, amazing to relate,
 By sniffing the valleys, he roused them all.
 Are there dogs anywhere in the world to compare with them?
 Brycheiniog gather strongly together, and arise,
 Warmly sing together, praise in peace
 The dogs of Squire Lewis, a generous, gentle and nice man,
 A gifted and talented man, gentle and good-looking.
 You should praise him until you are buried in your grave.

From the hillocks of the Cnwch,
 Lusty and confident arose the great strong fox;
 And Rorri went with him, beautiful to behold.

And so onwards
 All in a pleasant throng, all in their element,
 And Ffinder was the next to the front bellowing,
 ‘Si-ho,’ said Miwsig and Sowndwel furiously,
 And matchless Ffamws, wild in the chase,
 And Fflora and Cymli, ambling along, and Lili,
 And Danser holding their ground,
 And Preimar and Bliwmon hard at it,
 Triwbel and Trowser and Roman and Lider,
 And Dinger was in full cry,
 And Fforman and Clowdy in their prime this year,
 Isn’t it good reciting their names in order?
 That is all their names exactly as I was told them.

But next I shall tell you,
 Listen now carefully, so you understand better,
 The way that the fox ran from his murderous cell
 The rocks of the Cnwch, that’s clear
 Clearly seen in the open air, to everyone’s satisfaction,
 From there to Corn Gafallt, I understand he went,
 Then to Rhyd Crychdu and Cefn Gwastedyn,
 To the Gorsddu they went in a line, didn’t they?
 Through the valley of the Faenor, he couldn’t get rid of them,
 And the dogs
 Rorri and Ffinder and Miwsig, certainly,
 Bright and eager and praiseworthy, all in a pack,
 Chasing to Camlo, Cefn Pawl they went, bowling along,
 Strong biters, rolling along,
 The fine hounds of Squire Lewis, all in high spirits.

Llanddewi to Llywy going well,
 All together remembering to be seen in every place,
 Cwmfaerdy, Dyfaner, it was gentle going,
 To Abbey Cwm-hir,
 It is clear from the north and all of Gwynedd,
 A remarkable place to name and make known to the world,
 To the Wenallt at a run, to the Cwm Du lovely to see,
 To beautiful Cefn Garn as well,
 Up Moel Hywel, it looked high,
 Trying to cheat him of his life in the strong grip
 Of the honest Squire’s dogs, a wonderful pack.

Down he went, running from there to the Marteg
 All the way along it, a sight to behold,
 Past the Coed Gleision, he aimed exactly
 For the rocks of the Allt Gochion, they were all rough,
 Confident that he would not yet be killed in rage.

To the Wylorn without doubt
 Thoroughly trying to tire them out without fail.
 But Ffinder and Rorri conspicuously wanted to get him.
 Along the ridges boldly
 To Craig y Neuddu, a safe haven, I can say without doubt,
 Here are Miwsig and Sowndwel and their kennel into the fray!
 They ran fiercely up to Llangurig.
 Here comes matchless Ffamws, always good-tempered,
 And Fflora and Cymli following them,
 Handsome hounds shouting, wanted to catch him good and proper.
 These are the most determined dogs, I warrant you.
 Through Cwm-march, Glynbrochan and Glynhafren Vale
 And Cefn Maenhinon, Pumlumon without a doubt,
 Down to Aberbiga, Llanidloes, in full cry,
 Trefeglwys easily avoiding the traps he went,
 Here come Squire Lewis's hounds, handsome without a doubt.

From there to Llanbryn-mair
 The story is told daily in all the countries
 Went the hounds of Squire Lewis, deserving of great praise.
 The fox was
 Clearly at that stage, almost failing to flee,
 He let out a high cry like an Irishman in distress.
 Without stopping he went further from there to the parish of Carno
 And from there groaning and crying really terribly,
 Saying, 'Here will be an end of me
 I will be flayed to shreds in open daylight.
 I will be reduced to honey by Rorri and Ffinder and Miwsig.'
 And so the fox met his end in Carno
 And Rorri ripped and tore him to pieces, delighted,
 And Ffinder, in a rage they ate half of him,
 And Miwsig happy with pride and fullness.
 Where in the whole province would you see such a hunt as this?
 Through eleven parishes,
 Running beautifully, or more for you,

Ran the hounds of Squire Lewis, handsome and bold,
 Through part of three counties.
 They clearly deserve great praise for their exceptional vigour,
 We can be sure that their heads were hurting.
 Llanwrthwl full of wonders, and Nantmel without doubt,
 Llanddewi, it is outstandingly famous,
 Llananno, Llanbister, Saint Harmon, pure delight,
 They ran eager, full of joy,
 Llangurig, this is the best and happiest place,
 Llanidloes, an excellent grove, Trefeglwys, an extensive place,
 And excellent Llanbryn-mair, with its fruitful land,
 Carno, the parish of great chimneys, where his bier was prepared
 Without a house or barn or hovel but indeed
 Breconshire, Radnorshire, Montgomeryshire, three Counties.

We wish in peace
 Every virtue in the world to be shared and apportioned,
 every one of them
 To the Squire and Madam,
 And their heirs the same way,
 And somehow wonderfully a succession of virtues
 And the blessing of a just Father, full and beneficial ones,
 God grant you great success and bounty,
 May thousands give praise in spirit and truth
 To the Squire of excellent goodwill and beautiful Madam,
 May he grant you his best virtues and no worries,
 And bless all his children, the most attractive in the land,
 To keep praiseworthy dogs to destroy the wild beasts
 [And stop them] from killing tame sheep, in a really
 determined way.
 From killing the weak lambs, happy with their mothers
 Sweet and pure, happy under the veil,
 Well, this is my wish in courtesy, Amen

There it is, the voice of an old countryman rising up from the lost fields below us. I am aware of these fields every time I come this way. Sometimes, in the evening, you can see two valleys here, one descending strongly to the lake, and the other, as if in a dark mirror, rippling on the face of the water. In a similar way, although I see the valley as it is, beautiful to look at but without its people, I think of the valley I have never seen, which was more beautiful and Welsh-speaking. Although it

has been drowned, this area and its history are as inseparable as a man and his shadow.

The road winds on through the trees, past the drowned land of Pant-y-blodau, and out at the foot of Craig y Mynach. This brings us to the boundary of Dôl-y-mynach lake, the smallest of the reservoirs. This lake is an unfinished dam and it is a very natural-looking lake. It is hard to believe that Dôl-y-mynach farm is beneath it.

From here on we are on the part of the old road that wasn't drowned, although it has been widened and smoothed out. The old natural trees grow here, oaks, mountain ash, alders and birches, and the Claerwen is a foaming mountain stream beside them. A mile after leaving Dôl-y-mynach you can see a farmhouse in the jaws of the rocky valley above the road on the right. The valley and the farm are called Cwm Clyd, and it was here that the hymn-writer John Williams, Shetinau, Saint Harmon, was born. By now there is a new house here, a green zinc house that does not fit in with the grey stone buildings close by.

The road is on the edge of the stream here and after turning around Craig Cwm Clyd and passing a little waterfall you can see on the right the new Cilewent farmhouse. The interesting old house has been standing in the Folk Museum for some years. It is hard for most of the visitors who see it in the rich verdure of the Vale of Glamorgan to imagine the wild, rocky hill country where it stood for so long.

The road forks after passing Cilewent. The lower arm runs on up to the foot of the great new Claerwen dam, which rises to a height of 170 feet above the river bed. The other arm climbs up to the top of the dam. The length of the dam in feet corresponds to the date that no one can forget, 1066. Above the dam the lake extends for five miles between the bare hills right up to the Cardiganshire border. The surface of the lake is twelve hundred feet above sea level and four hundred feet higher than the surface of the water that hides Nant-gwyllt. This means that the hills around Llyn Claerwen look low, although they rise in places twelve hundred feet above sea level. This huge lake holds almost as much water as all the other lakes put together.

Here in the uplands of the Claerwen you can see that there is more in Cwmteddwr than a chain of beautiful lakes. On every side there are extensive grassy tracts whose beauty is hard to describe. The beauty of simple smooth forms, and the vague tints of green and blue and grey in them. As well as being close to the sky these moorlands are like it in several aspects. They can change appearance utterly and frequently. Like the sky itself the sun and wind can turn them quickly into a pale emptiness or a fullness of shape and colour.

This is the end of the road for motorists and now we have to turn back down the Claerwen valley. This isn't hard on anyone because every valley appears different seen from another direction. After five miles we reach Garreg Ddu bridge once again. Once a number of houses stood here in the jaws of the Elan valley. Directly below the bridge, on the right as we cross, was y Siop Bach¹²³ and Garreg-ddu house. Further on was Glan-yr-afon house, and somewhere here was the Baptist chapel, a Welsh-language chapel to the end. Above the bridge and back a little on the right in the jaws of Cwm Coel stood an ancient farmhouse which was named after the valley.

After crossing the bridge we turn to the right to Cwm Elan. A little further on we can see a track turning down to the edge of the water. Opposite it, on the other side of the lake, you can see the steep valley of Nant Methan and to the right of it Coed y Glannau rising steeply from the water. Exactly beneath this wooded slope, on the northern side of Nant Methan, stood the other mansion that was drowned, Cwm Elan House. This house was rebuilt at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Thomas Grove, a man from Somerset, who had bought the estate in 1792. He was a cousin of Shelley's and the poet stayed here for a month in 1811, a year before he went to Nant-gwyllt. The new mansion was a high, four-storeyed house, and I am once again indebted to the late Mr Jansen Davies for a picture of it. In 1746 Thomas Grove started digging for lead about a mile up the Methan behind the mansion, but the work had come to an end by 1830. You can see the remains of this activity up under the shadow of the Graig Ddu.

This is the most beautiful part of the lake. The road winds beside the water for two miles and more in the shade of the trees and rocks of the Llethr Melyn and Craig Dôl y Folau. The seventy acre farm was named after this rock. The site of the farmhouse is very close to the side of the lake and the fields below the house went right down to the river. A little further on again we see Nant Dôl y Folau cascading down a cleft under the Glog Fawr, and then, after turning around Craig Dolfaenog, past the site of another farmhouse, we come through the trees to the bridge below the next dam.

I said that the most beautiful part of the valley was the part below the Garreg Ddu, and this was true before it was drowned. The Elan foams through black troughs down the valley and snakes its speckled way through the green meadows. This, as well as the Glog Fawr, was what Shelley was looking back at in his 'Cwm Elan', as he remembered:

*Ye jagged peaks that frown sublime
Mocking the blunted scythe of Time.*

But as for the Garreg Ddu itself, down in the jaws of the valley the poet sings:

*Thou rock whose bosom black and vast,
Bared to the stream's unceasing flow,
Ever its giant shade doth cast
On the tumultuous surge below.*

The next dam takes its name from Pen-y-garreg farm, which is up on the right. You can leave the car by the bridge and walk the river-bank up to the dam, which rises a hundred and sixty three feet. The road itself crosses the bridge and turns steeply to the top of the dam. The surface of Llyn Pen-y-garreg is nine hundred and fifty feet above sea level. Once again we are climbing from the valley to the summits, and along the two and a half miles to the further end of the lake you feel that the road is a road rather than a lakeside avenue. From the next dam, Craig yr Allt Goch Dam, the road retreats a little from the edge of the water, running over Cefn Gwair, Rhos Hirnant, and Rhos y Myheryn, and there is no longer any doubt that the mountain owns the road. In the same way it owns that last high lake on the right as well. It is difficult to accept the fact that the water of Craig yr Allt Goch has anything to do with far-off Birmingham.

The road wends its way over the moorland to Pontarelan beyond the end of the lake and then climbs up again steeply to join the old coach road that runs from Rhaeadr to Cwmystwyth. It reaches the Montgomeryshire boundary about four miles up this road. I am always attracted by this last western corner with its black peat hags and its pale pastures with the river Elan meandering white through it. Only a handful of people live here, but the sheep are as numerous as the river pebbles of the Elan. I heard that there are a hundred thousand sheep on the hills of Cwmteuddwr, and twenty-eight thousand of them are the property of the Birmingham estate.

Three miles north of Pontarelan over the Cefn Bach is Cwm Dernol, a little valley that runs along the county boundary down to the Wye valley. There in Nant Llymystyn was the home of John Harries and his son David, both of them poets and musicians. The father sang begging carols and drinking carols in the old style. The son, David Harries, became very well known as a musician, and some of his anthems were very popular. Probably the most popular was '*Par imi wybod Dy ffyrdd*'.¹²⁴ He moved to Carno, Montgomeryshire, near the end of his life and died there in 1834. He is probably one of the last Welsh poets of Radnorshire. Here is a song which he composed in November 1826.

PYSGOTA AR LYN TEIFI

O bob rhyw gampau sy'n y byd,
 Pysgota ydyw'r benna'i gyd;
 A gwialen gywrain flaenfain fwyn
 A rhawn yn llinyn wrth ei thrwyn,
 A bachau plyfiog duriog da
 Ar fore teg yn nechrau ha'.

A chael y gwynt o'r deau draw,
 A'r pysg yn neidio ar bob llaw
 Yn awchus at y duriog blu
 O fesur weithiau ddau neu dri,
 A thynnu'r rheiny maes i'r lan
 Yn gywrain wrth y ffunen wan.

Dymunwn hefyd gael ger bron
 Gwmpeini o'r hen Frytaniaid llon,
 A'r rheiny 'gyd, heb ado gŵr,
 Am daflu'r ffunen uwch y dŵr
 Sy'n llynnoedd Teifi teg eu gwawr
 I ddala'r pysgod cochion mawr.

Os gofyn rhai o'r Cymru glân
 O ble yw'r gŵr a luniai'r gân,
 Rhowch hyn yn ateb iddyn' nhwy,
 Mae Cymmerdeuddwr ydyw'r plwy',
 Ac enw'r fan y ganwyd fe
 Yw Nant Llymystyn yn ddible.

FISHING ON TEIFI POOL

Of all the kinds of great feats that are in the world,
 Fishing is the chief of all;
 And a lovely tapering well-made rod
 And a horse-hair line at its nose,
 And good steel feather hooks
 On a fine day at the start of the summer.

And getting the wind from the far-off south,
 And the fish jumping on every side
 Greedily for the steely feathers

Sometimes two or three of them at a time,
 And pulling these out to the river-bank,
 Skilfully with the thin fishing-line.

I also want to have at hand
 The company of the merry old Britons,
 And all of these, not one man too many,
 Throwing their line across the water
 Of the Teifi pools, that are so beautiful at dawn,
 To catch the big red fish.

If some of the good Welshmen should ask
 Where does the man who composed these lines come from,
 Give them this as an answer,
 That Cymmerdeuddwr is the parish,
 And the name of the place where he was born
 Is Nant Llymysytyn without a doubt.

When you turn by Pontarelan and climb the hill between the Foel and the Geufron, there is a five-mile journey between us and Rhaeadr. That is, five miles for those who are not tempted by the open mountain all around the road. After reaching the top of the hill you can see the remains of an old green road striking out over the *bwlch* on the left. The Monks' Way¹²⁵ is the name you sometimes hear for it, and it is said that it is part of an old road from Strata Florida Abbey to Abbey Cwm Hir. This could well be true since the path follows Nant y Sarn to Nannerth and Marteg Bridge down in the Wye valley, where it joins the narrow road that we came along from Saint Harmon.

Half a mile on in the direction of Rhaeadr where the road starts to descend is a white stone not far from the road. It is called Gwyn Gweddw, but I don't know anything of its history. But about a mile further, to the north-east of it, there is another stone, the Maen Serth, of which everyone in the area knows the history. It is said that it was erected in 1176 at the spot where Einion Clud, Prince of Elfael, was murdered by Roger Mortimer's men. The prince was on his way home from the great eisteddfod which was put on by Lord Rhys, his father-in-law.

One afternoon in May 1963 I saw the stone for the first time. I left the road opposite the sheep wash and walked up the slope on the left. A little further on I came to an old green ridgeway, a sort of groove running through the coarse grass toward the east. I followed the windy track until I saw the stone on the horizon of Esgair Dderw in front of me. The views

from this high ridge were superb. On the one side you could look down Carreg y Gwalch to the Wye valley and Aber Marteg and, on the other, I could see far into Breconshire. To the east beyond the Maen Serth lay the bare ridges of Radnor Forest, grey-green on the horizon. And as he travelled towards it, it is possible that Einion Clud was looking at his boyhood home when he was attacked. The stone stands a little over seven feet from the ground and on its eastern face are the remains of a cross. I fear that what is left of the cross will not last much longer. The rain and ice of the ages, and especially the restless fingers of visitors in our age, were a bit too much for a fragile stone like this.

I returned to the car and started down the steep hill towards Rhaeadr. This is one of the most beautiful parts of the journey through Cwmteuddwr, but you shouldn't be content to travel it only in one direction. Because although the view that you get as you come down the wild side of the Wenallt below the Maen Serth is exceptional, you need to climb this road from Rhaeadr if you want to realize the glory of this rocky corner. You can take it for granted that each little valley will be more attractive and each stream wilder-looking in the traveller's eyes if he ascends rather than descends. There is no doubt that this is true about this valley and about Nant Gwynllyn, which cascades down through it.

I must confess, anyway, that I have never seen such colours on the Wenallt as I saw on that day as I came down towards the town. The whole rocky bluff was speckled with the bright yellow of the mountain oaks that had just come into leaf. The wooded hillside was from end to end as yellow as a field of mustard. A few minutes later I was down in the valley by the Dderw mansion between the fruitful fields and the tidy hedges and in a different world. As I approached Rhaeadr and looked at the husbandry at the edge of town, I was ready to accept the two contradictory opinions I quoted at the beginning of the chapter as I started this journey. Desert land and fruitful land exist side-by-side with each other here. This is the special magic of this lovely corner. For that matter this is the special magic of this enchanting county from one end to the other.

NOTES

- ¹ W. Maesyfed
- ² W. Llugwy
- ³ E. Ithon Valley
- ⁴ Pronounced 'Cleed'
- ⁵ W. Llanandras
- ⁶ Full W. Name: Rhaeadr Gwy
- ⁷ W. Caersalem
- ⁸ W. Maesyfed
- ⁹ W. Tref-y-clawdd
- ¹⁰ W. Dyffryn Llugwy
- ¹¹ W. Llugwy'n cronni o fewn llygaid
- ¹² W. Clawdd Offa
- ¹³ W. O bobtu 5 o dai
- ¹⁴ E. Kerry
- ¹⁵ E. Eulogy
- ¹⁶ W. Pilalau
- ¹⁷ W. Cwrt Pilalau
- ¹⁸ W. Brwydr y Bryn Glas
- ¹⁹ W. calon llys Prysus
- ²⁰ E. Red Ford on the Ithon
- ²¹ E. Pen-y-bont Common
- ²² E. Sick People's Field
- ²³ E. Sick People's Copse
- ²⁴ E. rashers and eggs
- ²⁵ E. Which do you want, pork or fat beef?
- ²⁶ E. Men of the South
- ²⁷ W. Abertawe
- ²⁸ E. Llandegle Rocks
- ²⁹ E. Eagle's Hill
- ³⁰ W Bannau sir Gâr
- ³¹ W. ceffylau gwyllt
- ³² Gerald of Wales, otherwise Giraldus Cambrensis
- ³³ E. Between Wye and Severn
- ³⁴ W. Llanfair Llwyth Yfnwg
- ³⁵ W. a'i enw a'i glaim i dan Glud
- ³⁶ W. i dreiglo wers draw i Glud
- ³⁷ W. Hacluit
- ³⁸ This is demonstrated by the change of 'c' to a 'g'
- ³⁹ E. Shepherd's Dingle
- ⁴⁰ Welsh 'torri gwddf' can mean both 'cut one's throat' and 'break one's neck'
- ⁴¹ W. Melin Haines
- ⁴² W. Dere 'mlaen, Tango, dere, was!
- ⁴³ W. Cnrtwn
- ⁴⁴ W. Y Ddomen Ddu
- ⁴⁵ W. Einsiob
- ⁴⁶ W. Castell y Waun
- ⁴⁷ W. Colunwy

- 48 E. Knucklas
 49 W. Pan ddaw Mai a'i lifrai las
 50 E. Skybory [pron. Skibbóry]
 51 E. the Heyop valley
 52 W. Gwenhwyfar
 53 W. Yr Amwythig
 54 E. Lloyney
 55 W. Syr Made a Muruc Pichgar Colynw a gosod o ddec pund cyryfudd
 56 E. Black Dafydd
 57 E. Radnor County
 58 W. Elfael Is Mynydd
 59 E. Also her husband, John Griffiths Morris, August 18 1863 – February 11, 1952.
 Good night
 60 W. Ni wyddys lle mae bedd Arthur
 61 W. lle bu rodwyr holl Brydain
 62 W. seigiau gwinllannau llawnion
 63 W. i flaen hoywfro Maelienydd
 64 W. Bannau Brycheiniog
 65 W. Bannau Sir Gâr
 66 E. Wolf's Castle
 67 W. Mynyddde sychion a gwlybion gae
 68 W. mieri lle bu mawredd
 69 W. uchelrwyg bobl wych haelryw
 70 W. dial a ddaeth
 71 W. piau rhent Llinwent a'i llys
 72 W. dau hen dŷ ŷnt o'r hynaf yng Nghymru, a llawer o bendefigion a gyfododd o'r tai yma
 73 W. o Fôn i Fynwy
 74 W. Castell Tinbod a wnaeth Urien Rheged
 75 E. Llanbister Ridge
 76 E. Knife-rag Tax
 77 W. pedair llaw ar bedair llaw
 78 E. houses built in one night
 79 W. gwr ar llethr gerllaw Ieithon
 80 E. Buddugre Tump
 81 W. Ystrad Nynhid a'i rhyddid rhydd
 82 E. *The Hall that was troubled by Something*
 83 E. Llanddewi Hall
 84 W. achubwyd
 85 W. prif afonydd rhydd rhwng Gwy a Hafren
 86 E. Red Ford
 87 E. The Ford of the Sick People
 88 W. wythwaith
 89 E. Nightmare Hill
 90 W. Good night.
 91 E. wooden castle
 92 E. wheel-cars
 93 W. Gwestun
 94 W. Gwestun graig sy dan y gro

- ⁹⁵ W. oll yng nghôr Cynllaw yngudd
⁹⁶ E. The Long Hill
⁹⁷ E. Heyop
⁹⁸ W. Ystrad Fflur
⁹⁹ W. Gŵr y mai ei hanes yn rhyfeddach nag un ffug-chwedl
¹⁰⁰ W. y croesawyd cannoedd o bregethwyr ar eu ffordd o'r De i'r Gogledd ac o'r Gogledd i'r De
¹⁰¹ W. O'r Drenewydd
¹⁰² W. Efe oedd un o'r rhai cyntaf o'r Bedyddwyr . . . a bregethasant yr efengyl trwy Ogledd Cymru a'r cyntaf oll a weinyddodd yr ordinhâd o Fedydd trwy drochiad yn Ynys Fôn.
¹⁰³ W. Trwy ei lafur ef y dechreuodd achos y bedyddwyr yn Kington. Yr oedd y dref hon y fwy annuwiol na'r cyffredin.
¹⁰⁴ E. Eve
¹⁰⁵ W. llew Llan-ur eglur wiwglod
¹⁰⁶ E. Wild Boar
¹⁰⁷ E. Llywelyn Our Last Ruler
¹⁰⁸ E. Penny Well
¹⁰⁹ W. O Ferwyn hyd fawr Hirddywel
¹¹⁰ W. Trefsgob
¹¹¹ W. llen gêl Hirddywel ddaear
¹¹² E. the Nun's Ford
¹¹³ E. grange
¹¹⁴ E. summer dwelling
¹¹⁵ W. Melin Cenarth
¹¹⁶ W. ei dŷ a'i swllt gyda'i serch
¹¹⁷ W. ger tor y fron
¹¹⁸ E. singing to the harp
¹¹⁹ E. Vortigern
¹²⁰ E. rural poet
¹²¹ W. Pont-ar-Farteg
¹²² Pronounced 'ellann', not 'eelun'
¹²³ E. the little shop
¹²⁴ E. Let me know Thy ways
¹²⁵ W. Ffordd y Mynachod

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Personal names recorded in the old Welsh fashion are indexed by Christian names; names recorded in the English fashion are indexed by surnames. Definite articles ('the', 'y' and 'yr') are disregarded. All entries are in the order of the English alphabet, thus 'Ffrwdwen' comes before 'Foel'.

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