THE MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARY

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARIAN ASSOCIATION

Edited by
ANNETTE M. BURTON

VOLUME XXIV (2008)

ISSN 1359–9062

Designed and printed by 4word Ltd, Page and Print Production,
Unit 15 Baker's Park, Cater Road, Bristol, BS13 7TT. Tel. 0117 9410500

Front cover: Caerleon ceramic 'box' altar with face showing incised palm leaf decoration (Fig. 7, p. 41).
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

THE MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARY

VOL. XXIV **2008**

CONTENTS

THE NEOLITHIC CHAMBERED TOMB AT GAERLLWYD, NEWCHURCH WEST

By Ian McFarlane and Neil Phillips

The tomb at Gaerllwyd[1] has attracted much attention over a surprisingly long period of modern history. Most of the written material is in the context of more general studies of Neolithic tombs, but there are also a few pieces of work focussed specifically on this monument.[2] The purpose of this article is to assemble these commentaries into as coherent an analysis of the tomb as possible. This new assessment has been supported by a non-invasive archaeological investigation.

The remains of the monument stand *c*.70m to the north-west of the Gaerllwyd crossroads (at NGR ST 4475, 9675, *c*. 210m AOD), in a field adjacent to the B4235. This is the 'Shirenewton Branch' of the turnpike road from Piercefield to Gwernesney, started in 1832 and finished in 1835, connecting Chepstow to Usk.[3] It intersects at the crossroads the much older ridgeway route from Trellech to Christchurch, mapped by Ogilby in 1675,[4] as part of the main land route from London to St Davids, *via* Oxford, Gloucester and Monmouth.

The location of the monument at the junction of such important routes may perhaps explain the early historic references to the tomb and the flurry of interest in the site shown by antiquaries in the 1830s and subsequent decades.

The name *Gaerllwyd* is almost certainly a corruption of an earlier name, *Garn llwyd,* which may be translated as grey or holy cairn.[5] The cairn that would in all probability have been part of the tomb is no longer in evidence. There are several stone buildings nearby which may well have been constructed using material from the cairn. The remaining megaliths of the tomb are of local quartz conglomerate ('pudding stone'), which outcrops locally and is shown on the *Geological Survey*[6] as a thin sequence between the Brownstones and the Tintern Sandstone Group of the Devonian Age 'Old Red Sandstone'. This conglomerate has been much appreciated by both prehistoric and modern builders. It occurs in relatively large, dense and hard slabs compared to the adjacent more blocky sandstones. It is more resistant to weathering, which also enhances its appearance. Some of these factors may explain why it was preferred for building the tomb. The same conglomerate outcrop continues to nearby Gray Hill, where it was used for the Bronze Age stone circle and standing stones as well as for the orthostatic walls and the boundaries of the

---

1 Note that parts of Newchurch West, including Gaerllwyd, were transferred to Shirenewton in 1972.

2 *See* in particular Webley, D., 'Y Garn Llwyd, Newchurch West, Monmouthshire: A Reassessment', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 19 (1962) 255–8.

3 Birbeck, T.T., *Sword and Ploughshare. The Story of the De Bohuns and Caldicot* (The Chepstow Society, 1972) 126; Waters, I., *Turnpike roads. The Chepstow and New Passage Turnpike Districts* (The Chepstow Society, 1948) 49.

4 Cleeve, R., *Ogilby's Road Maps of England and Wales from Ogilby's Britannia, 1675* (Osprey Publications Ltd, Reading, 1971) part of plate 16, 'The Continuation of the Road from LONDON to St DAVIDs'.

5 Morgan, R., *Place-names of Gwent* (Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst, 2005) 94; Osborne G. and Hobbs, G., *The Place-names of Eastern Gwent* (Old Bakehouse Publications, Abertillery, 1998) 28; Wood, J.G., 'Y Garn Llwyd, Erroneously called the Gaer Llwyd', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (1910) 305–12. In standard modern Welsh, the name would be more conventionally spelt *Garn Lwyd* since *Carn* is feminine. The definite article 'Y' is not required.

6 *Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), Chepstow, Sheet 250, Solid and Drift Edition* (Ordnance Survey, 1981).

D-shaped enclosure.[7] It was also used for the standing stones at Trellech where the same geological sequence occurs.

Gaerllwyd is located in the vicinity of several springs, some of which together form the sources of the Troggi and the Mounton brook, two fast flowing streams that have played a key role in the history of the area. The tomb's location is at the head of the Mounton brook valley. There are lines of sight to the south-western peak of Mynydd Henllys, towards the west-south-west, and theoretically to the Severn and to the south-western edge of the Cotswolds in the east, but not to the summit of Gray Hill to the south. There is also a line of sight relationship slightly north of west, over a false ridge, to the carboniferous volcanic plug beneath Golden Hill.

These theoretical lines of sight may be irrelevant to the location, as most of Wales would have been heavily wooded[8] at the time of the tomb's construction. Views, especially to the north and south, would have been thus obscured. However, Cummings and Whittle argue that the effect on 'viewsheds' of deciduous woodland would have been seasonal. They further argue that earlier human activity would have led to significant local variation in the density and age of the 'wildwood' and that the trees and clearances themselves might have enhanced rather than diminished the viewsheds from Neolithic chambered tombs.[9]

There seems to be no obvious positional relationship with the other known surviving Neolithic tombs in Gwent at Heston Brake, Thornwell Farm and Cleppa Park.

In speculating about choice of location for the tomb, the adjacent occurrence of quartz conglomerate for its construction may have been the most important factor.[10] If it could be established that Golden Hill may have been a source for workable stone, this might also have influenced the choice of position.

The monument is amongst more than one hundred megalithic tombs remaining in Wales[11] and all are believed to date from the earlier Neolithic, between 3800 and 3000BC, with the possible exception of some of the later passage graves.

The Earlier Neolithic

Unfortunately, as there is no record of excavation at the Gaerllwyd tomb, there is no direct evidence for dating it. However, it is reasonable to suggest, by analogy with other Welsh tombs for which

---

7 Chadwick, A., *The Gray Hill Landscape Archaeology Project, Llanvair Discoed, Monmouthshire: A Summary of Fieldwork in 2002 and 2003* (Unpublished interim report, University of Wales, Newport, 2004) 1, 9.

8 Aldhouse-Green, S., 'Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Wales', in Lynch, F., Aldhouse-Green, S. and Davies, J. (eds.) *Prehistoric Wales* (Sutton, Stroud, 2000) 24; Lynch, F., 'The Earlier Neolithic' in *ibid*., 44–5.

9 Cummings V. and Whittle, A., *Places of Special Virtue; Megaliths in the Neolithic Landscapes of Wales* (Oxbow, Oxford, 2004) 69–72.

10 Megalithic tombs seem to have all been built close to a suitable supply of megaliths. *See* Burrow, S., *The tomb builders in Wales 4000–3000BC* (National Museum Wales, Cardiff, 2006) 64–7 and Burl, A., *A Brief History of Stonehenge* (Robinson, London, 2007) 194.

11 Nash, G., *The Architecture of Death: Neolithic Chambered Tombs in Wales* (Logaston Press, Almeley, 2006). Nash catalogues 100 monuments (pp.252–4) all but three of which are megalithic, refers to a further 40 (some of which are doubtful) and postulates that in the Neolithic there were 300 – 400 chambered tombs in Wales (p. 241).

dates do exist, a general date of *c*. 3700BC for its initial construction.[12] This estimate could be up to a couple of centuries out, but it is unlikely to be much earlier.[13]

Parts of the Neolithic 'package', notably ceramics and sheep were introduced to the British Isles from the south and east, but the megalithic tombs seem to have developed, in part at least, from an older, Atlantic tradition.[14]

Excavation evidence for burial practice during the earlier Neolithic tends to show that human remains are disarticulated and communally interred. There is evidence that cremation was also practiced, particularly towards western Wales.[15] Thus the tombs are believed to have been for 'communal ancestors' rather than individuals and there were few grave goods. This practice endured until the shift to more individual burials with trappings of status from around 3000BC.

These communal graves are believed to be a landscape statement of ancestral inheritance, related to both a commitment and an entitlement to land and territory. This was perhaps influenced by increased feelings of responsibility and anxiety. The shift from a highly successful mobile lifestyle was in effect irreversible and exchanged for a commitment to a harder, riskier life increasingly reliant on farming.[16]

Flint tools assigned to the late Mesolithic and to the earlier Neolithic, and so broadly contemporary with the tomb, have been found in the vicinity of the Troggi and Mounton brook valleys.[17] The hard igneous and metamorphic rocks of the nearby carboniferous volcanic plug at Golden Hill might have been used for axes or other stone tools.[18] This possibility is being investigated.

---

[12] Burrow, *op.cit*., 118; Wysocki, M.P., *pers. com*., email 18 July 2007. Michael Wysocki and Alastair Whittle have recently refined carbon dates for Welsh Neolithic tombs and these results may be published in the near future.

[13] Neolithic culture reached Wales by 4000BC, but populations are thought to have been initially too small to either motivate or provide resources for the construction of great monuments. Darvill suggests an estimate of between 7,000 and 16,000 man-hours to create equivalent structured mounds, based on estimates done by Bill Startin and Richard Bradley and by Alan Saville; *see* Darvill, T., *The Long Barrows of the Cotswolds and Surrounding Areas* (Tempus, Stroud, 2004) 90.

[14] Cunliffe, B., *Facing the Ocean; The Atlantic and its Peoples 8000BC-AD1500* (Oxford University Press, 2004) 143–211; the Neolithic and Mesolithic lifestyles probably co-existed for centuries and there is evidence that some tomb locations in Wales were in use in the Mesolithic. *See* Lynch, *op.cit*., 48; Russell, M., *Monuments of the British Neolithic: The Roots of Architecture* (Tempus, Stroud, 2002)167–170; Makepeace, G.A., *The Prehistoric Archaeology of Settlement in South-East Wales and the Borders* (BAR British Series, Oxford, 2004) 40. Future advances in DNA analysis will no doubt enhance archaeologists' interpretation of the Neolithic transition.

[15] A possible earlier Neolithic cremation and excarnation site has been excavated by Geoff Mein. *See* Mein, A.G., 'Neolithic Mortuary Ritual at Trostrey, Monmouthshire', *Archaeology in Wales* (hereafter *Arch. Wales*) (2003) 65–8.

[16] Lynch, *op.cit*., 42–3, 48, 54–8 and 64; Burrow, *op.cit*., 85; Lynch, F., *Megalithic Tombs and Long Barrows in Britain* (Shire Publications Ltd, Princes Risborough, 1997) 5; Aldhouse-Green, *op.cit*., 40–1.

[17] McFarlane, I., 'Llanmelin Wood, Shirenewton' and McFarlane, I., Lee, K. and Davies, W., 'Shirenewton, Crick Road', *Arch. Wales*, 42 (2002) 104–5. A smaller assemblage, about 2.5km down the Mounton brook valley to the south-west of the tomb has recently been reported by Pete Bond. This includes a Mesolithic microburin and Neolithic arrowheads, some of which may be early. There are also Mesolithic and earlier Neolithic artefacts further down Mounton brook at the late Upper Palaeolithic site at Cophill Farm – *see* Walker, E. A. and Lodwick, M., 'Howick, Cophill Farm', *Arch. Wales*, 45 (2005) 148–50.

[18] Boulton, W.S., 'On a Monchiquite Intrusion in the Old Red Sandstone in Monmouthshire', in *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society*, 67 pt. 4 (1911) 460–76. Professor Boulton describes 'a dark porcellanite with a sharp flinty fracture (p.462)'. The Golden Hill volcano is less than 2km from the tomb.

There were two main megalithic cultural influences in Wales, the portal dolmen and the Cotswold-Severn tomb styles.[19] Many Welsh tombs do not seem to fit these two classifications. In determining to which, if either of these two main types Gaerllwyd belongs, it is useful to examine the recorded history, which may help to suggest how the monument has been disturbed from its original state.

The Recorded History

The first known record of the tomb is to be found in the 1613 'Survey of the Lordship of Caldicot', where it appears as the starting point for a description of the boundary of Shirenewton.[20] Here it is called *Garne Lloyde*, which is considered to be a representation of the Welsh *Garn Llwyd*.[5] This is an unusually early record for a Welsh Neolithic tomb although the tomb at Pentre Ifan in Pembrokeshire has a slightly earlier record of 1603.[21] The tomb also seems to be present as a symbol on a map of Earlswood that dates from 1608 (Fig. 1).[22]

By 1665, the name of the location had transmuted to *Gair Loyd* and by 1698, to *Gaer-lwyd*,[23] a more grammatically correct variant of the current name, which would translate as 'grey fort'. These changes may have been as a result of confusion with the nearby *Gaer Fawr*.[5] On Foord's survey map of 1771, the tomb is represented by a similar symbol to that on the 1608 map and called *Gare llyd* (Fig. 2).[24] Wood records that Gaerllwyd Farm (on and near the crossroads) was described in an 1823 conveyance as 'Garn Lloyd otherwise Gaerllwydd'.[25]

The turnpike road, which runs adjacent to the tomb and possibly over or more likely through the remains of its cairn, was started in 1832 and it would seem that Thomas Wakeman 'made an account' of the monument before the road construction was finished in 1835. This can be deduced from an article in the first volume of *Archaeologia Cambrensis* published in 1846. The article refers to Wakeman's efforts to prevent damage to the tomb by the road builders.[26]

A woodcut depicting the tomb accompanies the 1846 article although, unfortunately, there is no provenance. From the context, a reasonable working hypothesis is that this image of the tomb was made before the construction of the adjacent turnpike road and before the collapse of the capstone. The same image also appears in the 1848 second edition of Cliffe's *Book of South Wales*, with a description of the tomb which seems to have been lifted, together with the image, straight

---

19 The portal dolmen tomb style seems to have spread eastwards from the Irish Sea. The Cotswold-Severn style is evident on both sides of the Severn, perhaps influenced by the English long barrow tradition. *See* Lynch (1997), *op.cit*., 18, 54; Cummings and Whittle, *op.cit*., 3.

20 Rees, W., *A Survey of the Duchy of Lancaster Lordships in Wales 1609–1613* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1953) 144.

21 Burrow, *op.cit*., 130.

22 Gwent Record Office (hereafter GRO) MAN 115/8, 'Copy of Plan of Earlswood made in the year 1608, Duchy of Lancaster'.

23 Bradney, Sir J.A., *A History of Monmouthshire Volume 4 Part 1 The Hundred of Caldicot (Part 1)* (Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, London, 1933, reprinted by Merton Priory Press, Cardiff, 1994) 13, 114.

24 The National Archives (Public Record Office) hereafter TNA (PRO) MPC 1/117.

25 Wood, *op. cit*., 311.

26 Abaris, 'Cromlech at Gaerllwyd, Newchurch, Near Caerwent, Monmouthshire', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (hereafter *Arch. Camb*.) (1846) 277- 9. It is possible that Wakeman himself was the author. A later edition of the journal carries two articles by Wakeman each entitled 'Prehistoric Remains in Monmouthshire' and the second of these states that 'The cromlech at Gaer Llwyd, in Newchurch, has already been described and figures in an earlier Number of the Journal.' *See* Wakeman, T., 'Prehistoric Remains in Monmouthshire', *Arch. Camb*., 1, 3rd series (1855) 14–17 and 120–3.

from the 1846 *Archaeologia Cambrensis* article[27]: 'The upper stone is twelve feet long and about three and a half broad, and the uprights vary from four to five feet'.

At first glance it would seem that the artist of the woodcut is viewing from where the turnpike road was built to the south-west. If so, some of the megaliths are badly misrepresented. Of critical importance is the side support stone ((F) in Fig. 8c) which is both on the wrong side of the capstone and is leaning the wrong way (Fig. 3a) to that shown in a more reliable drawing (Fig. 5a) and the current state of the tomb (Fig. 4b). Furthermore, the rear megalith (G) is presenting its west rather than its east face and the eastern face of the capstone is not visible as it should be (Fig. 5a). These anomalies can be explained if the picture was published as a mirror image of what the woodcut artist intended (Fig. 4a). The view would then be from the north and the main orthostats would be much as they appear today (Fig. 4b). The capstone has tilted the other way as a result of the complete collapse of the side support and having fallen from the south portal stone (B).

If we accept this interpretation, then the mirror image tells us three important things about the monument:

1 There was no cairn as such left when the woodcut was done (presumably some time earlier than 1846, perhaps before 1832), just a few small stones lying on the ground, although the general curvature of the ground is interesting.
2 The capstone is in place, but the beginning of a collapse is evident in the angles.
3 The tilted side orthostat and not the rear orthostat (that is to the north-west of the capstone), provides the rear support for the tomb.

The next important representation of the tomb is the work of Sarah Ormerod, whose two pencilled sketches are clearly dated 9 August 1837. The first sketch (Fig. 5a) is from the turnpike road to the south-west. The second sketch is from the north-east showing the presumed entrance to the chamber (Fig. 5b). These sketches accompany a letter written by Sarah's husband, George, to the journal *Archaeologia* dated 20 April 1841.[28]

The 1837 sketches allow for further interpretations:

1 By the summer of 1837, the capstone was down, or nearly so, as a result of the collapse, towards the south, of the northern side support.
2 The fallen position of the capstone would support the above hypothesis, that the woodcut published in 1846 was created several years earlier.
3 Because Sarah Ormerod shows much more detail than the 1846 woodcut, particularly the 'odd' megaliths surrounding the east 'entrance' area, these stones, if displaced, were done so by or shortly after the construction of the turnpike road.

George Ormerod's letter, though brief, is quite revealing. In it he records:

---

[27] Cliffe, C.F., *The Book of South Wales, The Bristol Channel Monmouthshire and the Wye* (2nd edit., Hamilton, Adams and Co., London, 1848) 61–2. The tomb is not mentioned in the first edition of 1847.

[28] Ormerod, G., 'Cromlech of Gaer Lwyd. Monmouthshire', *Archaeologia*, 29 (1842) 400. The two sketches by Sarah, wife of George Ormerod, are in the library of the Wiltshire Archaeological Society, Devizes, ff. 73–4. They can be regarded as serious representations of the tomb, since George Ormerod, who was by this time living at Sedbury Park, near Chepstow, was an eminent historian of his time. *See* Hess, J.P., *George Ormerod Historian of Cheshire* (Herald Printers Ltd, Whitchurch, 1989) 92.

> I learn that...[the construction of the new road has levelled] contiguous inequalities [of the site and that] large stones near it, as well as some of the supporting uprights [have] been broken up [leading to the] increased inclination [of the capstone].

Ormerod mentions the reference to *Gaer Llwyd* in the 'Survey of the Lordship of Caldicot' and also says that it is 'noticed as a boundary in the old perambulations of the Chepstow Lordship'.[29] He measures the capstone as being 'twelve feet six inches in extreme length, six feet in breadth and two feet six inches in thickness'.

W.H. Thomas mentions the 'druidical cromlech' in 1839 with a somewhat different description of the stones to that of 1846 in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. He writes that there are six megaliths supporting a capstone which he gives as eight or nine feet long and four or five feet broad. He suggests that 'Some miscreants have partly dislocated the upper stone'.[30]

The 1840 Newchurch tithe map (Fig. 11) shows the new turnpike road splitting the field in which the tomb is located and this is named in the tithe apportionments as *Cae fundy*. [31] This is a name that survives amongst some of the local inhabitants of the Gaerllwyd hamlet to this day.[32] The derivation of *fundy* is not clear. It has been suggested that it may derive from Welsh *m[f]aen* meaning stone and *t[d]y* meaning house,[33] so perhaps field or enclosure of the stone house or perhaps stones. Another possible derivation is from *ffin* meaning boundary or limit.[34] Gaerllwyd is at the medieval boundary between the lordships of Striguil and Caldicot and at the pre-1972 parish boundary between Shirenewton and Newchurch. A third possibility is from *ffwrndy*[35] meaning oven house or furnace.

The field boundary between *Cae fundy* and the field to the north, shown on the tithe map and also on the 1881 twenty-five inch Ordnance Survey map, has since disappeared, but is nowadays readily distinguished as a bank and a ditch feature with two mature sycamore trees on its line.

Two watercolours of the cromlech at Newchurch are included in the *Gwentia Eccles. Antiq.* volumes in the collections of the Society of Antiquaries of London (Figs. 3b and 6a). The artist (or artists) responsible for the watercolours from this collection is (or are) unknown, but it has been

---

29 A search of the GRO has not yet uncovered any clear evidence for this perambulation. MAN/H/20/0030, 'Copy of Perambulation of Manor of Striguil at Chepstow', is an undated copy of an undated document, which includes 'a merestone at "Garellyd" ' on the perambulation. The original of this perambulation might be earlier than another perambulation, D.501.1103, 'Extract from the Perambulation of Manor of Chepstow made in 1687', which extract is dated 1824. This would appear to be the same 1687 perambulation quoted by Wood, *op.cit.*, 310, which though clearly using Gaerllwyd as a boundary does not mention it by name. If MAN/H/20/0030 is indeed a copy of an earlier document, then Gaerllwyd could have the oldest historic reference in Wales. *See* footnote 21 above.

30 Thomas, W.H., *Tinterne and its Vicinity* (Hamilton, Adams and Co, Bristol, 1839) 60–1. We are grateful to Julian Mitchell for bringing this reference to our attention.

31 GRO D.893, Newchurch tithe map and apportionments, 1840.

32 A number of present and former residents of Gaerllwyd were interviewed in 2007–8 and contributed in many ways, not least with oral traditions. These included Mrs Marjorie Evans, Mr Edgar Saysell of Priory Farm, Mrs Margaret Sparey of Goytre Cross, Mr John and Mrs Sheila Sparey of Wentwood Mill, Mr Sam Weavin of Druid's Heath Farm, Mr Anthony and Mrs Sandra Williams of Gaerllwyd Farm. Also interviewed was a person who has lived near the Gaerllwyd crossroads for about eighty-five years and wishes to remain anonymous.

33 This derivation was suggested by Mr C. Cooper during a visit to the site by the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association, on 4 July 2007.

34 This suggestion was made by Dr Ivor Cavill of Itton.

35 Morgan, R., *pers. com.*, email 20 Feb. 2008.

deduced that these paintings might date to 1845–6.[36] It is interesting to note that the first image (Fig. 3b) is almost identical to that of the woodcut in *Archaeolgia Cambrensis* in 1846 (Fig. 3a). If the hypotheses are accepted that the 1846 image was produced some years before it was published and that, as published it is a mirror image of what the artist intended, then it seems clear that the unknown artist has copied the printed image either from the first volume of *Archaeologia Cambrensis* or from the second edition of Cliffe's *Book of South Wales*.

The second watercolour (Fig. 6a) would seem to have been painted from direct observation since it is unlike any other image. The megaliths do not match those of the first (Fig. 3a), even if the first is viewed as a mirror image. It seems therefore quite likely that the two paintings were done at different times. The second painting shows the tomb to be reasonably similar to its current state (Fig. 6b).

These two watercolours show numbers on the stones (1–4 in *Gwentia IV*, 21 and 1–8 in *Gwentia IV*, 22). The numbered stones of the two portrayals do not relate to each other. Perhaps the artist, or someone else trying to make sense of the discrepancies between the two pictures, added them later. There is no record in the library of The Society of Antiquaries of London of any notes to accompany the paintings.

In 1889, Mrs M. E. Bagnall-Oakeley, with assistance from her husband, the Revd W. Bagnall-Oakeley, published *An Account of the Rude Stone Monuments and Ancient Burial Mounds in Monmouthshire*. The publication included a description of the tomb and two illustrations: a drawing of the monument (Fig. 7a) and a ground plan (Fig. 8a) of the megaliths showing some dimensions. Both bear the initials 'MBO'.[37] Mrs Bagnall-Oakeley reported five support stones to be in position 'though the one at the north end has fallen inwards'. In fact north on her diagram is about 135 degrees out, so she is probably talking about a support stone on the east side of the tomb which she marks in her plan as 'leans inward'.

Webley later reproduced the Bagnall-Oakeley plan together with his own survey (Fig. 8b),[38] which he undertook in 1960. He found no trace of the east support stone, which Mrs Bagnall-Oakeley says 'leans inwards', nor does it unambiguously appear in any earlier or later representations or photographs of the monument including Mrs Bagnall-Oakeley's own illustration (Fig. 7a). However, *see* the discussion on morphology in the next section.

There are some other anomalies in Mrs Bagnall-Oakeley's account. She reports that the capstone is broken and the remaining dimensions are '12ft 5ins by 5ins [surely a printing error for 5ft]; and is 9ins to 1ft thick'. No other commentator reports the capstone to be broken, though Cummings reports it to be split.[39] Unfortunately, the Bagnall-Oakeley plan with its incorrect compass points can be seen to have caused much confusion.[40] Perhaps the woodcut published in 1846, in all likelihood as a mirror image, has also been a reason for misinterpretation.

---

[36] McHardy, G., 'A Note on the Four Volumes of *Gwentia Eccles. Antiq.* in the Collections of the Society of Antiquaries of London', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 18 (2002) 43.

[37] Bagnall-Oakeley, M.E and Revd W., *An Account of some of the Rude Stone Monuments and ancient Burial Mounds in Monmouthshire* (Monmouthshire and Caerleon Antiquarian Association, Newport, 1889) 10 and plates I and II. Plate I is titled 'Caer Llywdd' but plate II is 'Gaer Llwydd', as is the text.

[38] Webley, *op.cit.* 256.

[39] Cummings and Whittle, *op.cit.*, 183.

[40] Mrs Bagnall-Oakeley's directional errors seem to have been repeated in the following: Cummings, *op.cit.*, 183; Crawford, O.G.S., *The Long Barrows of the Cotswolds* (John Bellows, Gloucester, 1925) 157; Nash (2006), *op.cit.*, 87.

There is a stray megalith some 30m to the east of the entrance area, presumably the one noted by Sir Joseph Bradney, when his fieldwork was done in the late 1920s or early 1930s.[41] No other writer has noted this either before or since, except Leighton,[42] who speculates that it might be the missing Bagnall-Oakeley orthostat discussed above.

The first known photograph appears in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* in 1909, in an article by Professor Anwyl mentioning the tomb. The photograph that appears with the article is attributed to Bowen who visited the site in September 1908.[43] Unfortunately, the quality of this photograph as published is very poor and it has not yet been possible to trace the original plate, if it still exists. It is clear enough, however, to see that the tomb seems to be much as it is today and there is no sign of the mysterious Bagnall-Oakeley 'north' (in fact east) orthostat.

Crawford includes a much clearer photograph, published in 1925, but probably taken during a site visit on 26 August 1921.[44] It is useful to compare this (Fig. 9a) with a modern photograph taken by one of the current authors from almost the same angle (Fig. 9b). There seems to be no change to this end of the tomb in the eighty-three or eighty-seven years between the two shots.

This history has shed some light on the interpretation of the tomb's original shape and style.

Morphology and Style of the Tomb

Quite a lot about the morphology and typology can be deduced from the present state of the stones and from the recorded history that has been outlined above. Archaeological survey work, described later in this article, has added to this analysis.

Webley's survey of 1960 is a good starting point for examining the morphology. His diagram of 1960 is shown as Fig. 8b. This has some shortcomings, most notable an error in his compass points, which is ironic in that he points out the larger error made by Mrs Bagnall-Oakeley. There are also some inaccuracies in his depiction of the three recumbent stones in front of the entrance, which Crawford's photograph shows to have been in the same position in 1921 as they are today. Fig. 8c corrects the principal errors[45] and has been annotated in red with letters for the megaliths, (A) to (K), (O) and (X) as shown in the table below. The numbers in square brackets show the numbers allocated to the megaliths in *Gwentia IV*, 21 and 22 respectively. The dimensions, in centimetres, are maximums (but not diagonals) for length, breadth and thickness. An asterisk against the dimension indicates that some or most of that dimension is buried, and so this unknown buried portion would increase the true dimension of the megalith.

Stone	Dimensions
(A) Capstone. [-, 3].	395 x 170 x 75
(B) S Transverse Portal support. [2, 1]	125* x 115 x 60
(C) N Transverse Portal support. [4, 4]	145* x 85 x 35
(D) S Entrance feature. [-, 2?]	115 x 75* x 45

---

41 Bradney, Sir J.A., *A History of Monmouthshire Volume 4 Part 2 The Hundred of Caldicot (Part 2)* (Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, London, 1932, reprinted by Merton Priory Press, Cardiff, 1994) 160.

42 Leighton, D., http://www.coflein.gov.uk/pls/portal/coflein.w_details?inumlink=6062626, RCAHMW report, 1999.

43 Anwyl, E., 'The Early Settlers of Monmouth', *Arch. Camb.*, 9 pt. 2 (1909) 261–282.

44 Crawford, *op.cit.*, 157.

45 This revision is in part derived from the archaeological surveys. A detailed ground plan of the stones cannot be undertaken at present.

(E) N Entrance feature. [-, -]	115 x 75* x 60
(F) Fallen N side support. [3, 8?]	150* x 125 x 40
(G) W (support?) orthostat. [1, 8?]	150* x 105 x 40
(H) E Entrance (fallen?) stone. [-, 6]	140 x 70 x 35*
(I) E Entrance (displaced?) stone. [-, 5]	100* x 100 x 50
(J) E Entrance (displaced?) stone. [-, 7]	100 x 60 x 50*
(K) NW Stone in hedge and in turf. [-, -]	150* x 120* x 15*
(O) Stone shown by Bagnall-Oakeley, but missing.	
(X) Stray megalith *c*.30m to E (not shown).	140 x 70 x 25*

It is estimated that the capstone weighs between seven and ten tonnes and that the total weight of the twelve megaliths measured above is of the order of between fifteen and twenty tonnes.[46]

Mrs Bagnall-Oakeley suggested that the tomb either had a double cist or an entrance feature added at a later date, a view repeated by other commentators.[47] However, a double cist would only make sense if the missing stone (O) were in place and if the capstone were broken.

There is no earlier corroboration for stone (O) though the 1846 representation (Fig. 4a) of the entrance area is somewhat ambiguous, showing as it does a single odd megalith. Similarly, Sarah Ormerod's sketches (Figs. 5a and b) show a leaning pointed orthostat in front of the entrance. This could well be orthostat (H) having fallen and rotated from the leaning angle she shows, so that the face shown by her drawing from the north-east (Fig. 5b) is now the uppermost face of the fallen stone. The dimensions of (H) and its pointed shape at the north end are compatible with this hypothesis. Allowing for the unknown buried portions of the known orthostats, stone (H), if once standing, may have been a bit shorter than the others and perhaps therefore buried less deeply, which might explain why it fell over, if indeed it did. Arguably, (H) may have been some sort of entrance blocking feature. The stone labelled '2' in the second *Gwentia* painting (Fig. 6a) is also somewhat ambiguous. It has been assumed that it is stone (D) but poorly drawn and positioned. However, it is just possible that it is meant to be (H), the hypothetical orthostat.

Mrs Bagnall-Oakeley's two drawings are somewhat unreliable not least because they are mutually inconsistent and she does not show stone (E), despite the fact that it is clearly part of the tomb's structure and is clearly discernable in the Ormerod drawing from the north-east (Fig. 5b). Perhaps her plan was produced away from site and with reference to earlier drawings.

This analysis of the stones that are still present would suggest Gaerllwyd is a tomb with a single chamber. However, the existence of other chambers, which might have been destroyed before or during the construction of the turnpike road, cannot be entirely ruled out. If they did exist, they would probably have been to the south or west, since this is where road construction damage would have been most likely. The 1846 *Archaeologia Cambrensis* article would suggest that by the time the road was built, no other megaliths survived.

Frances Lynch designates the three south-east Gwent tombs (Gaerllwyd, Heston Brake and Thornwell Farm) as Cotswold-Severn in style on her distribution map published in 2000.[48] This interpretation differs from that in an earlier distribution map, which classified Gaerllywd as portal

---

[46] Based on the current writers' measurements and using a density value of 2.1 for the quartz conglomerate.

[47] Webley, *op.cit*., 257; Children, G. and Nash, G., *Prehistoric Sites of Monmouthshire* (Logaston Press, Almeley, 1996) 33–4.

[48] Lynch (2000), *op.cit*., 47.

dolmen in style.[49] In her 1997 *Megalithic Tombs and Long Barrows in Britain*, she suggests that the tomb is Cotswold-Severn with possible lateral chamber(s).[50] She has very kindly explained her rationale[51] as a belief that Gaerllwyd has some similarity in style to Lanhill, an earthen long barrow in Wiltshire and to Ty Isaf in the Brecon Beacons. She also cites a newly discovered tomb on Graig Fawr, near Pontardulais.[52] These are all lateral Cotswold-Severn style tombs with multiple chambers and 'blind' entrances, though this latter feature cannot be confirmed for Graig Fawr. 'The lower orthostats [(D) and (E) in Fig. 8c] would be the beginning of the passage, which would be continued in dry stone-walling'.[51] If her interpretation is correct, and the tomb was similar to Lanhill and Ty Isaf, then the cairn could be expected to be orientated with a blind entrance to the north or the north-west and there might be other chambers, now destroyed.[53]

It is difficult to find any features at Gaerllwyd that would more firmly link it to the Cotswold-Severn style. There is no evidence of dry stone-walling and no evidence of a trapezoidal cairn.

Darvill includes it in his gazetteer of 'Long Barrows',[54] but the majority of other commentators either cannot classify the tomb or suggest that the style has more in common with the portal dolmen, western or Irish Sea traditions.[55] However, the portal stones at the entrance are transverse rather than parallel to the chamber so the tomb lacks the typical 'H' configuration for this style of tomb. Furthermore, the fact that all supporting stones (B), (C), (F) and possible supporting stone (G) are of approximately the same height (125 to 150cms, or 4 to 5 feet) above current ground level, suggests that the capstone did not slope significantly down from the entrance as would be the case with a typical portal dolmen. Furthermore, the landscape setting of Gaerllwyd does not seem to fit the stereotype for portal dolmens suggested by Cummings and Whittle.[56]

Webley suggests also a different possible link, to the 'Clyde-Carlingford culture' because of what he describes as an 'oval' shape of the tomb and because of the entrance feature.[57] He may have been influenced by his conclusion that the north-west orthostat (G) formed the rear support for the tomb before the capstone fell off it and forward onto the side support (F). The evidence from the earlier drawings suggests that (G) was to the west of the capstone.

---

49 Corcovan, J.X.W.P., 'The Cotswold-Severn Group: 1. Distribution, Morphology and Artefacts' in Powell, T.G.E., Corcovan, J.X.W.P., Lynch, F., and Scott, J.G. (eds.), *Megalithic Enquiries in the West of Britain* (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 1969) 20–1 and 288.

50 Lynch (1997), *op.cit*., 67.

51 Lynch, F., *pers. com*., emails 7 and 8 Nov. 2007.

52 Tuck, M. and Evans, E., *Prehistoric funerary and ritual site survey: EDM survey of Graig Fawr chambered tomb, Swansea,* Glamorgan and Gwent Archaeological Trust Report no. 2007/029 (2007). A brief account of this survey appears in *Arch. Wales* (2006) – for further information refer to the authors.

53 Nash (2006), *op.cit*., 51; Darvill, T., *The Megalithic Chambered Tombs of the Cotswold-Severn Region* (Vorda, Highworth, 1982) 120.

54 Darvill (2004), *op.cit*., 249, Appendix A.

55 Grimes, W.F., 'The Megalithic Monuments of Wales', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* (1936) fig.20, 129; Houlder, C.H., *Wales: An Archaeological Guide* (Faber and Faber, London, 1978) 138–9; Darvill (1982), *op.cit*., 7, fig. 2; Castelden, R., *Neolithic Britain. New Stone Age Sites of England, Scotland and Wales* (Routledge, London, 1992) 386; Peterson, R. and Pollard, J., 'The Neolithic' in Aldhouse-Green, M. and Howell, R. (eds.), *The Gwent County History Volume 1 Gwent in Prehistory and Early History* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2004) 72–5; Cummings and Whittle, *op.cit*., 58, 60 and 68; Nash (2006), *op.cit.,* 87.

56 Cummings and Whittle, *op.cit*., 88; Cummings,V., *pers. com*.. exchange of emails 14 Dec. 2007.

57 Webley, *op.cit*., 257.

According to Nash, '... nearly all the burial monuments in Wales possess more than one building phase, even hybrid monuments ...',[58] and it seems therefore possible that this is the case with Gaerllwyd. Perhaps some variant of a portal dolmen style tomb had a 'fashionable' forecourt feature added later. Lynch suggests that such:

> ... Portal Dolmen ... communities seem to feel free to absorb new ideas and to adapt their tombs, perhaps for new ceremonial, perhaps for enhancement of the old ... [suggesting]...religious flexibility.[59]

There are several outstanding questions arising from this discussion of the morphology and style of the tomb, relating to the original construction of the megaliths and cairn and to anomalies in the field in which it lies. In order to address at least some of these questions, 'Scheduled Monument Consent' to carry out a resistivity survey of the site was sought from and granted by Cadw. The results of this and other surveys are discussed at the end of this article.

As well as helping to guide this non-invasive archaeology, the above analysis of the morphology and of the historic record sheds some light on a local oral tradition.

Legend, Folklore and Oral Tradition

A persistent and widespread local oral tradition is that the stones have moved. This is usually a second-hand tradition although some people remember first-hand the stones being high enough for cattle to shelter under or to be seen more clearly 'from the bus'.[32] Crawford's photograph clearly does not show any change in the height of the stones over the last eighty years or so but it does show that the hedge was lower. This might explain why the stones appeared higher and why they could be seen 'from the bus'.

But of course, the historic evidence is that both the side support and the capstone have moved, probably when the turnpike road was constructed 175 years ago. It may also be that stone (H) has fallen, perhaps a few years later. Because these megalithic monuments attract so many other legends, it is likely that these events (and no doubt earlier changes to the tomb such as the robbing of the cairn) have been handed down by word of mouth as 'the stones have moved'.

It is interesting to speculate how the earliest recorded name *Garne Lloyde* arose. Assuming this means grey or holy cairn, it might then date back to the time when the cairn was still in existence. Unless this oral tradition goes back to the earlier Neolithic, one would expect the cairn to have a covering of vegetation and so it is more likely that the translation is holy cairn, despite the fact that the stones are grey (though it is always possible that the original tradition was 'cairn' and the 'grey' was added when the cairn was robbed).[60] It seems strange that the tomb should be seen as 'holy' in the early-seventeenth century. Perhaps the original description of the monument had somehow been handed down over the millennia.

Of similar interest is the name of the field in which the tomb is situated, *Cae fundy*. If this did originally mean 'field or enclosure of the stone house' or 'of a boundary house' then this suggests a later tradition based on appearance. In the 1846 A*rchaeologia Cambrensis* article, Wakeman is said to have mistaken from a distance that the monument was a stone house.

One might assume that the movement of the name from *Garn* to *Gaer* during the seventeenth century represented a break with any earlier tradition of holiness. Then and during the two centuries

---

58 Nash (2006), *op.cit*., 22.
59 Lynch (2000), *op.cit*., 72–3.
60 Wood, *op.cit*., 307–9.

that followed, the term 'cromlech'[61] became increasingly used for megalithic structures, as did a general belief that they were associated with druids.[62] Some thought the chambers were druids' houses and some that the capstones were altars for sacrifice. The term 'druid's table' was used, similar to the Breton *dolmen* meaning 'stone table'. So in a sense the idea of holiness survived.

Gaerllwyd provides some amusing examples of this purported link to the Celtic past. The article of 1846[63] speculated that the monument is the 'resting place of the celebrated Caracticus' or if not of him then of 'some British chieftain of ancient days, who fell in battle'. Thomas asserts 'That they were druidical is a matter of history, but whether they were monumental or sacrificial, remains in doubt'.[64] Interestingly, just to the north of the Gaerllwyd tomb is 'Druid's Heath Farm', though this name would seem to be no older than 1949.[32]

Credit must be given to Mrs Bagnall-Oakeley for being somewhat ahead of her time in siding as early as 1889 with those who believed that the tombs pre-dated Celtic Britain.[65] The debate with the druid devotees was finally settled with the publication in 1915 of John Ward's excavations at Tinkinswood.[66]

There are some other traditions that link the tomb with death. According to Roy Palmer, Jack of Kent is said to have fought the Devil at Gaerllwyd and Gibbon relates that the tomb was known as 'Sion Cent's Quoits', one of many 'stone throwing' Jack of Kent legends prevalent in the Chepstow area and possibly relating to the late-fourteenth century.[67] A local oral tradition is that the stray stone (X) some 35m to the east, was used as a block for chopping people's heads off. It is also said to cover a well.

The Archaeology

'Scheduled Monument Consent', under Section 42 (2) was granted by Cadw on 16 October 2007 and the field was prepared for a resistivity survey on 25 October.[68] This survey was carried out using a TR Systems TRCIA 1.31 resistance meter fitted with 0.5m array, allowing 400 readings *per* 20m square. The area surveyed amounted to 2400m^2 divided into six 20m grid squares arranged parallel to the B4235. Boundaries of the site and obstacles necessitated some partial grids. The data was downloaded to the 'Archaeosurveyor' software from which a shade plot was produced. The shade plot was then exported to 'Adobe Illustrator CS' for publication.

The results yielded some interesting anomalies and it was decided to undertake a topographic survey of the field as an aid to interpreting the results. The topographical survey was carried out using a 'Topcon GPT 3007 Total Station' with data downloaded into 'Civilcad 6.4' for initial

---

61 Stephens, T., 'On the Naming of Cromlechau', *Arch. Camb.* (1856) 99–109. The Welsh term *cromlech* is often translated as 'stone circle', a meaning still used in France but no longer in Britain. Stephens translates it more literally as 'crooked stone' and cites its first use in George Owen's *History of Pembrokeshire* (*c*.1600), prior to which these monuments were more simply called *llech*, for example in the *Mabinogi* of *Perdur ab Evrawc* in which a rusty-armoured black knight arose from under such a monument.

62 Burrow, *op.cit*., 130.

63 Abaris, *op.cit*., 278. Presumably the writer fashions himself 'Abaris' after the ancient Celtic priest of that name.

64 Thomas, *op.cit*., 61.

65 Bagnall-Oakeley, *op.cit*., 7.

66 Burrow, *op.cit*., 134.

67 Palmer, R., *The Folklore of (Old) Monmouthshire* (Logaston Press, Almeley, 1998) 102; Gibbon, A., *The Mystery of Jack of Kent and The Fate of Owain Glyndŵr* (Sutton, Stroud, 2007) map 2, 156 (plates), 184, 272.

68 We wish to thank Dorothy Brabon and Shirley Bonsey of the Shirenewton Local History Society for invaluable assistance in laying out the field.

processing and then into 'Autocad' for annotation and scaling. A digital terrain model was produced showing a contour layout at 0.10m intervals, for the area of the survey. The Autocad plot was then imported into Adobe Illustrator CS, combined with the resistivity plot and annotated to produce a composite plan (Fig. 10).

It was originally planned that the survey would include part of the field on the west side of the B4235. This field has an interesting, probably entirely natural, 'false ridge' providing for the top of the cairn to be visible above the skyline when viewed from the two stream valleys below. These are tributaries of the Troggi brook, one of which is the Blackbird brook. As already noted, there is a line of sight in this direction across these valleys to the Golden Hill volcanic plug.

In fact the survey was limited to that part of *Cae fundy* to the east of the turnpike road because the owner advised that the field to the west had been deeply ploughed fairly recently for a cereal crop.

It was also intended to extend the resistivity survey to the north of the field boundary shown on the tithe map. This is clearly discernible as a bank and ditch feature. Again the owner provided information that this area had been ploughed during the Second World War.

Analysis of the results suggests a number of interesting things (*see* Fig. 10). As far as the monument is concerned, there is an area of high resistivity to the north and north-east of the tomb chamber. This could of course be bedrock but the topography does not necessarily support this view and so the dark area shown could well be the remains of the cairn below current ground level. If this is the cairn, the survey might be interpreted as showing the remains of horns to the east with an entrance, possibly blind, just like a lateral Cotswold-Severn style tomb. However, if so it would be oriented east-west with the chamber almost parallel to the cairn, not at an angle as would be expected. Furthermore, the cairn seems too far to the north of the chamber for the east-west orientation to make sense. An alternative interpretation is that the cairn was oriented north-south (supporting the lateral Cotswold-Severn style), but that all the material beneath the surface to the south disappeared when the turnpike road was built. If this were the case, then an area of high resistivity would have been expected between the south of the tomb and the road. This survey does not show this. Thus, the evidence suggests a simpler structure, though the position of the possible cairn relative to the chamber is a bit odd. It has been suggested that some cairns, particularly those associated with portal dolmens, may have been low platforms rather than a covering of the burial chamber.[69]

There also seem to be the remains of some sort of curvilinear kerbstones following a ditch to the east of the chamber entrance. This does not seem to be a natural feature and may be the remains of some circular structure that could have pre-dated the construction of the megalithic tomb. It is perhaps relevant to note that some of the antiquary representations suggest that the tomb is on the remains of a slight mound, which indeed it is.

The survey also shows that it would have been theoretically possible for orthostats (G) and (F) to have supported the capstone (A) as Webley suggested. The relevant long axis of the capstone (A) is 3.7m and now lies at a north-south slope of 1:10 from the horizontal. The distance from the west side of (B) to the east face of (G) is less than 3m and could therefore have been spanned by (A) whilst retaining support from (C), (B) and (F). As stated earlier, the evidence from the nineteenth-century images suggests that (G) did not support the capstone. Furthermore, the western end of the displaced capstone is currently between 25 and 70cm to the east of (G). If it had once rested on (G) it would have had to move in an eastwards direction when it collapsed. The capstone is estimated to

---

[69] Cummings and Whittle, *op.cit.*, 74.

weigh at least seven tonnes, whereas the above ground portions of the two portals, (B) and (C) weigh about one and a half tonnes and less than a tonne respectively. If the capstone had shifted to the east, either these orthostats would have been pushed to lean towards the east, or else marks on the underside of the capstone could have been expected to record such a traumatic event. Thus, it seems most likely that (G) did not support the capstone and that the chamber would have been approximately 2.6m long by 1.7m wide.

So, many of the questions outstanding from the earlier analysis of the morphology have been at least partly answered. The cairn would seem to be to the north of the megaliths and to be inconsistent with the tomb being of Cotswold-Severn style. There is no evidence for more than one chamber or for the capstone having been broken. Stone (H) may well have been the missing stone (O) and the rear orthostat (G) was probably not a support stone. It is not possible to deduce the original functions of stones (G), (I), (J) and (K), the original height of the tomb or the nature of the cairn except by excavation within the scheduled area.

The survey has revealed some other information about the field in which it lies. There are many interesting features shown, but there are two in particular that stand out. Firstly there is a linear high resistance feature with a dogleg, which might almost be respecting some aspect of the monument. Because this coincides with a ditch-like feature on the topography, it could well be natural stone. On the other hand, it could be the remains of a wall or some other boundary feature, in which case its close proximity to the tomb could be of great significance.

Also significant is the somewhat complex, large area of high resistance between the tomb and a barn. The high resistance area seems to contain a number of right angles. These readings could show bedrock or signs of quarrying, but it is more likely that they represent one or more masonry buildings.

On the 1840 tithe map (Fig. 11) and apportionments, the barn and a curved area to the west of it, is designated 'homestead and gardens'. It seems reasonable to suggest that if there was an earlier building immediately to the west of this it would have been considerably earlier, perhaps Roman or early Medieval.

The stray stone 30m to the east of the tomb, (X) in the table of megaliths, is on closer examination not quartz conglomerate, but sandstone with quartz inclusions. It looks as if it has been dressed, with a distinctly chamfered edge.

Bradney suggests that a lost early Celtic church, called *Llanfihangel Lechryd,* might be near the site of Wentwood Mill.[70] This is just over a kilometre to the south-west of the tomb. One could speculate that the 'holy' translation of *llwyd* might relate to a Christian tradition taking over from a much older religious belief. Similarly, the name *Cae fundy*, if indeed it does mean 'stone', 'boundary' or 'oven' or 'house' could refer to this feature rather than to the tomb itself.

These new questions might be answered by carefully excavating one or more trenches in the field clear of the scheduled area. Such limited archaeology near the monument may well improve our understanding of this tomb and the way it was subsequently viewed. If consent can be obtained to excavate, on a limited basis within the designated scheduled area, such excavation might enable a better understanding of the field's anomalies and also raise the possibility of dating and of a better understanding of the monument's construction.

Historic records of the tomb other than those included here may be uncovered in the future. Furthermore, new archaeological discoveries and new analysis of existing material will change the view of the earlier Neolithic and of the role of these great stone monuments within this period.

---

70 Bradney (1932), *op.cit*., 157.

Donald Rumsfeld notoriously used the expressions 'known unknowns' and 'unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know'.[71] These expressions could be applied to the Neolithic, to megalithic chambered tombs in general and to Gaerllwyd in particular. Before the resistivity survey, the possible existence of later structures adjacent to the monument was an 'unknown unknown'. Now, like the tomb itself, it is a 'known unknown'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The desk research was mainly done by Ian McFarlane who wishes to thank all those who helped, including Mike Anthony, Steve Burrow, Wayne G. Davies, David Leighton, Mark Lewis, Frances Lynch, Julian Mitchell, Richard Morgan, Professor Hywel Wyn Owen, Dorothy Brabon of the Shirenewton Local History Society, and the staff of both the Newport Reference Library and the Gwent Record Office, who were most helpful. The surveys were undertaken on an honorary basis by Dr Neil Phillips of A.P.A.C. Ltd with the help of his son Adam, and we wish to thank Cadw for 'Ancient Monuments Consent', the landowner, Miss G Burridge, Anthony and Sandra Williams of Gaerllwyd Farm, and Sarah Derby who helped to control her Shetland ponies.

The authors would be pleased to receive additional information, or to enter into correspondence about Gaerllwyd. Please contact ian@thecayo.com.

[71] U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), News Transcript, 12 Feb. 2002.

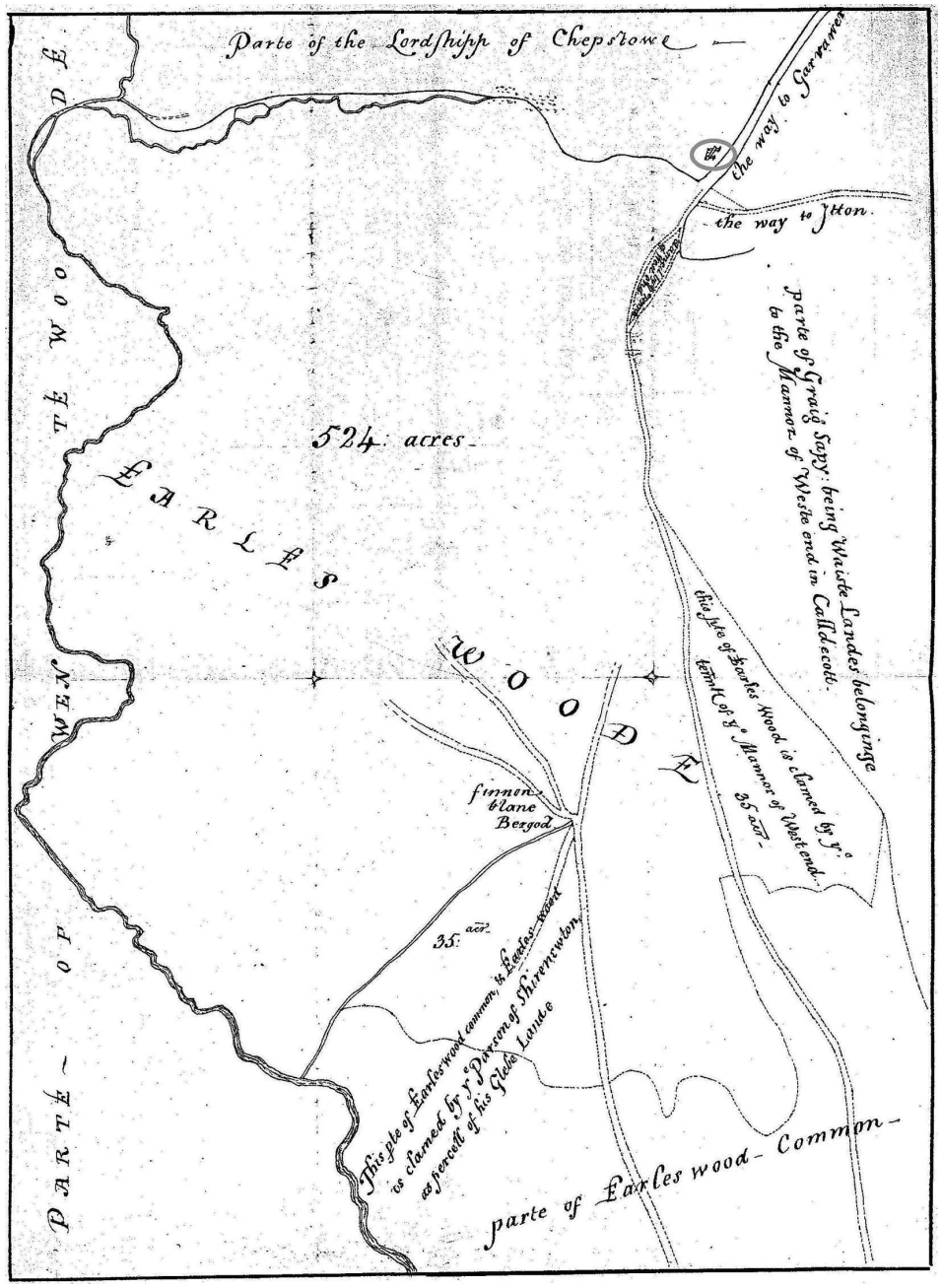


Fig. 1: 'Copy of plan of Earlswood made in the year 1608' (GRO MAN 115/8). The supposed cromlech symbol near the top of the map is circled.

Fig. 2: Part of William Foord's map of 1771, showing the 'Gare llyd' tomb to the west of the road from Wentwood Mill to Newchurch (TNA (PRO) MPC 1/117). The supposed cromlech symbol is circled.

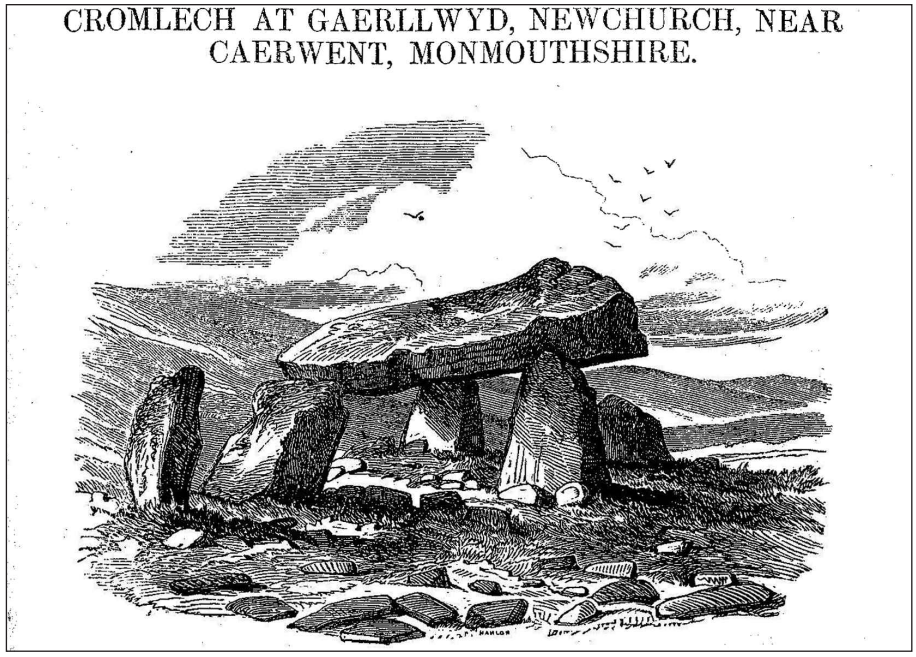


Fig. 3a: 'Cromlech at Gaerllwyd, Newchurch, Near Caerwent, Monmouthshire' – the woodcut as it appeared in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 1846. It was also reproduced in Cliffe's *Book of South Wales* (2nd edit., 1848).
Reproduced by kind permission of the Cambrian Archaeological Association.
Copyright: Cambrian Archaeological Association.

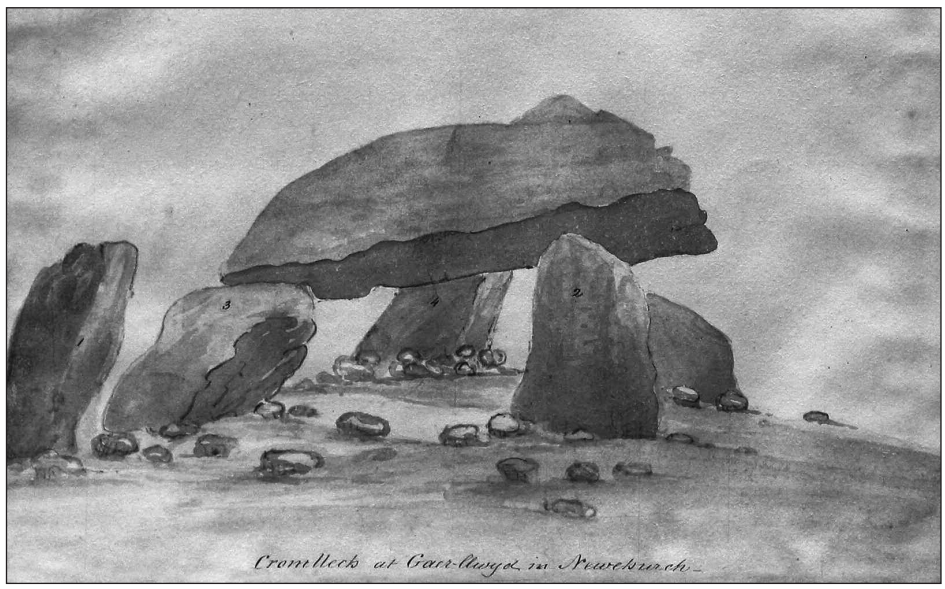


Fig. 3b: 'Cromllech at Gaerllwyd in Newchurch' (*Gwentia Eccles. Antiq. IV,* 21).
Reproduced by kind permission of The Society of Antiquaries of London.
Copyright: The Society of Antiquaries of London.

Fig. 4a: Mirror image of the woodcut published in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* in 1846.
Reproduced by kind permission of the Cambrian Archaeological Association.
Copyright: Cambrian Archaeological Association.

Fig. 4b: Photograph of the tomb taken from roughly the same angle, October 2007.
Photographed by Ian McFarlane.

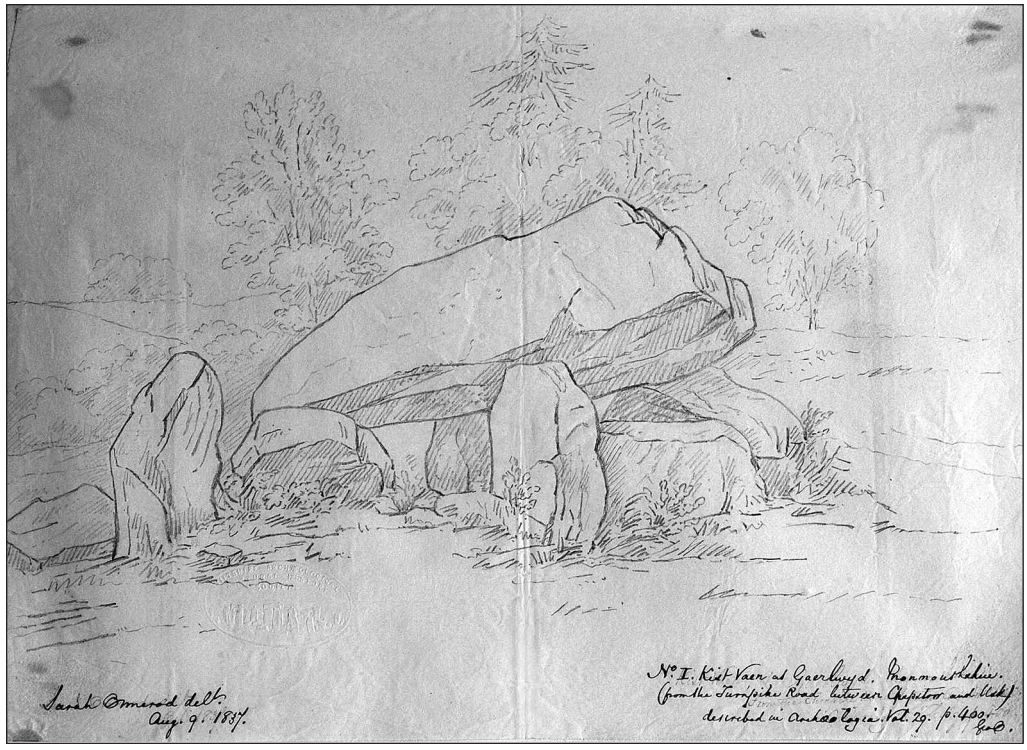


Fig. 5a: View from the south, '... (from the Turnpike Road between Chepstow and Usk)...'. Sketch, 9 Aug. 1837, by Sarah Ormerod, annotated by her husband, George Ormerod.
Reproduced by kind permission of Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.
Copyright: Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.

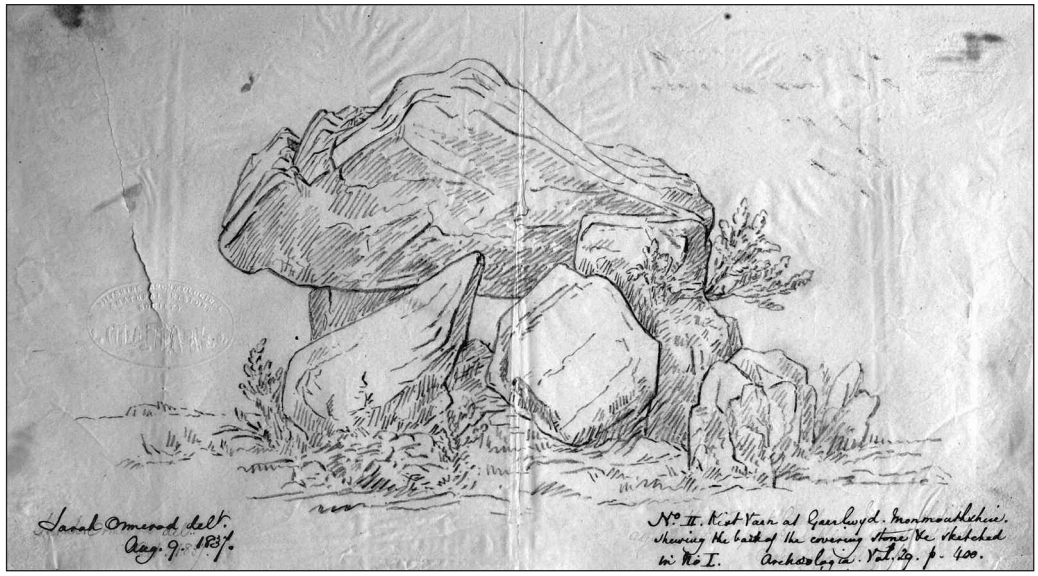


Fig. 5b: View from the north-east. Sketch, 9 Aug. 1837, by Sarah Ormerod, annotated by her husband, George Ormerod.
Reproduced by kind permission of Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.
Copyright: Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.

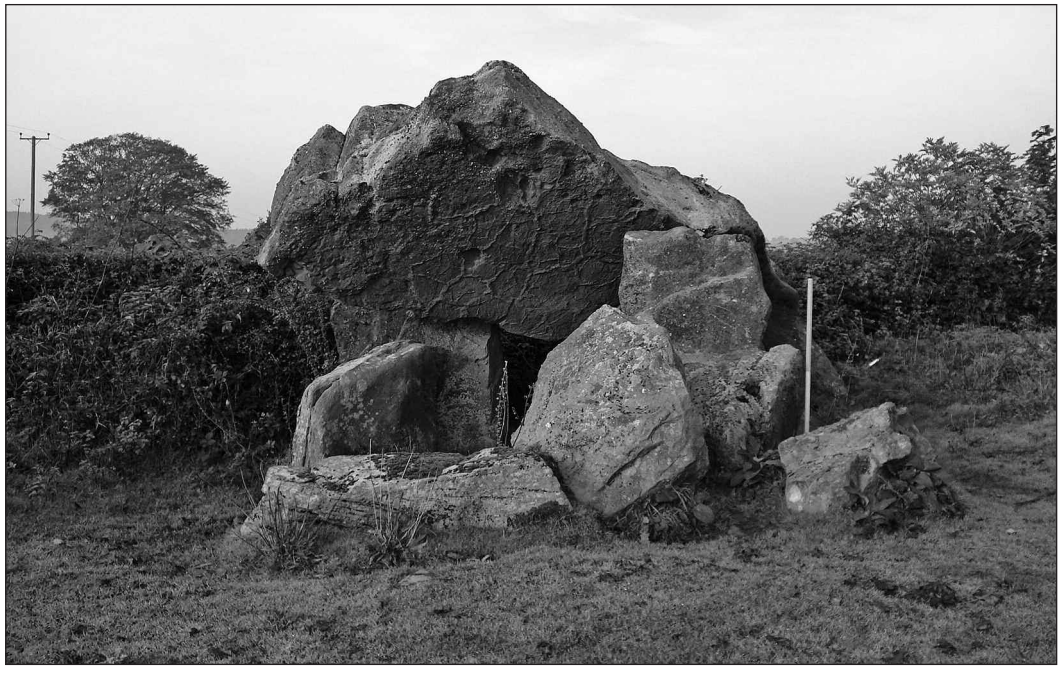


Fig. 5c: Photograph of tomb, from roughly the same angle as Fig. 5b, taken October 2007.
Photographed by Ian McFarlane.

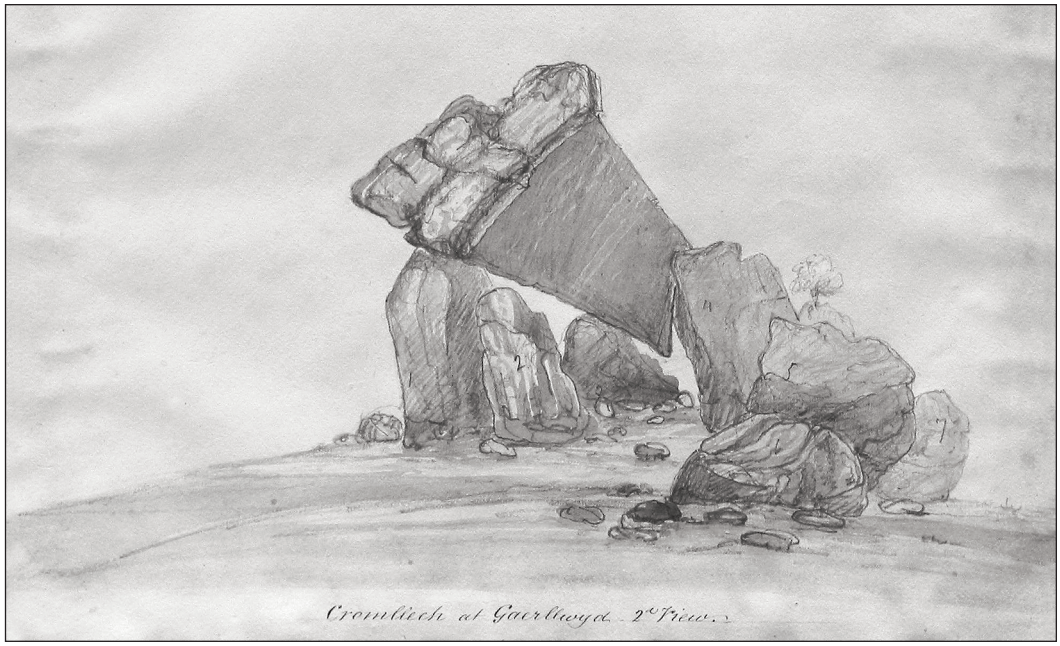


Fig. 6a: 'Cromlech at Gaerllwyd. 2d View'. (*Gwentia Eccles. Antiq. IV*, 22).
Reproduced by kind permission of The Society of Antiquaries of London.
Copyright: The Society of Antiquaries of London.

Fig. 6b: Photograph of tomb, from roughly the same angle as Fig. 6a, taken October 2007.
Photographed by Ian McFarlane.

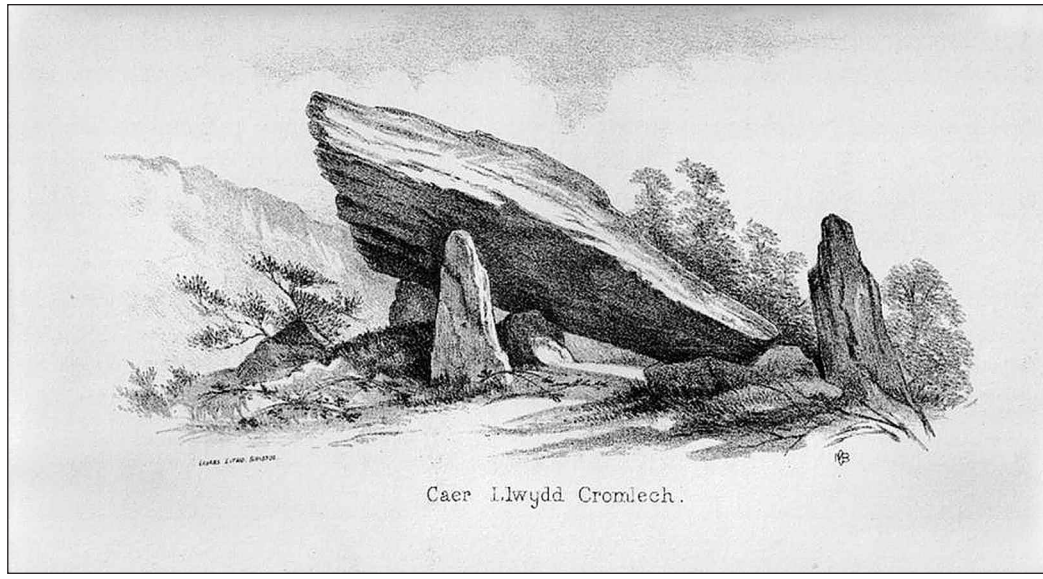


Fig. 7a: Sketch of 'Caer Llwdd Cromlech' by Mrs Bagnall-Oakeley, 1889.
Reproduced by kind permission of The University of Wales.
Copyright: The University of Wales.

Fig. 7b: Photograph of tomb from roughly the same angle as Fig. 7a, taken October 2007.
Photographed by Ian McFarlane.

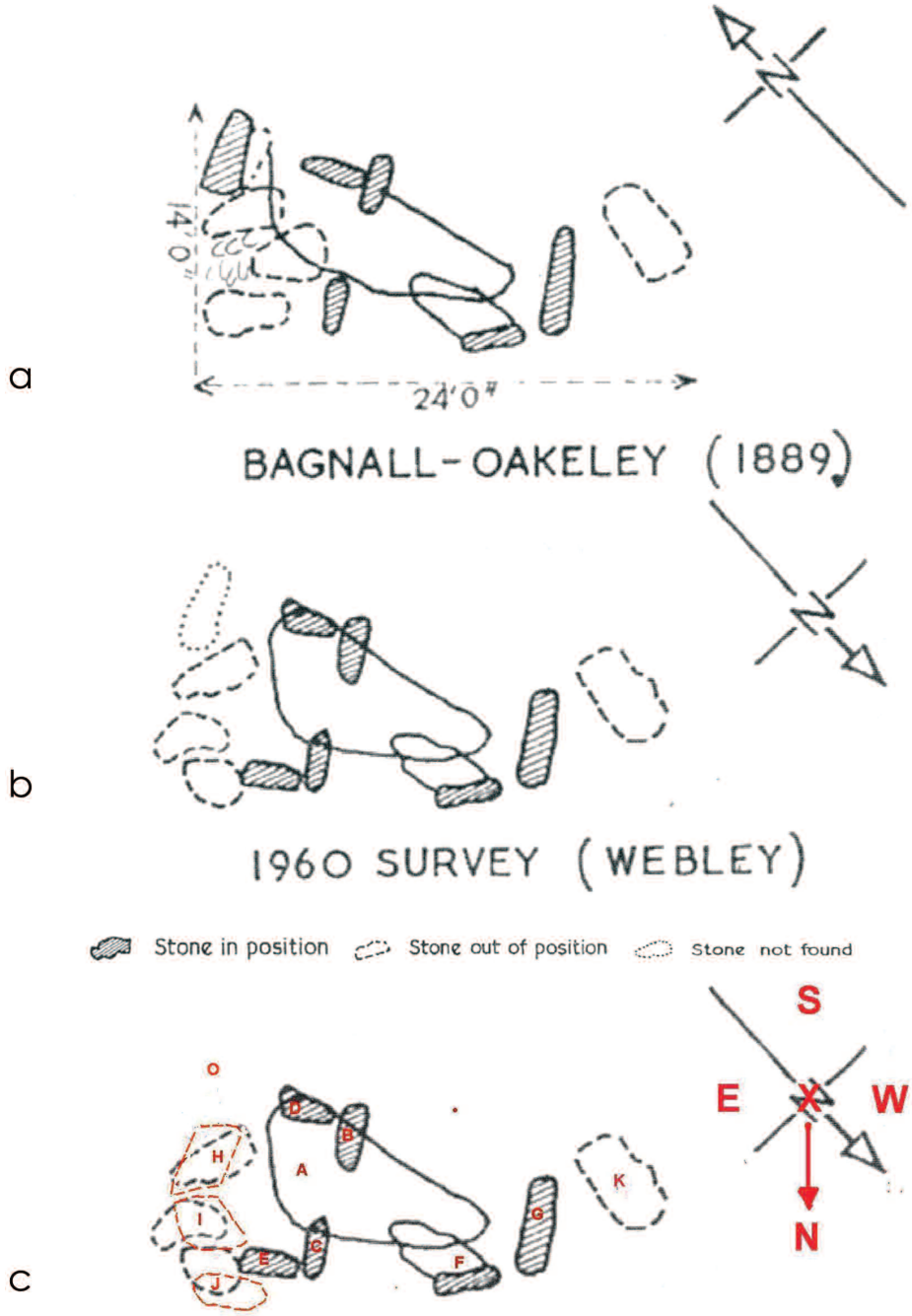
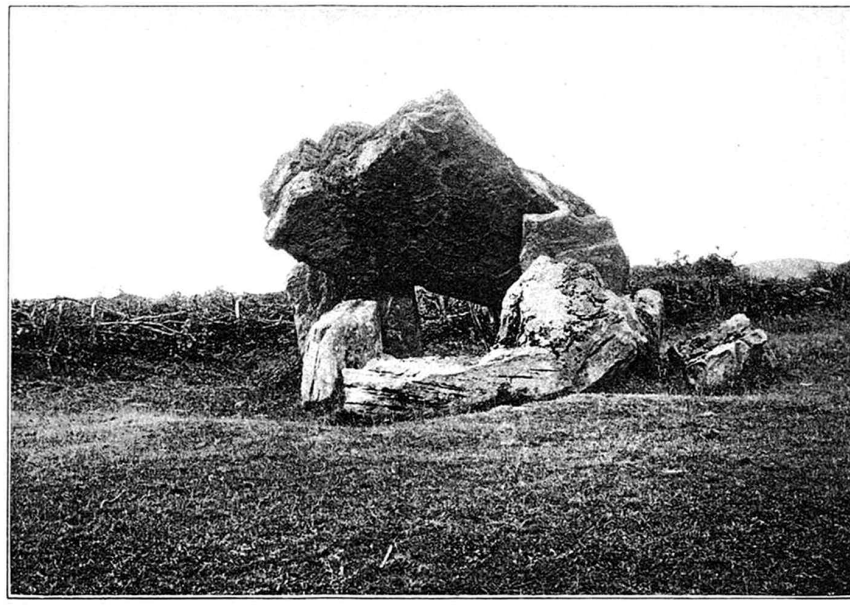


Fig. 8: (a) Bagnall-Oakeley plan, 1889, compared with (b) Webley survey, 1960, (c) shows Webley with stones annotated, amended North and main corrections in red (*see* text). Magnetic North (2008) is at an angle of approximately 17 degrees to the west B-C axis, giving grid North in the approximate position shown above. After Webley, D. in *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* (1962).
Prepared by Ian McFarlane.



Y GARN LLWYD (p. 155)

Fig. 9a: Photograph of 'Y Garn Llwyd', published in Crawford's *The Long Barrows of the Cotswolds* (1925).[72]

Fig. 9b: Photograph of tomb from roughly the same angle as Fig. 9a, taken February 2008. *Photographed by Ian McFarlane*.

[72] Despite extensive enquiries, we have been unable to establish who, if anyone, owns the copyright in this photograph.

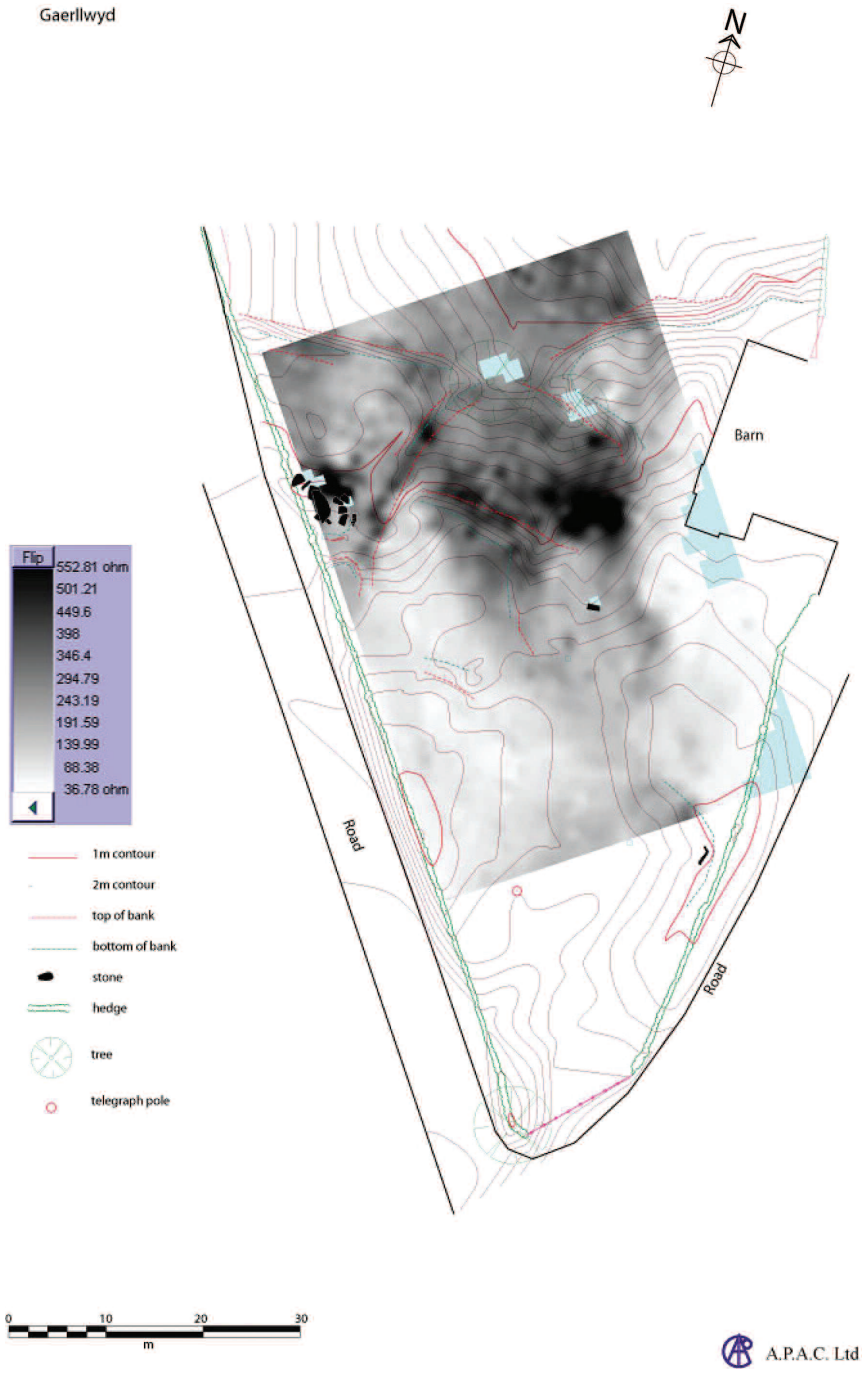


Fig. 10: Combined result of resistivity and topographical surveys at Gaerllwyd.
Reproduced by courtesy of A.P.A.C. Ltd
Copyright: A.P.A.C. Ltd

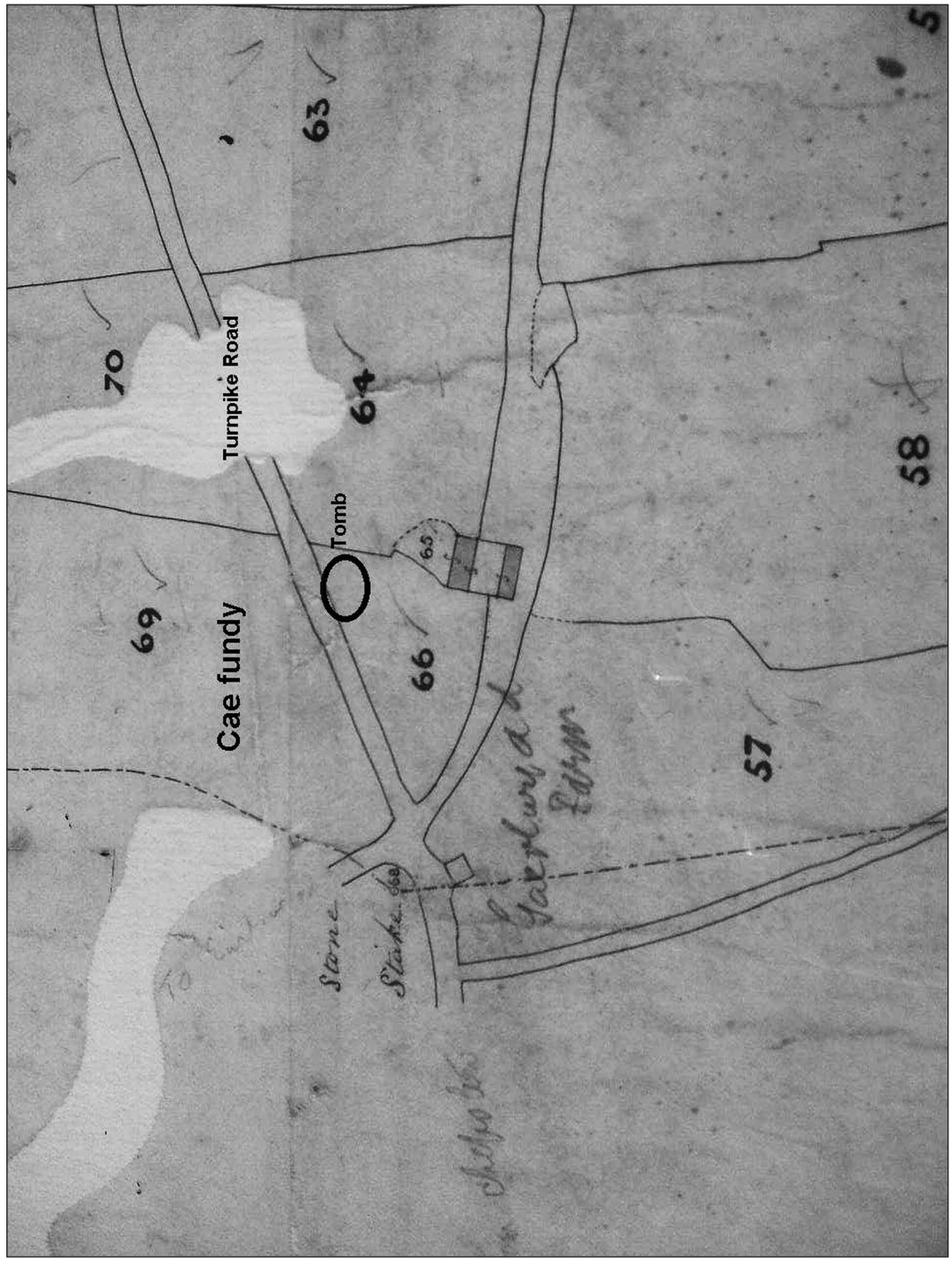


Fig. 11: Part of Newchurch West tithe map, 1840 (GRO D.893), with the location of the tomb marked.
Reproduced by kind permission of Gwent Record Office.
Copyright: Gwent Record Office.

ROMAN CLAY ALTARS FROM CAERLEON

By Mark Lewis, with contributions from Stephen Clarke and Jane Bray

Parts of no less than three Roman ceramic altars were recovered during an archaeological evaluation by Monmouth Archaeology[1]on land to the rear of the Mission Chapel, Bulmore Road, Caerleon, Gwent centred at ST 3446 9003 (Clarke and Bray, 2007). The site is situated on the opposite side of the river Usk to the fortress (to the south of it) near to the main Roman road that leads to one of the Roman cemeteries, the settlement at Bulmore and beyond.

Inventory of the ceramic fragments recovered

1 Conjoining fragments of two ceramic *mensae* (1a and 1b) of different designs (Figs. 1 and 2) measuring approximately 400mm square in both cases with candle holes of diameters around 20mm.

2 Fragments of two separate ceramic stepped 'bases' (2a and 2b), the larger matching the *mensae* in its proportions. Both are broken from their altar shafts along their upper surfaces. Surviving fragments measure to *c*. 150mm x 150mm x 65mm with the thickness of the shaft measuring 26mm, and 85mm x 70mm x 58mm with the thickness of the shaft measuring 18mm (Figs. 3 and 4).

3 One fragment of an altar shaft inscribed with the letters N, E and R. The shaft thickness is 20mm. The surviving fragment is 195mm long (Fig. 5).

4 One fragment of a probable altar shaft with incised borders *c*. 70mm x 80mm x 18mm shaft thickness (Fig. 6).

5 A 'box' altar base with incised decorated panels on three sides *c*. 275mm (face with palm spray) x 265mm (sides) measured at the base of the stepped base and *c*. 225mm (face with palm spray) x 195mm (sides) with a shaft thickness of 20mm measured at the shaft. The shaft is truncated at *c*. 210mm from the base (Figs. 7–9).

6 A fragment of a ceramic stepped base or cornice with incised decoration *c*. 10mm x 12mm x 124mm (Fig. 10).

7 A fragment of a ceramic stepped base or cornice with incised hatched decoration in two bands indicating the presence of at least two steps *c*. 18mm height of lowest step, stepped back 10mm from its face to the base of the second step. Surviving length 99mm. The fabric of this fragment is different (sandy) compared with all the other fragments (Fig. 11).

8 One *pedalis* brick stamped LEG II AVG (Boon, 1984, type A.v.i) of late first to mid-second century date *c*. 268mm x 250mm x 55mm (Fig. 12).

9 A ceramic brick fragment with a bored hole (12mm in diameter) in the one surviving, crudely rounded, corner. The surviving portion measures *c*. 275mm x 230mm x 60mm (Fig. 13).

Description

It is probable that this assemblage represents the surviving remains of no less than three altars. The evidence suggests that the altars comprised separate pedestals and *mensae*. There is evidence that one of the ceramic altars carried an inscription on the front face of its shaft (only one fragment, with

---

[1] Commissioned by Revd Iain Doull.

three surviving letters, one on each of three lines of text, has been recovered, *see* Fig. 5). An attempt to stamp an inscription into the wet clay of one of the *mensae* (1b) before firing appears to have failed. Both of the *mensae* retain evidence of localised burning at the centre of the upper surfaces. The survival of opposing corners of the *mensae* and the nature of their fragmentation suggest that they may have been deliberately broken with blows delivered near the centre of each. Both of the Caerleon *mensae* have rows of holes for candles along two of their four sides. One (Fig. 1) has rows of candle holes at the sides of the *mensa*, adjacent to the bolsters, whilst the other (Fig. 2) has rows of holes along the front and back where there are no bolsters with a single, angled, candle hole at the base of the outer face of each bolster, centrally positioned on each side.

The 'box' altar base (Figs. 7–9) appears to survive to approximately half its original height and is of similar proportions to the *mensae* and other altar fragments. The surviving portion of the shaft of the altar springs seamlessly from its stepped base. Whereas at least one of the other altars had an inscription, this altar is decorated on three sides and was possibly designed to be set up against a wall. Assuming that the three decorated faces would have been visible during use, with the undecorated face to the rear, the front face (Fig. 7) has an arrangement of a spray of palm leaves, the left hand face (Fig. 8) has a raised border along the front edge and is decorated with palm leaves and a pole-axe, whilst the right hand face (Fig. 9) has a similarly raised border along the front edge and is also decorated with two palm leaves, leaning towards one another so as to form an arch, with a knife beneath. Where the palm branches and the pole-axe meet, the wall of the altar is pierced by a deliberate hole that was bored through the clay before firing, perhaps a receptacle for garlands. This is mirrored on the opposite face of the altar. The knife and axe recall the instruments of animal sacrifice; the beast was usually stunned using the pole-axe and then stabbed with the sacrificial knife (Henig, 1984). The raised borders between the two decorated side panels and the decorated 'front' panel (bearing the image of the palm leaf spray) are decorated with palm leaf motifs in both instances. The asymmetry that these decorated raised borders create on the sides of the altar suggests that the back of the altar may in fact have been the face bearing the palm leaf spray. This would mean that the front face of the altar would have been that which is plain. No traces of pigmentation have been noted here or elsewhere within the assemblage.

The dimensions of the *pedalis* (Fig. 12) and brick fragment (Fig. 13) closely match those of the two *mensae* and their association with them may indicate that they also functioned as altar bases or *mensae*.

Archaeological Context

The *mensa*, *pedalis*, shaft and stepped base elements all formed the walls of a 'drainage channel' near to the corner of a Roman building of unidentified proportions or use, whilst the 'box' altar and other stray fragments were found near by.

A partial animal skull, bones and horn core were also found in the 'drain', which was covered by a capstone. All of the bones are of sheep or goat and comprise: a partly burned fragmented skull, three juvenile lower mandibles, two, more mature, upper mandibles and a fragment of goat horn core. It is believed that these bones were in place when the capstone was laid. Whilst it is not possible to offer a certain interpretation for the animal remains based upon the excavation of such a small area, it is noted that the bone assemblage from the precinct or *temenos* of the Uley shrines was dominated by goat and domestic fowl (the cult animals of Mercury, to whom the temple was dedicated). The *temenos* of the temple at Hayling Island also produced goat or sheep, but pig was more dominant in the assemblage. Henig (1984) argues that the burial of the animal bone within the temple *temene* suggests that, even as rubbish they remain sacred, consecrated to the Gods. At

Caerleon we may only note the possibility that the deposition of the animal bone and altar fragments may be directly associated through the rite of sacrifice. This possibility should inform any research proposal for future investigation at this site.

The 'box' altar base (Figs. 7–9) was found within 2m of the other fragments recovered from the 'drain'. The 'drain' context, containing the bone and other altar fragments, had clearly been cut from the surface upon which the 'box' altar sat and it may therefore be interpreted as a contemporary deposition.

Associated pottery from the site dated to the second to fourth centuries AD but none of the contexts could be closely dated. Fragments of four locally produced *tazze* (incense cups), with clear traces of burning, were also recovered from the site.

Parallels

Ceramic Roman altars are known from Britain and elsewhere but they are not common finds, although it is probable that fragmentary examples have escaped recognition.

The closest match for the Caerleon *mensae,* may be found in an example of a sacrificial table from Linz, on the Danube frontier in northern Austria (Egger, 1958).[2]

The fragments of the Linz sacrificial table were discovered at the Tummel Platz Mithraeum in the Old Town. Unfortunately, no date for the Linz *mensa* is given.[3] Three fragments of the table top were recovered which formed approximately half of a large, square, plate or platter of fired clay measuring approximately 380mm square. It was inscribed with a Mithraic inscription to Jupiter – the planetary god of Leo grade. The Lions of the Lion grade in Mithraism were associated with fire and offered incense on behalf of the cult members.[4]

The edges of the Linz table top are raised and have holes of varying sizes to receive candles in a similar manner to the Caerleon examples. Egger argues that the Latin inscription on the Linz table top indicates that it is a *mensa* of the form described by Macrobius (*c*. AD 400) in his *Saturnalia Conversations III* (*see* below), or a sacrificial table in the form of the *quadratum*.[5] Like the decoration and inscription of the Caerleon examples, the inscription of the Linz *mensa* was scratched into the wet clay, before firing, using a wooden tool.

Roman sources describe the use of *mensae* and *quadrata,* and clearly explain the evidence for burning preserved at the centre of the upper surfaces of the Caerleon examples.

'Exta intra quadrata contra cremantur'
'Within the *quadrata* the entrails are, together, consumed by fire'

CIL II 2395

'Mensa, in qua epulae libationesque et stipes reponuntur'
'The *mensa* by which means the libation feast and small offerings are staged again'

Macrobius, *Saturnalia III*, 11, 442

---

2 This reference, with notes, was kindly provided by Joanna Bird, *via* Julie Reynolds.

3 The excavation report is published elsewhere (Karnitsch, 1956).

4 The offering of incense by the Lions is recorded in two lines of verse beneath the lower (earlier) layer of Mithraic wall paintings preserved in the Mithraeum beneath the church of Santa Prisca, Rome. The verse asks that the 'incense-burning lions' should be received by the Father (Mithras). 'The Lions, through whom we ourselves offer the incense, through whom we ourselves are consumed'. The Lions were initiated through a baptism of fire. The purifying force of fire used in the mysteries of the cult transformed the Lion into a new man who was sanctified (Vermaseren, 1963). Analogy to purification and dedication through the fire of burnt offering (the common form of sacrifice) is also used by St Paul in his Letter to the Romans, chap. 12, v. 1.

5 Literally *square*. *Quadra* is also rendered *square* or *table*.

'Lignum quoddam quadratum, ubi immolatur'
'The *quadratum*, with firewood, is where the sacrifice is offered'

Festus, s.v. *Molucrum*, 141

There are many depictions of the sacred altar fire from the ancient world, including examples on the reverse of coins.[6] Fine sculptural depictions include the first century BC example at Civita Castellana cathedral, Lazio, Italy (Strong, 1976) and the well known, ivory 'Symmachi' diptych panel, dating to the late-fourth century AD (Victoria and Albert Museum, London).[7] A Mithraic relief from Vienne (Department of Isère, France) depicts a lion-headed and winged deity (identified as the Mithraic Kronos or Saturn) beside an altar with a sacred fire (Walters, 1974). There is also a depiction of the sacred fire from Caerleon on a sculpture dedicated to *Bonus Eventus* and *Fortuna* (RIB 318 and Brewer, 1986). Neither the form of altar nor the method of sacrifice depicted varies temporally or geographically during the four hundred year period spanned by the examples cited above.[8]

The closest British example of a ceramic 'altar' comes from Uley, Gloucestershire (Henig, 1993). The diminutive one-piece Uley example is stylistically similar to the Caerleon 'box' altar base in that it exhibits moulded bolsters, incorporated in the upper surface of its *mensa,* and zigzag ornamentation as part of the moulding scheme.

A re-examination of a 'tile' fragment (Fig. 14) found during the excavation of Jenkins' Field, Caerleon, in 1926, held within the collections of the National Roman Legion Museum, suggests that this may also be a fragment of a ceramic altar, judging by its form, zigzag decoration and mouldings (*see* Nash-Williams, 1929). The zigzag in this example also constitutes the true edge of the ceramic and is interpreted here as denoting its base, although it can not be ruled out that this surface served as the top of a cornice that supported a separate *mensa*.

The common occurrence of zigzag decoration on altars is noteworthy. The Civita Castellana depiction (cited above) clearly exhibits this form of (vertical) decoration along one side. The similarity between the zigzag decoration exhibited by many altars and the frilled decoration commonly found on *tazze* (including the examples from the Caerleon Mission Chapel site) and their chimneys is also worthy of comment. In terms of design these altars, *tazze* and chimneys visually

---

6 Silver and copper *antoniniani* of the mid and late-third century AD provide a number of depictions of altars with sacred flames (Reece, 1970). A series of silver memorial *antoniniani* struck by Trajan Decius (AD 249–51) commemorated all the deified emperors from Augustus to Severus Alexander. The obverses show the radiate heads of the deified emperors and the reverses show an eagle or an altar with flame, with the legend CONSECRATIO (meaning *consecration* or *deification*). Similar coins were also struck for Valerian II (*ob*. AD 258) and commemorative copper *antoniniani* struck after the death of Claudius II (*ob*. AD 270) also bore the obverse legend DIVO CLAVDIO and the reverse legend CONSECRATIO with a depiction of an altar with a sacred flame.

7 Dated to AD 388–401 (Ramage and Ramage, 1996).

8 The sacrifice of burnt offerings was commonplace in the ancient world. It was not a peculiarly Roman rite. A good sense of the rite may be gleaned from the many biblical citations describing ancient Hebrew practice. Succinctly outlined by Psalm 66: 13–15, further detail is provided by Leviticus 16, 17, 19: 5–8, 23: 15–20, 27, 36–7. Noah constructed an altar of burnt sacrifice for deliverance from the flood (Genesis 8: 20) and Abraham constructed an altar of burnt sacrifice for the immolation of Isaac (Genesis 22). Part of every offering was burnt in the Hebrew sacred fire, but this part was wholly burned and was regarded as ascending to God while being consumed. Citations of chapter and verse above refer to the New International Version of the Bible (NIV) where these translations are particularly well rendered (NIV, 1980). Verse numbering varies in other translations.

complement each other well. Their decoration may be interpreted as the result of deliberate intent to maintain a decorative scheme if not actually signifying their ritual purpose. Alternatively, it is possible that the zigzag decoration of the altars represents nothing more than a debased suggestion of an ovolo border?

Another, miniature, clay altar, only 0.10m square, reported by Tomlin (1993) is from Carlisle. This example was found in a Trajanic context and is dedicated to Fortune.

The similarity between the Caerleon ceramic *mensae* and the ceramic *cernus* (a stand) with signs of burning from Crookhorn Farm, Purbrook, Hampshire (Henig, 1982 and 1989) is noteworthy, but the larger cup-like depressions (80mm diameter) of the *cernus* will have served a different, specific, purpose – as receptacles for the 'first-fruits' offered to *Ceres*, possibly during the *Cerialia,* or during a similar, autumnal, festival.[9] The fragments of two, different, stepped bases and the inscribed shaft fragment found in such close proximity to one another at the Caerleon Mission Chapel site suggest that the two Caerleon *mensae* were associated with altar bases, and constituted altars in use, rather than taking the form of discrete offering platters or 'first-fruit' stands.

Conclusion

If we accept the evidence suggesting that the Caerleon *mensae* were deliberately broken, we may conclude that the site of their destruction was probably near the place where they were used. It is quite probable that this was near to their find spot given the quantity of similar material recovered from such a small area. The quantity of associated animal bone and *tazze* may also support this model. Given the situation of this site, its identification as the location of a small shrine or temple where animal sacrifice could have taken place (during the second to fourth centuries AD) is consistent with the evidence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge the generosity of the excavators, Monmouth Archaeology, and especially Stephen Clarke and Jane Bray, for inviting comment and encouraging the subsequent publication of these artefacts based upon the results of their field work and archaeological evaluation. The author is also indebted to Mr Richard Brewer, F.S.A., keeper of Archaeology, National Museum of Wales, for his most helpful guidance and encouragement.

[9] The *Cerialia* was the Roman festival of Ceres, the goddess of grain concerned with fertility. It was preceded by minor entertainments known as the *Ludi Cereri* from around 12 April and culminated in the feast proper, with the *Ludi in Circo*, on 19 April (Scullard, 1981). August (harvest time) was also under the protection of Ceres. Around 21 August, the *Consualia* was celebrated to ensure that the harvested grain was safely stored. The *Cerialia* and *Consualia* may be likened to the agricultural sowing and thanksgiving festivals celebrated today (e.g. Rogationtide and Harvest Festival). We are indebted to Dr Martin Henig for drawing this *cernus* to our attention.

REFERENCES

Boon, G.C., 1984 — *Laterarium Iscanum: The Antefixes, Brick and Tile Stamps of the Second Augustan Legion* (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff).

Brewer, R.J., 1986 — *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani – Corpus of Sculpture of the Roman World, Great Britain. Volume 1, Fascicule 5, Wales* (British Academy and Oxford University Press, Oxford) 3–4, catalogue no.1, plate I, no.1.

Clarke, S. and Bray, J., 2007 — *Mission Chapel Bulmore Road Caerleon. An archaeological evaluation carried out by Monmouth Archaeology for Reverend Iain Doull* (MA 33.07. Monmouth Archaeology, Monmouth).

Egger, R., 1958 — 'Bescheidene Ex-votos', *Bonner Jahrbucher*, 158 (1958) 73–80, taf. 30.

Henig, M., 1982 — 'Seasonal Feasts in Roman Britain', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 1 (1982) 218.

Henig, M., 1984 — *Religion in Roman Britain* (Batsford, London) 131.

Henig, M., 1989 — 'The Crookhorn Stand' in Soffe, G., Nicholls, J. and Moore, G., 'The Roman Tilery and Aisled Building at Crookhorn, Hants, Excavations, 1974–5', *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, 45 (1989) 83–5.

Henig, M., 1993 — 'Ceramic "Altar" ' in Woodward, A. and Leach, P., *The Uley Shrines* (English Heritage Archaeological Report No. 17. English Heritage and British Museum Press) 147, fig. 122.

Karnitsch, P., 1956 — 'Der heilie Bezirk von Lentia', *Historisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Linz* (1956) 189 ff., das Mithraum 205 ff. mit plan taf. II.

Nash-Williams, V.E., 1929 — 'The Legionary Fortress at Caerleon in Monmouthshire. Report on the excavations carried out in 1926', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 84 (1929) 252–3, fig. 14, no. 10.

NIV, 1980 — *The Holy Bible New International Version* (International Bible Society and Hodder and Stoughton, London).

Ramage, N.H. and Ramage, A., 1996 — *Roman Art* (2nd edit., Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River) 303–4, fig. 12.32.

Reece, R., 1970 — *Roman Coins* (Ernest Benn Ltd., London) 120, 124 and nos. 474 and 750.

RIB 318, 1965 — *See* Collinwood, R.G. and Wright, R.P., *Roman Inscriptions of Britain, Volume I, Inscriptions on Stone* (The Clarendon Press, Oxford) 109, no. 318.

Scullard, H.H., 1981 — *Festivals and Ceremonies of The Roman Republic* (Thames and Hudson, London) 101–3 and 177–8.

Strong, D., 1976 — *Roman Art* (Prepared for press by J.M.C. Toynbee. Pelican, London) 20, plate 18.

Tomlin, R., 1993 'Roman Britain in 1993', *Britannia*, 24 (1993) 316, no. 5.
Vermaseren, M. J., 1963 *Mithras, The Secret God* (Chatto & Windus, London).
Walters, V.J., 1974 *The Cult of Mithras in the Roman Provinces of Gaul* (E.J. Brill, Leiden) 76–8, no. 16, plate VII.

Fig. 1: Caerleon ceramic *mensa* (1a) viewed from above. The uppermost surface shows signs of burning between the bolsters and candle holes. Note that the upper edge, as photographed, is raised to form a wall seamlessly merging with the right-hand bolster.
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 2: Caerleon ceramic *mensa* (1b) viewed from above. The uppermost surface shows traces of burning at its centre. Note the different arrangement of bolsters and candles holes compared with *mensa* (1a) of Fig. 1.
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 3: The larger of the two Caerleon ceramic altar stepped base fragments (2a).
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 4: The smaller of the two Caerleon ceramic altar stepped base fragments (2b).
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 5: Caerleon ceramic altar shaft fragment (3) inscribed N, E and R (front face).
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 6: Caerleon ceramic altar shaft fragment (4) with incised border.
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 7: Caerleon ceramic 'box' altar (5). Face showing incised palm leaf decoration.
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 8: Caerleon ceramic 'box' altar (5). Face showing incised depiction of a pole-axe and the hole, possibly a receptacle for garlands. Note the raised border with incised palm leaf decoration along the right-hand edge as photographed.
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 9: Face showing incised depiction of a sacrificial knife framed by palm leaf decoration and the corresponding hole to that shown in Fig. 8 above. Note the raised border decorated with incised palm leaf decoration along the left-hand edge as photographed.
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 10: A fragment of a ceramic stepped base or cornice (6) with incised hatched decoration.
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 11: A fragment of a ceramic stepped base or cornice (7) with incised hatched decoration.
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 12: A *pedalis* brick (8) stamped LEG II AVG (Boon, 1984, type A.v.i).
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 13: A fragment of brick (9) with a deliberately rounded corner (post firing) and bored hole.
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

Fig. 14: Caerleon Jenkins' Field 'tile'. National Roman Legion Museum accession no. 32.62 (+).
Photographed by James Wild, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales.

THE CULT OF ST THOMAS BECKET IN MONMOUTHSHIRE, WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PARISH OF LLANTHOMAS

By David H. Williams

Introduction: The Cult in Wales

The martyrdom in 1170, his subsequent canonization three years later, and the translation of St Thomas Becket's remains into the Trinity chapel of Canterbury cathedral in 1220, fired a wave of intense devotion in England to his memory. New churches being built were dedicated in Becket's honour – as far afield as those at Chapel-en-le-Frith in Derbyshire and of Cliffe in Lewes, Sussex. Some churches with earlier dedications were renamed, like the ancient church of St Merryn near Padstow in Cornwall.[1]

In Wales the cult was muted and restricted to areas of Anglo-Norman penetration and settlement. Views differ on how many Welsh people made the pilgrimage to Canterbury,[2] but Archdeacon Gerald of Wales told how he, and his companions, went there 'with the sign of St Thomas hung about necks', referring to ampules containing the martyr's diluted blood. It was appropriate as St Thomas's cross-bearer, Alexander (*alias* Cuhelyn) was a Welshman, and later became bishop of Bangor.[3] In the meanwhile he acted as cross-bearer to Archbishop Baldwin, and accompanied that prelate as an interpreter during his peregrination of Wales (1188).[4]

References to St Thomas in medieval Welsh poetry are relatively scanty, though one poet, Ieuan Llwyd ap Gwilym, took St Thomas as a bench-mark by which to compare St Teilo.[5] Most medieval ecclesiastical kalendars compiled in Wales, included one or both of St Thomas's feasts – his martyrdom on 29 December and his translation on 7 July.[6] As for Welsh people said to have been cured by St Thomas, amongst them was a boy dumb from birth; he miraculously acquired not only speech, but the ability to express himself in English as well as in Welsh.[7] The chronicle of the princes, the *Brut y Tywysogyon*, noting his death, referred to Becket as: 'a man of great piety and saintliness and righteousness'.[8]

In 1284, Archbishop John Peckham of Canterbury, advising Edward I how to civilize Wales, urged him to remember his promise 'to plant St Thomas in his new conquest'.[9] Church and chapel dedications in North Wales to the martyr were, in fact, very few and far between. They included the castle chapel at Rhuddlan,[10] and a manor house chapel with graveyard attached at Emral in Worthenbury in Maelor Saesneg.[11] Across the border dedications to Becket included the chapel

---

1 Hartwell Jones, G., *Celtic Britain and the Pilgrim Movement, Y Cymmrodor*, 23 (1912) 293*n*.

2 Hartwell Jones, 291, suggested many did so – especially during the jubilees of the martyr's translation in 1420, 1470 and 1520; Williams-Jones, K., 'Thomas Becket and Wales', *Welsh History Review*, vol. 5, pt 4 (Dec. 1971) 355, cast doubt on this.

3 Hartwell Jones, 289–90; Williams-Jones, 354–6.

4 Fenn, R.W.D., 'The Cult of Thomas Becket and the Welsh Marches', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society*, 54 (1984) 20.

5 Williams-Jones, 360–1.

6 *Ibid*., 352.

7 *Ibid*., 354.

8 Jones, T., *Brut y Tywysogyon* (Cardiff, 1955) 151.

9 Williams-Jones, 357.

10 Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales, 2, *County of Flint* (London, 1912) 82 (No. 223), 85 (No. 233).

11 Lee, M.H., 'Maelor Saesneg', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (1880) 275–6; the chapel was named in a will of 1444 (Royal Commission, *Flint*, 117 [No. 364]).

in Ludlow named after St Thomas, 'the martyr and athlete of Christ'.[12] Late-medieval stained glass depicting Becket occurs in Nerquis church and, possibly, at Hope.[13]

Memorials of Thomas Becket in South and West Wales (*See* Map 1)

There were not over many Thomas dedications in South Wales, for there were a number of other non-Celtic saints, like Martin and Nicholas, favoured by the Anglo-Normans. Those that do appear reflect the patterns of settlement of the newcomers – along the coastal lowlands of South Wales and penetrating the river valleys of the Teifi, the Tywi and the Wye. Occasionally, there are no visible remains or indeed documentary evidence to assert the former presence of a Thomas church or chapel, but field-names can perhaps bear witness to a long lost dedication. Close to Cedweli lies a field known as 'Mynwent Domos' where, in the adjacent garden, human bones have been discovered.[14] Similarly, in Lampeter, a plot of ground south-west of the old town is called 'Mynwent Twmas', burials have been found there, and the street leading to it still bears the name of St Thomas Street.[15] On both sites a chapel with cemetery almost certainly once stood.

In several instances in South Wales, there is manuscript evidence of a dedication to Thomas Becket, but sometimes the attribution is only to 'St Thomas', leaving open the possibility of a dedication to the apostle of that name. Edward Owen, writing in 1918, went further; he suggested that 'the few dedications to St Thomas in Wales are almost certainly intended for St Thomas the Apostle'.[16] This argument was, the following year, rightly rebutted by J.S. Corbett, who took the opposite view.[17] There can be little, if any doubt, that all the Thomas dedications of South Wales were to Becket. They all fall within the former Anglo-Norman sphere of influence, and they probably mostly date from the decades subsequent to his martyrdom, at a time when devotion to him was at its height.

The non-Welsh saints adopted by the Anglo-Normans included the occasional Andrew (as at Narberth) and sometimes James (as at Manorbier).[18] There are numerous dedications to Peter, the prince of the apostles, and there is the odd dedication to St John. All these four saints were popular perhaps because they formed Our Lord's inner circle, but there is no recorded medieval Welsh dedication to Matthew, Mark or Luke, and no **positive** evidence of any to Thomas the apostle.

The sole exception is that when the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, the Crown survey of monastic lands prior to the suppression, was compiled in 1535, the parish church of St Dogmael's was recorded as being dedicated to St Thomas the apostle.[19] This may well have been a deliberate act by the priory's monks in order not to earn disfavour with Henry VIII who, three years later, forbade the veneration of the saint and ordered Becket's feast-day to be expunged from the liturgical calendar.[20] At any

---

12 Bannister, A.T. (ed.), *The Register of Richard Mayew* (Cantilupe Soc., Hereford, 1919) 286. (Grant in 1515 of an indulgence for the repair of the chapel).

13 Gray, M., *Images of Piety* (British Archaeological Report, British Series 316, 2000) 32.

14 Royal Commission, 5, *County of Carmarthen* (London, 1917) 56 (No. 158); Wade-Evans, A.W., *Parochiale Wallicanum, Y Cymmrodor*, 22 (1910) 48; Browne Willis, *Parochiale Anglicanum* (London, 1733) 188, lists St Thomas's chapel, Cedweli, as being in ruins in his time.

15 Wade-Evans, 59.

16 Owen, E., 'The Parish Church of New Radnor', *Arch. Camb.* (1918) 269.

17 Writing in the same journal, (1919) 230.

18 Bacon, J. *Liber Regis* (London, 1786) 1002, 1004, respectively.

19 Williams-Jones, 362.

20 Editor's note in *Arch. Camb.* (1919) 231; Fenn, 17; this political change of dedication may account for two supposed Monmouthshire dedications to the apostle (Llandegfedd and Redwick).

rate, the very detailed minister's accounts drawn up in the years following the dissolution to safeguard former monastic lands and rents for the Crown, explicitly refer to the parish church of St Thomas the Martyr at St Dogmael's.[21] A pre-Reformation reference of 1524 to 'the parish of St Thomas the Martyr in Cemais', given its context *vis-à-vis* neighbouring Cilgerran, refers without any doubt to the St Dogmael's parish and is proof positive of its dedication to Becket.[22]

A deed of 1380 refers to 'the hill of St Thomas the Martyr in Haverford',[23] on which stood a parish church of that dedication without the walls of the town looking down to Haverfordwest priory by the western Cleddau river below.[24] In its burial ground have been found coins ranging in date from the reign of Henry III (1216–72) down to that of William III (1695–1702).[25] The priory itself had a dual dedication to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Thomas the Martyr,[26] but was usually referred to as St Thomas's priory.[27]

Not far east from Haverford, Bishop Bek of St David's in 1287 founded a hospital at Llawhaden dedicated in honour of Blessed Virgin Mary, St Thomas the Martyr and St Edmund the King. It stood in a field now called Chapel Field, but little of the fabric remains.[28] Perhaps because his own Christian name was Thomas, Bek had a particular devotion to the martyr, and he also founded in 1283 the short-lived college at Llangadog (dedicated to St Maurice and St Thomas the Martyr) which he removed to Abergwili in 1287.[29]

In the north-west of Pembrokeshire, a chapel dedicated to Becket was added to St David's cathedral in the early-thirteenth century; remodelled by Bishop Gower in the fourteenth century, it is now set aside for private prayer and contemplation.[30] Further east along the coast, in the parish of Nevern, a St Thomas chapel was one of eight pilgrimage chapels recorded.[31]

Along the coastal routeway of South Wales are a series of Thomas the Martyr dedications. Commencing in Monmouthshire, they included the dual attribution of the church of St Mary and the Blessed Martyr Thomas in Cardiff, a church later destroyed and its parish united to that of St John's. The dedication is given in a charter granted by Earl William of Gloucester (and therefore lord of Glamorgan) in, it is asserted, 1147–8. The occurrence of this date, over twenty years before Becket's death, has led one author to suggest that the dedication was to Thomas the apostle.[32] It is more likely, however, that the original charter was given at a later date than that supposed, or when copied in later years, had its wording amended to take account of an additional patron. A charter of Bishop Henry of Llandaff (1193–1218) refers to the 'chapel of St Thomas' in Cardiff, implying perhaps a separate entity.[33]

Bishop Henry's charter, confirming lands and churches granted to Tewkesbury abbey, lists no less than three Thomas the Martyr dedications in relative proximity: 'the church of St James of

---

21 Royal Commission, 7, *County of Pembroke* (London, 1925) 1011 (No. 357); *Y Cymmrodor*, 27 (1917) 24.
22 National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW), Eaton Evans Deed 30.
23 NLW, Picton Castle Deed 63; the church was also so named in 1592 (NLW, Eaton Evans Deed 101).
24 *Arch. Camb.* (1898) 26; the church gave its name to St Thomas Green, noted in 1662 and 1765 [NLW, Bronwydd Deeds 2514, 1685 respectively], also called 'Cinnamon Grove' in 1793.
25 Royal Commission, *County of Pembroke*, 115 (No. 300).
26 *Ibid*., 114 (No. 296).
27 *Liber Regis*, 998.
28 Royal Commission, *County of Pembroke*, 143 (No. 380). The adjacent field is called Priory Field.
29 Fenn, 27.
30 Cathedral web-site; *Arch. Camb.* (1898) 222.
31 Wade-Evans, 58; Royal Commission, *County of Pembroke*, 265 (No. 784).
32 Williams-Jones, 362.
33 Crouch, D. (ed.), *Llandaff Episcopal Acta, 1140–1287* (Cardiff, 1989) 28–9 (No. 31); Conway Davies, J. (ed.), *Episcopal Acts relating to Welsh Dioceses* (Cardiff, 1948) vol. 2, 659.

Kenfig with the chapel of St Thomas in the same town ... also the chapel of St Thomas between the rivers Afan and Neath ... the chapel of St Thomas de 'Creitic' '. St Thomas's chapel in Kenfig has very long since disappeared, whilst the location of 'Creitic' is unknown. It is tempting to think that it stood at Capel Mair, but that would put it on the lands of Margam abbey.

The chapel between the Afan and the Neath refers to the chapel which stood on Melis grange, a property of Margam abbey pre-dating 1186, though it lay eastwards of the Afan – perhaps the river course has changed or there is a scribal error in the charter. Standing on the edge of Afan marsh, it was certainly an entity in the opening years of the thirteenth century.[34] In 1239, Bishop Elias of Llandaff permitted divine worship to be held in the chapel (in other words, for Mass to be said there), reflecting the current change in attitude of the Cistercian Order which until about that date had discouraged the celebration of the Eucharist in its grange oratories. The bishop's permission was necessary, so that the rights of the local parish clergy were not compromised *vis-à-vis* the dues they might expect of the monastery's tenants and grange servants. The chapel perhaps stood in the neighbourhood of the present Port Talbot railway station, and remains were visible until the late-nineteenth century. Human burials have been found in the vicinity.[35]

The borough of Neath received its first charter from Earl William of Gloucester around 1150, and a church was built (as was St Thomas's, Rhuddlan) close to the castle and lying east-south-east of it. If built earlier than the year of the martyr's canonization (1173), it later took him as its patron. It remained a chapel within the parish of Llantwit-iuxta-Neath (Llanilltudd Nedd) throughout the middle ages, but on account of Henry VIII's antipathy to Thomas Becket, Neath church was another which during the Reformation found it expedient to change its patronage to that of Thomas the apostle.[36] Lastly, in Glamorgan, in the year of 1340, no less than four deeds were dated and sealed, to quote their wording, 'in the Chapel of St Thomas the Martyr in Kylvei' (Cilfái; Kilvey, Swansea).[37] In 1783, a deed referred to 'the Salt House or the Salt house point in the hamlet of St Thomas and parish of Swansea'.[38]

In the south-west of Pembrokeshire a St Thomas chapel was noted at Begeli (Begelly) in 1699,[39] while George Owen (*d*.1613)[40] and later Edward Lhuyd (1707)[41] perhaps copying him, both referred to a St Thomas chapel at Hubberston. Might this have been the chapel referred to in 1330 by William de Rupe, lord of Roche, when he gave to Richard Steynton, chaplain, a holding 'next to the chapel of Blessed Thomas the Martyr in Pulla Oliverii' (Pwll Oliver)?, for Steynton lies close to Hubberston.[42]

In central Wales, the only certain medieval dedication to Becket was that of the church (long since vanished) of Llandomas in the parish of Llaneigon (Llanigon), which itself was dedicated to

---

34 Birch, W. de Gray, *History of Margam Abbey* (London, 1897) 224.

35 Gray, T. 'Notes on the Granges of Margam Abbey', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association,* 9 (1903) 165–7 (illus.); Griffiths, W.E., 'Granges of Margam Abbey', in Griffiths, W.E. (ed.), *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan, Volume III: Medieval Secular Monuments, Part II: Non-defensive* (HMSO, Cardiff, 1982) 267–70 (illus.); NLW, Penrice and Margam Charter 4.

36 Eaton, G., *A history of Neath from earliest times* (Swansea, 1987) 39–41.

37 NLW, Penrice and Margam charter roll 2966 (nos. 2, 3 and 6), and charter 325.

38 NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 2, 878, 1269.

39 NLW, R.K. Lucas Deed 4096, Picton Castle Deed 254, *Parochialia*, 30.

40 *Description of Pembrokeshire* (Cymmrodorion Record Series 1, London, 1897) vol. 2, 17.

41 Wade-Evans, 40.

42 Hunter, J., 'Copies of Original Charters of the Family of De La Roche of Pembrokeshire', *Arch. Camb.* (1852) 267.

St Nicholas.[43] At the time of the Reformation, a Catholic die-hard, Stephen Powell of New Radnor, 'caused a table of the false abolished history of Thomas Becket' to be set up in the parish church there at the altar 'sometime called Saint Thomas altar'.[44] It was a brave thing to do, for the counting of Thomas Becket as a saint had been abolished by the Crown six years previously.

Memorials of St Thomas in Monmouthshire (*See* Map 2)

There are in Gwent at least two dedications to St Thomas regarding which there is some uncertainty. Bacon's *Liber Regis* (in 1786) gave St Thomas as the patron saint of Llandegfedd;[45] if this was so, it must have been another instance where the Anglo-Normans replaced a Celtic saint, in this case the female martyr Tegfedd, mother of St Teilo, with one of their favourite holy people. Wade-Evans, dealing with the diocese as it was in 1733, gave St Tegfedd as patron,[46] whilst Browne Willis (1733) omitted the name of any patron.[47] Bacon and Wade-Evans also gave St Thomas as the dedicatory saint at Redwick, but in both cases did not specify 'apostle' or 'martyr'.[48] Today, St Thomas the apostle is venerated at Redwick, but when in 1545 John Walter of that village made his will, he requested burial 'in the parish of the Steeple ('Stapull') of St Michael the archangel in Redwick in the parish of Magor'.[49] When and why the dedication changed is unknown.

The earliest lists of the possessions of the Benedictine priory at Monmouth make no mention of any Thomas dedications – not surprisingly, as Becket had not then died; but the papal confirmation of the priory's churches and tithes granted by Urban III in 1186 notes no less than six: the chapel of St Thomas at Overmonnow; the churches so dedicated at Ganarew and Wyesham; a chapel of St Thomas in the parish of Llanrothal; a chapel so named as being at 'Panrox' (? Penrhos); and another at Newcastle in the parish of Llangatwg Feibion Afel.[50] Later documentary evidence suggests that all these were 'martyr dedications', reflecting a surge of enthusiasm to adopt Becket's patronage within a decade or so of his canonization.

The chapel of St Thomas which stood by the motte and bailey at Newcastle was, like those of Neath and Rhuddlan, essentially a castle chapel. There are no visible remains, nor does any further documentary evidence regarding it survive, save for the note of a path there called 'Chappelwey' in 1515.[51] The motte and bailey perhaps represented Norman strengthening of the earlier Welsh Castell Meirch.[52] Eastwards, across the Monnow, the chapel of St Thomas at Tregate (in Llanrothal parish) also lay adjacent to a motte and bailey. The papal deed of 1186 refers to 'the church of St

---

43 There appears to be no modern lingering knowledge of the church at Llandomas. The house there was 'by tradition the home of William Thomas, political mentor of Edward VI, clerk to the Privy Council, who was beheaded in 1554' (Lloyd, T., *The Lost Houses of Wales* (London, 1986) 48).

44 Owen, E., 269–72; Williams-Jones, 364–5.

45 *Liber Regis*, 1096.

46 Wade-Evans, 80.

47 Browne Willis, 206.

48 *Liber Regis*, 1093; Wade-Evans, 79.

49 NLW, MS 7602D, 81–2; 7636D, 89–90; Williams, D.H., 'Medieval Monmouthshire Wills', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 11 (2003) 127.

50 Marchegay, P., *Chartes Ancienne du Prieuré de Monmouth* (Les Roches-Baritaud [Vendée] 1879) 14.

51 Gwent Record Office (hereafter GRO) D.583.101.

52 Bradney, Sir J.A., *A History of Monmouthshire Volume 1 Part 1 The Hundred of Skenfrith* (Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, London, 1904, reprinted by Academy Books, 1991) 51.

Roald (Rhyddol, in Welsh) with the chapel of St Thomas, and all the tithes of Treget'.[53] This was undoubtedly the long vanished chapel of the martyr at Tregate. At Ganarew, the church was still referred to as St Thomas's in 1325, but after rebuilding in 1850, seems to have adopted St Swithin as its patron.[54]

The architectural gem of St Thomas, Overmonnow, is still a place of divine worship, and finds several mentions in medieval and later deeds. It stood in 1432 by 'the royal way',[55] and there was note in 1569 of 'the lane next the cemetery of St Thomas the Martyr called Water Lane',[56] – a name which survives today as Watery Lane. Badly burnt during the baronial revolt of the 1230s, Henry III granted thirteen oaks to assist in the church's rebuilding.[57] Its fabric needed further attention in 1479 when the bishop of Hereford granted an indulgence to those giving alms for 'the repair of the chapel of St Thomas the martyr, Monmouth'.[58] The church underwent further and considerable restoration in 1831.[59]

In the central lowlands of Gwent, the village of Wolvesnewton 'takes its name from a Norman family of the thirteenth century named Lupus (Wolf) or Lovel'.[60] They can be credited with the dedication of the parish church to St Thomas Becket, but a reference in 1425 to the nearby 'well of St Gwynhael' betrays its earlier Celtic dedication.[61] Occasionally, too, the Welsh place-name for Wolvesnewton, Llanwynnell, appears in documents as 'Llanwonnleth' (1411),[62] 'Llanwonnell' (in 1546) [63] and 'Llanwennelth' (in 1550).[64] A deed of 1409 refers to 'the cemetery of the church of Lanwell in the parish of Wolvesnewton'.[65] It cannot have been a second church, as two years later comes the reference to 'the parish of Llanwonnleth'. The deed of 1409 locates the cemetery, referring to 'the way which leads from Gaer [the nearby prehistoric encampment] to the church of Llanwennell'.

In the case of Shirenewton ('the Sheriff's New Town'), the creation possibly of Durand, the sheriff who figures locally in Domesday Book, the church was founded by Humphrey de Bohun (*d*.1187) earl of Hereford and constable of England, a great-nephew of Durand by marriage.[66] Dedicated to Becket, it does not appear to have superseded a Celtic dedication.

Further west, on the eastern bank of the Afon Lwyd, the 1840 tithe map for Llanfrechfa Lower plotted a field named in the accompanying apportionment as 'St Thomas Field'.[67] The field lies directly opposite the home demesne of Llantarnam abbey (*See* Map 3). Along the river, up

---

53 Marchegay, 14.

54 Matthews, J.H., *Collections towards the History and Antiquities of the County of Hereford in continuation of Duncumb's History: Hundred of Wormelow [Lower Division]* (Hereford, 1913) 14.

55 NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 1, 1612.

56 *Ibid*., 1618; another reference to the cemetery occurs in Deed 1617 of 1523. Another deed, of 1454, refers to 'le Waterlode' [Deed 1614].

57 Kissack, K.E., and Williams, D.H. (eds.), *Monmouth Priory* (Leominster, 2001) 24.

58 Bannister, A.T., *The Register of Thomas Myllyng* (Cantilupe Soc., Hereford, 1919) 206; Herefordshire County Record Office, AL 19/11, f. 38d.

59 NLW, LL/CC/C(G) 2626.

60 Evans, C.J.O., *Monmouthshire; Its History and Topography* (Cardiff, 1953) 520.

61 NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 1, 1024. A field in Cwmcarfan bore the name of 'Cae Gwinyll' in 1622 [NLW, Wills/LL/1622/8].

62 *Ibid*., 517.

63 *Ibid*., 1550.

64 *Ibid*., 1364.

65 *Ibid*., 1023.

66 Bradney, *Volume 4 Part 2 The Hundred of Caldicot (Part 2)* (London, 1932, reprinted by Merton Priory Press, 1994) 153.

67 Field 431; NGR ST 319930.

towards Pontnewydd, are three small fields which the tithe map shows that, although now on the east bank, prior to changes in the river's course, they were formerly on the west bank. Might this have been true of 'St Thomas Field' thus placing it within the lands of the monastery? Does the name mark a former chapel site (perhaps by a river crossing), is it of more modern appellation, or was it a field was granted to St Thomas's church in Llandegfedd or Newport as a means of additional income? We shall perhaps never know. Another Thomas field-name was perhaps that of 'Gwaine domos' which, in 1613, lay somewhere in the parish of Llanarth or of Rhaglan.[68]

The river ports of Chepstow and Newport each had a chapel which, in both towns, gave its name to a St Thomas Street, but next to nothing is known of either edifice. The church of St Thomas at Chepstow lay outside the walls, lying north-west of the road entering the town through the western gate, in the area between Severn View and Welsh Street. The ascription of 'martyr' was perhaps reflected in the name of the 'Morty lands' later here.[69] Its churchyard was noted in a survey of 1687, but most of the buildings of St Thomas Street were demolished in 1935.[70] The chapel was mentioned, around 1200, as being a dependency of Chepstow priory.[71] It was also noted in post-dissolution accounts in 1537.[72]

When, in 1385, Earl Hugh of Stafford as lord of Newport granted the borough of Newport its first charter, its chapel of St Thomas was mentioned as being on the boundary of the borough: 'to the road so far as the chapel of St Thomas, so that the entire road be within the bounds'.[73] The late William Rees thus postulated a site for the chapel well away from the river. A deed of the reign of Henry VI (1422–61) has been quoted as describing a certain burgage as being near the east gate, and between the chapel of St Thomas and the 'Brigge' tower – perhaps the tower of the castle near the bridge? It has been suggested that the chapel may have stood close to the bank of the river, to the rear of the bridge house, but the source of the deed is not attested.[74] The later Thomas Street lay further inland, and Coxe on his map of Newport (drawn about 1802) plotted the name of 'St Thomas Chapel' halfway up Queen's Hill – though he followed this by a question mark![75] The precise position of St Thomas's, Newport, remains an enigma.

The Parish of Llanthomas (Llandomas) (*See* Map 4)

The term 'the parish of Llanthomas' does not appear in any surviving deed until 1414, when mention is made of two of its inhabitants, Iorwerth ap Gwilym and his son, John ab Iorwerth.[76] As there is evidence from the sixteenth century onwards, that the parochial tithes were payable to either the bishop or the treasurer of Llandaff cathedral, it is extremely likely – as in the instance of not far

---

68 NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 1, 211–2. There are several later references to the 'parish of Llanthomas' down to the 17th cent., with the *aliases* of Llantomas, Llandomas, Llandomos; e.g. NLW, Wills/LL/1597/2.

69 Waters, I., *The Town of Chepstow* (Chepstow, 1975) 178–9.

70 Waters, I., *About Chepstow* (Chepstow, 1952) 106 and plan.

71 Crouch, 37–8 (No. 40).

72 Waters, *The Town of Chepstow*, 178.

73 Rees, W., *The Charters of the Borough of Newport in Gwynllwg* (Newport, 1951) 7, Plan 16.

74 Freeman, E.I., and Morgan, O., *History of St Gwynllyw's Church, Newport on Usk, together with some Historical Notes on the Immediate Neighbourhood* (Newport, 1893) 50. There was certainly a bridge chapel, for a bequest made in 1361 provided for a chaplain 'to celebrate in the church of St Gunley [St Woolos/Gwynllyw] and the bridge of Newport equally' [GRO D.43.5491], but was this the chapel of St Lawrence?

75 Davis, H., *The History of the Borough of Newport* (Magor, Newport, 1998) 62.

76 NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 1, 924–5.

distant Llangynog,[77] that Llanthomas was a gift to the see of Llandaff by one of the pre-Norman kings of Gwent. It is not, however, easy to correlate it with the unidentified grants contained in the *Book of Llandaff*. The probability is that at some stage an Anglo-Norman family settled at Llanthomas, giving its chapel that dedication in the place of a previous Celtic ascription.

The earliest mention of the demise of the tithes of Llanthomas comes when Bishop Anthony Kitchin of Llandaff, at sometime prior to 1554, leased them to John David Willliam, gent., of Trelech. John William David, in 1556, sub-let the tithes to Richard John Harry, husbandman, of Penclawdd, and he in turn appears to have given his lease to Geoffrey William Layse, also of Penclawdd, who assigned it to John William Layse of Dingestow.[78] The importance of these references comes in the fact that not only do they refer to 'the church or chapel of Llandomas otherwise Llanthomas', but also to the presence there of the concomitant tithe barn.

From the mid-seventeenth century the income of the prebend and treasurership of Llandaff was demised *en bloc*, for in addition to the churches of Llanddewi Fach, Llangynog and Llanthomas, lands were held in Llandaff and Whitchurch. The way for this was paved by the appointment in 1631 by Bishop William Murray of Llandaff of Francis Mansell (probably of that notable Glamorgan family, and who was then principal of Jesus College), as treasurer of Llandaff.[79] In this capacity, in January 1648, Principal Mansell leased the prebend and treasurership to the principal (himself), and the fellows and scholars of his college.[80] From that date on, down to the mid-nineteenth century, in a series of leases and ratifications, the bishops and treasurers of Llandaff for the time being continued to demise the prebend including the church and tithes of Llanthomas to the principal, fellows and scholars of Jesus College, Oxford;[81] save from 1764 to 1770, when the prebend was assigned to Gervase Powell, clerk, of Brecon.[82]

The careful noting in the tithe apportionment schedule for the parish of Cwmcarfan in 1843 of the holdings from which the tithes were payable to Jesus College, makes it possible to delimit precisely the former boundaries of the 'parish' of Llanthomas. In addition, Jesus College held certain lands further east in Cwmcarfan, from which it paid tithes to the rector. A terrier of 1717 refers to 'the glebeland lying in the parish of Lanthomas', but makes no mention of the chapel or the tithe barn.[83] The college sub-let various parts of its valuable acquisition, and so the glebe lands and tithes of Llanthomas passed to John Edmonds (in 1694), to John Ayleworth in 1709 (renewed in 1721), and to Elizabeth Ayleworth (in 1729, renewed in 1738). In the last three instances, they were held jointly with those of Llangynog.[84]

The parish, or as later styled, the 'hamlet' of Llanthomas comprised 301 acres: part of Great Llanthomas Farm (26 acres – later sale catalogues show that this estate went far beyond the bounds of Llanthomas parish); part of Little Llanthomas (140 acres), Gader (24 acres), part of Upper House Farm (30 acres), part of Upper Trefildu (80 acres), and land near Penclawdd (1 acre). In the summer

---

77 This later extra-parochial area was united to the parish of Llanfihangel Tor-y-Mynydd in 1902 by an Order in Council. For a description of Llangynog, *see* Williams, D.H., 'Llangynog Church, Capel Gwenog', *Mon. Antiq.*, 5, pt. 3 (1985–88) 95–7.

78 GRO, Newport Public Library Deed 5058.

79 Archives of Jesus College, Oxford (hereafter Jesus College), GM.4/1/1. I am deeply grateful to Mr Christopher Jeens, the college archivist, for his helpfulness and for the information with which he has kindly supplied me, and to Pat Egglestone and Mark Cronk in whose works I became aware of the relevance of this archival resource.

80 Jesus College, GM.4/1/4.

81 Jesus College, GM.4/1/8–15, 38, 47; NLW, WCC/ECE/AD 211,999–212,000; ECE/DEEDS L 586–93.

82 NLW, WCC/ECE/AD 212,001–3.

83 Jesus College, GM.4/2/4.

84 Jesus College, GM.4/1/16, 21, 27, 30, 36.

of 1842, Mr Johns, the tithe commissioner appointed for Cwmcarfan, held meetings regarding the amount payable from Llanthomas, by way of commuted tithes, to the bishop and treasurer of Llandaff. The bishop's registrar and cathedral chapter clerk, Edward Stephens, sought £22 (the average value of the tithes in the past prescribed period), the landowners offered £18, and a compromise of £20 *per annum* was agreed.[85] (In modern terms, this was equivalent to around £970).[86]

Nothing is known of the chapel at Llanthomas, nor is the name of any chaplain on record. The perambulation of the manor of Trelech undertaken in 1679 places Llanthomas on the boundary. Part of the survey reads: 'from Penylan by the Gader, directly down the brook called Llymmon, and so to a chapel there called Llanthomas chapel adjoining the brook'.[87] This suggests a free-standing chapel, as there is no reference to the house (as in other portions of the described manorial bounds). It also suggests the chapel stood in close proximity to the stream (unless by 'chapel' it included the small field, later known as Chapel Orchard, in which the chapel lay). The perambulation does not imply that the chapel was no longer, at that date, in active use, as it might have done had it been in a state of ruin.

Joseph Bradney described the chapel as being a 'calves cot', and located it on the inner edge of Chapel Orchard, away from the brook. Bradney also noted of this building that 'the only thing that makes it as having been used for a purpose different to the present one is that the plaster still remains on the walls'.[88] Mr D. Edwards, of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments in Wales, mentioned traces of this plaster in his report written in 1958. He described the building as having a north-south axis and measuring 8 x 3 metres. He noted that there was no trace of an original entrance, and concluded that 'the building bears no trace of use as a chapel'.[89]

It is quite possible that in the rebuilding of Llanthomas over the last three hundred years – a new range of buildings has very recently been completed – all the stone of the chapel was reused, and that its precise site may never be known. In response to the question posed to incumbents in episcopal visitations from 1763 onwards, as to whether there were any ruined chapels in their parishes, the vicars of Cwmcarfan either made no response or replied in the negative, which suggests that by that date the chapel was no longer a physical entity.[90]

Its disuse may have long predated that year, despite the positive reference in the 1679 survey, for when Edmund ap Thomas Philip of Llanthomas died in 1622, he left bequests to Llandaff cathedral and to Cwmcarfan church. He desired 'Christian burial', but made no mention of Llanthomas chapel.[91] A further will, that of John Thomas of Gader, made in 1645 and proved in 1647, made bequests to the cathedral and Llangofen church – where he desired interment, but again omitted any reference to Llanthomas chapel,[92] which by this date may have become little more than a semi-private oratory (*See* Map 5).

The parish registers of Cwmcarfan throw little, if any light, as to the date the chapel ceased to function. It is clear from an entry (of 1696) in the registers that Llanthomas, so often referred to as a 'parish' from the fifteenth century on, was now 'a hamlet annexed to the parish of Cwmcarfan', whose incumbent would have expected the customary dues and offerings from the people of

---

85 NLW, LL/Tithe Papers/Parochial No. 8, 1.
86 Bank of England, *Equivalent Contemporary Values of the Pound: A Historical Series 1270 to 2004*.
87 Bradney, *Volume 2 Part 2 The Hundred of Trelech* (London, 1913) 133.
88 *Ibid*., 133.
89 Field card [SO 40 NE] consulted at the Royal Commission's offices, Plascrug, Aberystwyth.
90 NLW, LL/QA/1, of 1763, and subsequent visitations.
91 NLW, Wills/LL/1622/8.
92 NLW, Wills/1647/35.

Llanthomas. From 1682 onwards, the registers make occasional mention of the baptism, marriage or burial, of inhabitants of Llanthomas, but on only one occasion notes a sacramental act being performed at Llanthomas itself. This was when, on 30 January 1687, 'Elizabeth, the bastard daughter, born of Philip Murphy, an Irishman, and Rachel Thomas, widow', was baptized at Llanthomas. It seems likely that it was a private baptism, held in a house, like the private baptism noted as such at Cwm-bychan (also in Cwmcarfan parish) in 1696, when John Tyler was born there 'a very short time after a clandestine marriage'.[93]

The early eighteenth century deeds assigning the prebend and treasurership of Llandaff, including the church and tithes of Llanthomas, prescribed that regarding the churches granted it, the college was to 'sufficiently repair, maintain, uphold, amend and keep the chancel or chancels of the said churches'.[94] So far as Llanthomas was concerned, and perhaps Llangynog as well, this condition appears to have remained unfulfilled. It remains to note that the owners of Trefildu had their own chapel in Cwmcarfan church where, in 1597, Thomas William Edmond desired burial.[95] The frequency of worship in Llanthomas chapel, and the date its services ceased, remain a mystery.

The names of a number of the dwellers and tenants of the parish of Llanthomas are on record, but rarely is it known on which holding they resided. Notable for most of the sixteenth century was the Edmond family. A chaplain, Maurice Edmond, was mentioned in a deed of 1499,[96] but it may have been when Edmund ap Gwilym Hopkin received lands here in 1524 that the dynasty commenced.[97] A Thomas Edmond, gentleman of Llanthomas, (noted from 1553 to 1569), took for wife one Mary Catchmayde,[98] and had two sons, Harry and Henry Thomas.[99] A Thomas William (*alias* Thomas William Edmond), of Trefildu, died in 1597;[100] clearly a relation, if not the same person.

A list of 1579 named eleven of those people who then held or tenanted, or had lately tenanted, lands in Llanthomas, but several of them were seemingly non-resident and holding other properties elsewhere.[101] They included three members of the Phelip family: Thomas, William Thomas and John Thomas. In 1598, John Edmund, the son and heir of Edmund Thomas Philip was joined in holy matrimony.[102] Edmund Thomas Philip died in 1622.[103] His grandson, Isaac Williams, had nine children, their births ranging in date from that of Anne (1682) to that of Alice (1704).[104] Other residents of the time included William Evan and Dorothy Thomas, whom the Cwmcarfan parish register noted were 'illegally and privately married' in August 1696. Might they have been members of the local Anabaptist movement?

When, in 1843, the tithe apportionment schedule was drawn up, William Morgan was the tenant of Thomas Bennett at Great Llanthomas, William Evans leased the Gader from the Revd M.T. Rooker, William Hall inhabited Upper Trevildu by favour of Samuel Bosanquet, Walter

---

93 Bradney, *Hundred of Trelech*, 193.
94 As in 1721 [NLW, LL/Ch/7.]
95 Bradney, *Hundred of Trelech*, 188; NLW, Wills/LL/1597/2.
96 NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 1, No. 930.
97 *Ibid*., 1450.
98 *Ibid*., 604, 934.
99 NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 2, Nos. 608, 938, 1008, 1532.
100 Bradney, *Hundred of Trelech*, 188.
101 *Ibid*., 1109.
102 Edmund Thomas Phelip traced descent from Thomas ap Philip, a member of Henry V's council [Bradney, *Hundred of Trelech*, 187].
103 NLW, Wills/LL/1622/8. NLW, Milborne Deed 847, also refers to him.
104 Bradney, *Hundred of Trelech*, 187, for a genealogical table of the family of Williams of Llanthomas.

Roberts occupied the acre 'near Penclawdd', whilst William Nicholas owned both Little Llanthomas and Upper House, dwelling at the former himself, and having seemingly a relative, Walter Nicholas, residing at Upper House.

Amongst the non-resident landowners of Llanthomas in the late-medieval period was the Herbert family of Troy. In 1488, William Herbert demised four closes of arable land in Llanthomas, which lay 'on both sides of a stream called Nant Erath' to Henry ap David ap Gwallter. The names of the properties were given: *Cae y Clemendy*, *Tor-y-Cady*, *Cae Malte* and *Perbren Oame*.[105] The location of these units has long since been unknown, for none of the field-names given in the 1843 tithe apportionment schedule bear any resemblance to them. The same is true of three holdings mentioned more than once in the sixteenth century, whilst the position given of them is somewhat vague unless there could be certainty of the routeways used by the peoples of those times. The inherited descriptions of their location are at best confusing.

There is mention in 1556 of 'meadow and pasture called Tyr-y-llan, between the way leading to the grist mill of Thomas Edmond and the highway leading from Llansoy to Monmouth'.[106] Where was the corn mill of Thomas Edmond? Was it near Llanthomas down the Llymmon brook or by one of the streams at Trefildu? Where lay *Cae Vicary*, located in 1553 as being 'between the highway leading from Llangofen to Monmouth, the lane leading to Rhaglan, and the lane leading from Trelech to Penclawdd'?[107] Where lay *Cae Yoroth*, described in 1567 as being 'between the way from Llangofen to Monmouth and a river'.[108] Both *Cae Vicary* and *Cae Yoroth* stood next to 'the royal way from Llangofen to Monmouth' (1566).[109] Both 'closes' were perhaps large open fields, much greater in acreage than those of today; the rather vague location pointers would have made much more sense in their time.

Even more confusing was the lease granted by Thomas Edmond in 1568 of 'a messuage, garden and parcel of meadow, lying between the way from Llangofen to Monmouth, and the stream running there on all sides'.[110] This demise was made to David (ap) Philip Powell of Llansoe, a gentleman who was acquiring land not only in Llanthomas but in several neighbouring parishes and building up a substantial estate. In 1561, he had bought lands in Llanthomas and elsewhere from George James of Troy,[111] and by 1566, Thomas Edmond was one of his tenants, acknowledging rent payable to George James for the ensuing seven years.[112] He received the further lease from Thomas Edmond in 1569 of Tyr-y-llan.[113] David Philip Powell died around 1573,[114] and was buried in Llangynog church,[115] but he had laid the basis of the fortune of his greater son, Sir William Powell of Lan-pill, who himself in 1579 leased from Thomas ap Howell of Penallt all his holdings in Llanthomas.[116]

Most of the parish of Llanthomas was possessed of relatively fertile Old Red Sandstone soils, and there are two brief pictures of its agricultural economy. The first came in 1622 when Edmund ap Thomas Philip, bequeathed to his eldest son, William, 'my best wain, my best ox harrow, and my

---

105 NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 1, No. 588.
106 *Ibid*., 935, 937 (of 1565).
107 *Ibid*., 934.
108 *Ibid*., 938.
109 *Ibid*., 607.
110 *Ibid*., 608, 1532.
111 *Ibid*., 773.
112 *Ibid*., 605. *Cf*. 1008, 1011.
113 *Ibid*., 604.
114 *Ibid*., 269.
115 Egglestone, P. and Cronk, M., *Llanfihangel tor y Mynydd*, vol. 3, pt. 1 (Usk, 2006) 67.
116 NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 1, No. 1109, but *cf*. GRO D.583.79.

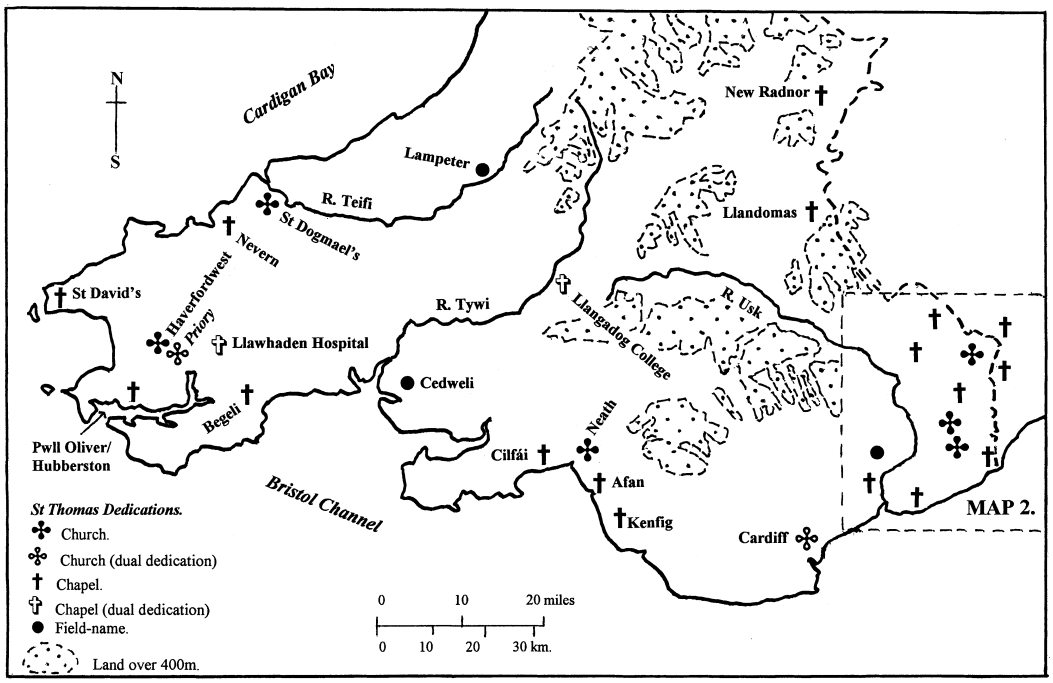
best horse harrows, two ploughs, a carr [cart], two yokes for oxen, two iron strings, one carr bridle, with all the wayne timber about my house'.[117] Secondly, in 1842, the report of the tithe apportionment commissioner, revealed that of Llanthomas's 301 acres, about half was given over to arable farming. He wrote that 'the system of farming is the same in Llanthomas and Cwmcarfan, viz. The four field system [a series of crops grown in four fields in rotation]. The average produce of an acre of land in wheat is ten imperial bushels. To produce that two bushels an acre is set. Very little barley is grown, the average of oats is not more than wheat.'[118]

Conclusion[119]

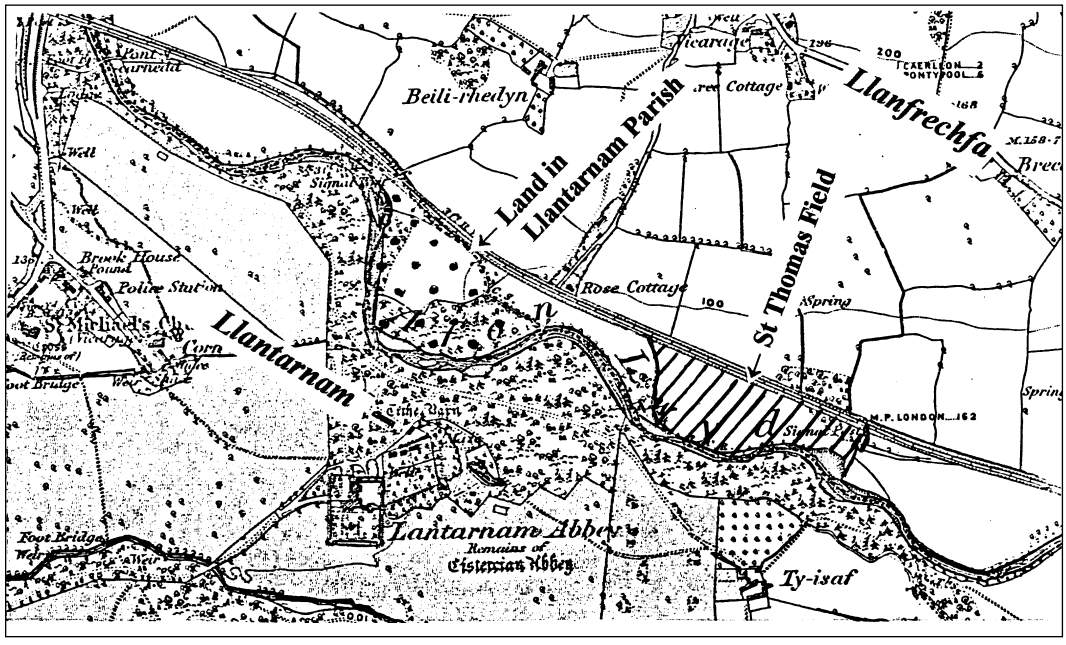
St Thomas the Martyr was not the only saint favoured as Anglo-Norman influence spread in twelfth-century Monmouthshire. Peter the apostle was the dedicatory saint at Llanbedr (by the ancient routeway now followed by the A48 road), at Peterstone in Gwynllŵg (perhaps, though not certainly, stemming from its possession by the Augustinian canons of Bristol), and at Dixton (ousting there an earlier dedication to St Tyddwg). Dedications to St Martin of Tours occur not only at Llanmartin (also close to the A48, suggestive again of Anglo-Norman penetration into the county), but also at Trewyn (perhaps as a medieval manor-house chapel), and at Llangofen (replacing there St Gofeinwen). St Lawrence was the favoured saint in churches in the suburbs of Chepstow and of Newport, whilst St Stephen replaced St Tathan as the patron saint of Caerwent. It is into that pattern of ecclesiastical settlement that Monmouthshire's Llanthomas falls. The likelihood is, given the appropriation of its church to one of the offices of the Llandaff cathedral chapter, that a place of worship existed here long before the Norman conquest, and it too received the patronage of a saint favoured by the newcomers. Like some other smaller properties of the cathedral chapter (notably Dinham, Llangynog and St Lawrence by Chepstow), in modern times the tithes were valued by the cathedral chapter – right up indeed to disestablishment, but the churches were neglected and allowed to pass into oblivion. The scanty knowledge of the history of medieval Llanthomas is also a reminder that the parish life of medieval Gwent as a whole is a largely neglected topic which deserves continued and earnest research.

---

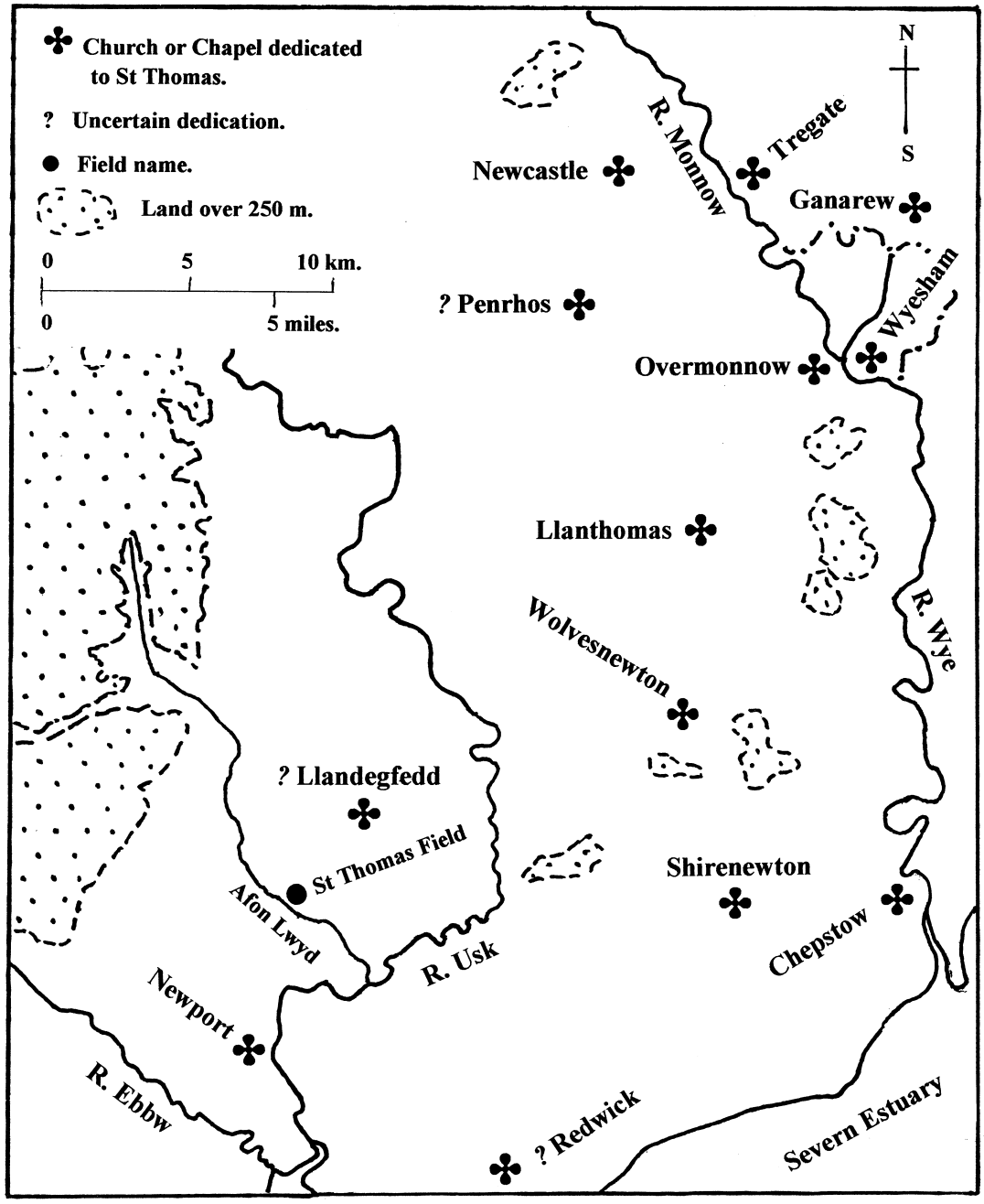
117 NLW, Wills/LL/1622/8.
118 NLW, LL/Tithe Papers/ Parochial No. 8, 1.
119 Based upon Williams, D.H., 'The Church in Medieval Gwent (Maps)', *Mon. Antiq.*, 16 (2000) 2–10.



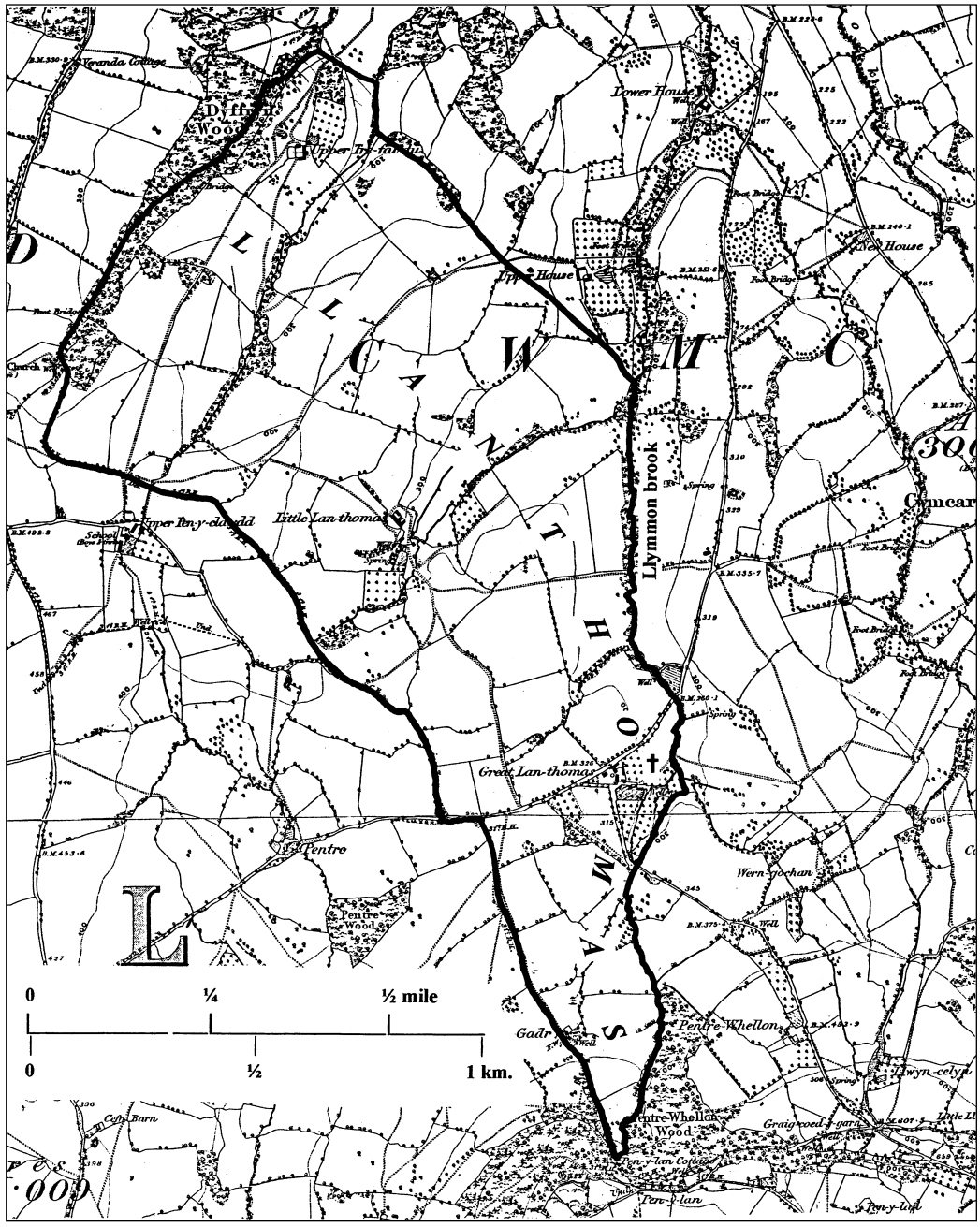
Map 1: St Thomas dedications in South and West Wales.



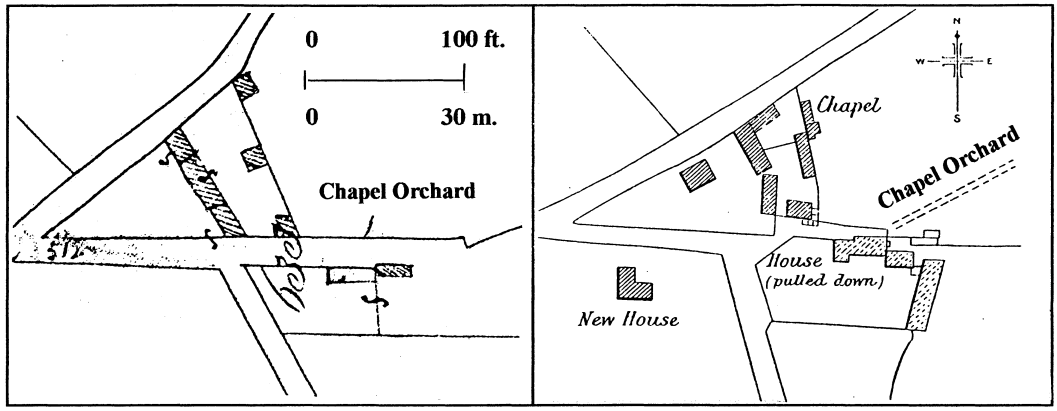
Map 3: St Thomas Field, Llanfrechfa Lower.



Map 2: St Thomas dedications in Monmouthshire and the Border.



Map 4: The parish of Llanthomas.



Map 5: Great Llanthomas: (*left*) 1840s [tithe map], (*right*) early-20th cent. [Bradney].

THE REVEREND STEPHEN WILLIAMS (1780–1860): A BLACK SHEEP OF THE WILLIAMS OF LLANGYBI FAMILY

By David H. Williams

The Early Years

On 12 May 1802, the rector of Llangybi, the Revd John Addams-Williams, certified to the Llandaff diocesan registrar that Stephen Williams, about to be made deacon, and the son of Trevor and Cecilia Williams, had been baptised on 7 January 1780 in Llangybi church. He also attested that his submission was 'a true entry' taken that day from the parish register.[1] He repeated his assertion when Stephen was about to be ordained priest in 1804.[2] It was either wishful thinking on the rector's part, or more likely a cover up. Stephen had, in fact, been born out of wedlock (to Trevor, John's own brother), a potential hindrance to his ordination.

The parish register actually records that Stephen was 'the base son of Cicilia Green'. His father, Trevor Addams-Williams, died intestate three years later in 1783, at the age of twenty-seven.[3] The letters of administration of his estate, granted to his father, William Addams-Williams, as well as the tablet set up in the chancel of Llangybi church, make it clear that Trevor was a 'bachelor'.[4] Trevor and Cecilia never married and, therefore, it had been wrong of John Addams-Williams to ascribe to Cecilia the surname of Williams, in attempting his concealment of the true facts.

For a number of years, his uncle, the Revd John Addams-Williams appears to have had Stephen living with him at Pen-park, which was Stephen's address when appointed to the rectory of Llanwern in 1814.[5] Very little else at all is known of Stephen's early years. He does not appear to have proceeded to university, yet he had a fine writing hand, and an ability to propound financial arguments. The circumstances of his birth may account for his always being referred to as 'Williams' and not 'Addams-Williams'. When, in 1810, Stephen was one of three 'necessary witnesses' called to give evidence, with expenses paid, at Llandaff consistory court, he did not appear, and had to be cited again to attend. This was surprising as the case involved another uncle, the Revd Thomas Addams-Williams, the vicar of Usk.[6]

When later Stephen was in severe difficulties, the Williams family rarely appear to have rushed to his aid. He had been married in Llangybi church by the Revd Thomas Addams-Williams. He named one of his daughters, Ellen, after his paternal grandmother, and his eldest son perhaps after John himself. Both his sons bore the middle name of Herbert; the reason for this is not known.[7] When he died *The Cambrian* noted that he was the 'son of the late Trevor A. Williams of Llangibby Castle',[8] and when a memorial tablet to him and his family was later set up in Llanfihangel Rogiet church, it bore a talbot passant, the crest of Williams of Llangybi.[9]

---

1 National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW), LL/O/310B.

2 NLW, LL/O/327B.

3 Bradney, Sir J.A. (hereafter Bradney), *A History of Monmouthshire Volume 3 Part 1 The Hundred of Usk (Part 1)* (Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, London, 1923, reprinted by Academy Books, 1993) 111.

4 NLW, Llangibby Castle Deed A. 613.

5 *The Cambrian*, 21 May 1814.

6 NLW, LL/CC/C(G) 1959 (of 29 May 1810).

7 A Herbert family farmed in Llangybi in the 1810s.

8 *The Cambrian*, 30 March 1860.

9 Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire Volume 4 Part 2 The Hundred of Caldicot (Part 2)* (London, 1932, reprinted by Merton Priory Press, 1994) 270. (The tablet survives to this day).

Early Ministry

On 9 May 1802, when Stephen was twenty-two years old, his intention to seek Holy Orders was published in Llangybi church, his letters testimonial being signed by the rector of Llangybi (his uncle), and the vicars of Newport and Caerleon.[10] He was made deacon on 26 June 1802 by Bishop Richard Watson of Llandaff,[11] and appointed as curate of Rogiet.[12] Two years later, not the more customary one year, he was ordained priest on St Peter's day (29 June 1804) at Llandaff cathedral,[13] and nominated as curate of Malpas.[14] Neither curacy was held for long, it would appear, and neither was well paid, but as he was seemingly still living at home, this perhaps did not too much concern him.

Stephen then took on new responsibilities, acting as curate of Whitson from 1806 to 1811, and simultaneously as curate of Llanwern from 1807 to 1813, and of Christchurch – where he may have resided – from 1807 until at least the close of 1817.[15] By 1813, he had been appointed rector of Llanfihangel Rogiet, but he still served unofficially as curate of the parishes of Llanwern and of Christchurch.[16] For two short years (1814–16), he became rector of Llanwern; but in his time there his position, first as curate and then as incumbent, was a sinecure, as there were hardly any baptisms, weddings or funerals during that period; in several years none are on record at all.[17] The poor clerical salaries necessitated pluralism.

On 31 January 1818, Stephen was licensed as stipendiary curate of Magor with Redwick chapel, and this greatly improved his financial position – importantly, as he was now a married man, the annual stipend of £60 was raised to £120 in 1822.[18] Add this to the estimated value of his living of Llanfihangel Rogiet (also £120),[19] and he had the equivalent (in to-day's values) of not less than £12,500 each year. For one unknown reason or another, it was however (as will be apparent later) insufficient to meet his requirements.

Stephen did not immediately move to Magor, but his early years as curate there saw him fully involved in the educational and political life of the parish; the rector instituted in 1822 (the Revd Sir William Somerset) being also non-resident.[20] Stephen established a charity day school in Magor in 1822 (described below), and had assisted the nomination of Sir Charles Morgan (patron of his living of Llanfihangel Rogiet) in the parliamentary election of 1820. Together with James Hodges of the Lower Grange, Stephen enlisted the promises of support of thirty-three inhabitants of Magor, Redwick and vicinity, and wrote to Sir Charles: 'I have not left a stone unturned in obtaining votes for you'.[21]

---

10 NLW, LL/O/310 SQ and T.
11 Information kindly supplied by Mr Paul Vivash, researcher for the Church of England clergy database.
12 NLW, LL/O/310 N. The annual stipend allocated was £25, worth a little over £1,000 in modern terms.
13 Information of Mr Paul Vivash.
14 NLW, LL/O/327 N; *Cf*. 327 B, SQ and T. The stipend of £30 was in to-day's terms worth a little over £1,300.
15 Parochial records.
16 NLW, LL/QA/26, LL/NR/989P.
17 Parochial records; *The Cambrian*, 21 May 1814.
18 Information of Mr Paul Vivash.
19 NLW, LL/NR/989P.
20 Commenting on Somerset's appointment, the bishop of Llandaff's London secretary, John Burder, ascribed it to the Beauforts being 'shy of pocket' (NLW, LL/MISC CORR/10,395.)
21 NLW, Tredegar Deed 135/778 (of 10 March 1820).

Rector of Llanfihangel Rogiet

This benefice was the one where perhaps Stephen was happiest, which he served for nearly half-a-century, where he was buried, and to which he was instituted on 9 December 1812.[22] The patron was Sir Charles Morgan, who owned practically the whole parish.[23] There was a glebe-house, but as Stephen pointed out to the bishop of Llandaff, 'it is at present in a very dilapidated state, and unfit for residence, and situated in a very unhealthy situation, which would be particularly injurious to Mrs Williams'(*See* Fig. 1).[24] Dampness appears to have been the problem.[25] Stephen, therefore, was granted licences of non-residence,[26] as Magor – where he became vicar in 1826 – also had no suitable accommodation for its incumbent.

Had there been an appropriate residence for Stephen in his own parishes, some of the difficulties which beset him from the 1820s on may never have emerged. There were moves in the 1830s to have the glebe-house of Llanfihangel renovated – both at Stephen's request[27] and once at the bishop's suggestion,[28] and a certain amount of work was done,[29] but it was never again to be the rector's residence, and it has long since been demolished.[30] Repairs were carried out to the ceiling and roof of the church in 1828.[31]

As for the parish, the total population was about forty souls, of whom (in 1851) twelve on average attended divine worship. There was one Sunday service at Llanfihangel, alternating between morning and afternoon;[32] the Eucharist (in 1813) was celebrated only at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun, and in general there were but five communicants.[33] Apart from his two spells in prison, Stephen served Llanfihangel on a regular basis throughout his incumbency. On 18 March 1832, however, Stephen's time in The Fleet meant that it was the Revd Watkin Morgan who baptised the quintuplets born to Joseph and Jane Brace.[34]

Changes of Abode

The many moves which Stephen and his family had to make throughout his ministry – partly because of the lack of official accommodation on his livings, and partly because of his own financial problems – must have been injurious to their physical health and state of mind. Did it in any way contribute to the early death of his two sons? Stephen appears to have always resided in rented accommodation. He was not the only clergyman in this position, but it must have made him at least a little envious of colleagues living in well-appointed houses. When, in 1835, he was living at Penhow – four miles (as he pointed out) from Llanfihangel Rogiet – he said that on rainy Sundays

---

22 Information of Mr Paul Vivash; Bradney, *Hundred of Caldicot*, *op. cit*., 271.

23 NLW, LL/Tithe Papers 352–7.

24 NLW, LL/NR /989P [29 Dec. 1817] and 990P [21 Feb. 1820]. *See* Fig. 1.

25 NLW, LL/PBEN/3, p. 63.

26 Also in 1855 (NLW, LL/NR/991P).

27 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18808, 18899, 18900, 18956, 18985 – but in one undated letter he asks for the projected repairs to be dropped as he had taken the Merril cottage on a seven year lease (LL/MISC CORR/18849).

28 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/10,169.

29 NLW, LL/S/259 (of 1835).

30 Bradney, *Hundred of Caldicot*, *op. cit*., 270.

31 NLW, LL/Tithe Papers 353; by Edward Jones, tiler, at a cost of £17 – worth £800 today.

32 Gwynedd Jones, I. and Williams, D, *The Religious Census of 1851 A Calendar of the Returns Relating to Wales Volume1 South Wales* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1976) 4–5.

33 NLW, LL/QA/26, clergy: *see* Figs. 2–3.

34 Parochial registers; they had a further son, Moses, in 1833.

he ran 'a risk of my life with wet clothes upon my back'.[35] The tragedy (for him) was that, no sooner had he passed away, than a new substantial vicarage was built in Magor.[36]

Living in 1817 in his curacy of Christchurch,[37] and at Llandevenny in 1821,[38] Stephen and his family resided from around 1824 to 1830 at Penhow cottage, close to the *Rock and Fountain* inn – which he sometimes used as his postal address.[39] From 1831 to 1833, they dwelt in his parish of Magor,[40] but appear to have been back in Penhow until 1835.[41] Some of his letters in 1838 were addressed from Caldicot,[42] one in 1840 from Caerwent[43] – though others of that year from Magor.[44] At the time of the 1841 census, he and his family dwelt in Kemeys Inferior.

Then, after a few more brief changes of letter address,[45] the family settled by 1846 until 1851 at Elm cottage, Magor (the building still exists) as tenants of John Williams.[46] From 1851 until his death, he still lived mostly in Magor, at first with the Keene family into which one of his daughters had married[47] – save in 1854 when he resided in Undy,[48] and in 1855 – when he rented a house in Llandevenny from a Mr Baker.[49] By the autumn of 1855, he was again living in Magor, with a Mr Milliner as landlord;[50] a few months later he appears to have moved to another (and unfurnished) cottage in that parish.[51] Long before this, of course, his wife and two sons had died, and his two daughters had married. Four years later, Stephen himself was dead.

The Family

On 3 October 1814, by licence in Llangybi church, Stephen married Sarah Temperance Ford, a spinster of Usk; one of Stephen's uncles and vicar of Llangybi, the Revd Thomas Addams-Williams officiating.[52] Born around 1793, Sarah was probably a daughter of William and Elizabeth Ford of Usk,[53] and she was a niece of Anna Maria Williams, daughter of Dr James Ford, sometime

---

35 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18942.

36 Newman, J, *Gwent/Monmouthshire* (Penguin Buildings of Wales series, London, 2000) 375.

37 NLW, LL/NR/989P.

38 Gwent Record Office (hereafter GRO), D.43/M 423.5.

39 *See*, for example: NLW, LL/LB/2, pp. 69, 99–100, 183; LL/LB/4, p. 65; LL/MISC CORR/18781, 18788, 18802–18808, 18819; LL/S/259CORR. During this period Stephen criticized the rector of Penhow for being non-resident, and for letting out his parsonage house to a Miss Blount who established a boarding school for girls there [NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18781].

40 NLW, LL/LB/4, 99; MISC CORR/18837, 18840, 18853, 18855, 18861–8, 18898.

41 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18926, 18934, 18943, with a Mr Penny as landlord.

42 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18945–7, 18949, 18951.

43 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18964.

44 NLW, MISC CORR/18962, 18965, 18970.

45 NLW, LL/S/259CORR.

46 Tithe-map evidence (plots 395, 398); NLW, LL/MISC CORR/19032, 19035, LL/S/259.

47 1851 census returns, NLW, LL/S/259.

48 NLW, LL/S/259.

49 NLW, LL/NR/991P.

50 NLW, LL/S/259.

51 NLW, LL/S/259 (of 26 March 1856).

52 NLW, Marriage Bonds A.B. 115/28 (of 19 Sept. 1814); parochial registers. No family members signed the registers as witnesses – these were Mary Atwood [a grand-daughter of Sir John Williams of Llangybi] and William Wells. Stephen was said to be resident in Llangybi. Mary Atwood was the daughter of Francis Herbert of Ty-fry; this may be a reason why Stephen's boys bore the middle name of Herbert (Bradney, *Hundred of Usk*, 101).

53 Her baptism is not recorded in the parish registers of Usk, though those of siblings were: William (around 1790; he died at the age of four); Elizabeth (1791) and a second son also named William (1795).

physician to the Middlesex hospital and physician extraordinary to Queen Caroline.[54] Sarah was also a niece of another of Dr Ford's daughters, Elizabeth, who married Bishop Samuel Goodenough of Carlisle.[55] Her middle name, Temperance, was borne earlier by at least two other members of the Ford family.[56] Sarah was 'of good family' and, later in life, this must have weighed upon her as she endured tribulations partly of her husband's making.

In an unhappy incident, Sarah showed her determination and strength of mind when, on the evening of Sunday 20 June 1830, six months after he had advised a course of action to alleviate Stephen Williams' troubles, Mr Fuljames, a land agent of Monmouth who had come to Stephen's aid whilst he was in prison there, visited Stephen and Sarah at their then home, Penhow cottage. Mr Fuljames alleged that during this visit Sarah took from him the deed of assignment Stephen had given him (dated 5 December 1829), and repeatedly refused to return it to him, despite his remaining there until the early hours of the next day. He also alleged that in a further meeting the next afternoon 'in the large room upstairs at the Heath Cock Inn, sometimes called the Bridge End Inn, Newport', Sarah still refused to return his deed.[57]

Consequently, on the afternoon of Saturday 26 June, Mr Fuljames obtained from Sir Thomas Salisbury, Sarah's committal to Monmouth gaol 'for a Larceny and a Felony'.[58] There she remained for seven weeks. In the week before the Assize was held at Monmouth, Stephen wrote to Edward Stephens asking for an advance on his salary, as 'her expenses during her confinement must be paid previous to her leaving Monmouth', and also 'not only to assist a distressed family but an injured and falsely accused woman'.[59]

When Sarah's case came before the court, on 19 August 1830, the grand jury (which included Sir Charles Morgan, Sir Thomas Robert Salusbury and, a kinsman of her husband, William Addams-Williams) returned that there was 'no true bill in this case'. The judge, Mr Justice Park, ordered Sarah's immediate release, saying that: 'I disapprove of the prosecution *in toto*, and I think it was a most improper commitment.'[60] Stephen called it 'a false imprisonment'.[61] The damage had, however, been done; Sarah had suffered the indignity and hardship of a common criminal.

When, over a year later, Stephen was committed to The Fleet prison in London as an insolvent debtor, Sarah wrote to Edward Stephens, the Llandaff diocesan registrar, asking for a remittance as her money was all but exhausted. She said that she had been in no way extravagant, but had paid the maidservant part of her wages, bought essential food for herself and her four children, and had purchased coal and hired a man with a cart to bring it to the house.

Sarah had the further concern that 'the little girl who is at Clifton at school' should appear as respectable as her school-fellows. Friends had advised her to leave 'this most horrid place', where prices were high and 'no kind of school to put my two little boys too', but she had no money to do so. Margaret James, wife of James James of Magor, had slandered her, and Sarah demanded an

---

54 The National Archives (Public Record Office) hereafter TNA (PRO) PROB. 11/1656.

55 When Stephen was appointed to the living of Magor in 1826, *The Cambrian* noted him as being 'a nephew of the bishop of Carlisle' [issue of 15 July 1826].

56 NLW, Llangibby Castle Deed B. 1291 (of 1764).

57 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/ 18832.

58 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18835; on 7 June, Fuljames had a meeting with Charles Greville, the Bristol solicitor who Stephen had consulted [LL/MISC CORR/18831]. Edward Stephens, a notary public, was diocesan registrar and cathedral chapter clerk.

59 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18851.

60 *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 21 Aug. 1830.

61 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18840.

apology: 'I will not be insulted with impunity'.[62] Mrs James was cited to appear at Llandaff consistory court on 6 October that autumn 'to answer Sarah Temperance Williams in a certain cause of defamation or slander'.[63] No details are known, but on the twenty-seventh of that month, Margaret James made her mark on a deed of apology, and had to pay the expenses incurred.[64]

Sarah appears to have been desperate, writing further letters to Edward Stephens on 5, 9 and 12 November, pointing out in her last epistle that if money had not reached her by the Monday, she would have to 'walk to Llandaff for it'.[65] She must have been at her wit's end, and early in March requested that their house rent be paid on her behalf.[66]

The Children

Stephen and Sarah had four children; the girls being named after relatives in the Ford family, the boys after Stephen's two uncles. The eldest child was their daughter Ellen Maria; born about 1815 at Langstone, she married a local farmer, John Keene, and had by him several children: Arthur, Jessie, Henry, Ellen and Caroline.[67] There was a third daughter, Anna Maria, who died young.[68] Arthur, Caroline, Henry, and Anna Maria, were all names of other members of the Ford family. It was Ellen who bore the burden of caring for her father in his latter years.

Baptised by her father in Magor church on 6 October 1819 was a sister for Ellen, christened Caroline Henrietta,[69] and named after either Queen Caroline or Caroline Addams-Williams. Caroline was to marry a Liverpool-born engineer, John Aspinall. Living in 1855 in Limehouse,[70] by 1861 they had moved to High Holborn.[71] Both of them, although far removed from Monmouthshire, did their best, as he grew old, to try to solve Stephen's financial difficulties.

The third child born to Stephen and Sarah was John Williams Herbert, named after Stephen's uncle and apparent guardian. Baptised at Magor church on 5 May 1822, he died and was buried at Magor on 28 September 1832, aged only eleven years and two months, the Revd Watkin Morgan officiating at the funeral. His death came only six months after his father's release from The Fleet, and such a time of tragedy cannot have helped Stephen's state of mind; indeed, it appears that he took to drink. Further, the boy died a little over a month after the bishop had sent a third party to visit Stephen. He found him 'in a state of destitution, without clothes, without furniture, his children lying on the floor, and without credit even for necessaries'.[72] Little wonder that his son fell ill and died.

---

62 LL/MISC CORR/18864 (5 Nov. 1831). An earlier letter from Sarah to the registrar (31 March 1829) asks him for an advance of £50 on Stephen's salary as 'our little girl having a good situation in Bristol, we are anxious to place her there without delay' [LL/MISC CORR/18804]. It seems that Stephens did not immediately reply, if at all [LL/MISC CORR/ 18805, undated but 1829].

63 NLW, LL/CC/C(G) 2620. (She appointed Richard Bassett as her proctor at the court). Sarah wrote [29 Oct. 1831] to the registrar: 'I wish to know how the witnesses are to come down to Llandaff, and who is to pay the expense of their coming' (Reference misplaced).

64 NLW, LL/CC/C(G)2060a.

65 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18864, 18867 and 18868.

66 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18878.

67 Census returns (Magor) 1861.

68 Bradney, *Volume 4 Part 2 Hundred of Caldicot (Part 2)* (1994) 270.

69 Parochial registers.

70 13 Paynton Terr., East India Rd. (NLW, LL/S/259).

71 261 High Holborn: Census returns (London) 1861.

72 NLW/LL/MISC CORR/10,171 (of 16 Aug. 1832).

Stephen and Sarah were to have a second son, Stephen Charles Herbert, but he too died young, on 10 March 1849, aged but twenty-one, and was interred in Llanfihangel Rogiet church, the Revd David Jones officiating. The cause of his death, which was registered by his brother-in-law, John Keene, was given as 'decline, not certified'.[73] It was another double tragedy for Stephen, as his wife, Sarah Temperance, had passed away, aged fifty-seven, but three weeks beforehand. Her death was attributed to 'consumption – not certified', and again John Keene was the informant.[74] It will become apparent that Stephen Williams sometimes laid himself open to criticism, but these tragic episodes in his life may well have affected his actions and outlook.

When, at the close of 1817, Daniel Williams (no relation to Stephen) of Redwick died, his will made unspecified provision for the education of his three children: Elizabeth, Abigail and William, all illegitimate it appears; they were, he said, 'my natural children begotten on my servant, Sarah Williams'.[75] There had been two Daniel Williams, and two Sarah Williams, resident in Redwick until that time.[76] Neither Sarah, however, could have been Stephen's future wife for, if so, the registers would have named her as Sarah Ford. It does though appear that after her father's death, Stephen and Sarah may have cared at least for Abigail, for when Abigail married William Cullimore, in Redwick church by licence in 1819, it was 'with the consent of Sarah Temperance Williams'.[77]

Living with Stephen and Sarah around 1819 appears to have been her aunt, Anna Maria Williams, widow of Henry Williams of Llangattock Place in Breconshire,[78] and after whom one of John and Ellen Keene's daughters was named. Anna Maria senior died in 1822, and was buried at Magor.[79] In her will (proved on 6 April 1822) she made Sarah sole executrix and a substantial benefactor. Possessed of some £4,500 in stocks, she bequeathed £1,000 stock (in three per cent Bank of England consols) to David Baker the elder and James Hodges, both of Magor, to invest in real security, paying the interest to Sarah and after her demise to Stephen; once both had died the principal sum was to be divided amongst Sarah and Stephen's children. Anna Maria made other bequests, but then left the residue of her estate to Sarah.[80] This bequest should have cushioned the effects of low clerical income, but may have been swallowed up in meeting the demands of Stephen's later creditors. Some of this income Stephen released to James Hodges in 1849 and 1852, but there was still £400 held in trust for his two daughters, Ellen and Caroline.[81]

Vicar of Magor and Redwick

On 14 June 1826, Stephen was presented to the vicarage of Magor with Redwick chapel by the duke of Beaufort, the previous incumbent, Lord William George Henry Somerset, having resigned.[82] Once again, there was no vicarage house,[83] something which would not have troubled Stephen's predecessor, but which was to make life very difficult for him. Stephen's income from the two

---

73 Parochial registers, copy of death certificate.
74 Copy of death certificate; she too was buried at Llanfihangel Rogiet.
75 GRO, Newport Public Library papers, M437.3 (of 10 Dec. 1817); D43.4293 (for the will *in extenso*).
76 Parochial registers; NLW, LL/1816/100.
77 Parochial registers; as Abigail Cullimore, she was buried at Redwick on 19 Oct. 1838, aged forty-one.
78 As mentioned, her father was Dr James Ford; her brother, the Revd Dr Thomas Ford of Melton Mowbray; other nieces were Caroline and Henrietta, daughters of Gilbert Ford of Newport, Pembs, and Mary Ann Goodenough, wife of the Revd William Goodenough.
79 Bradney, *Hundred of Usk*, *op. cit.*, 235.
80 TNA (PRO) PROB.11/1656.
81 GRO, Evans and Evill Deed 0455, 0498, 0478, respectively.
82 NLW, LL/P/2387; *The Cambrian*, 15 July 1826.
83 NLW, LL/QA/28.

churches was notionally £200, though he had to pay a curate to serve Redwick.[84] He continued to hold the rectory of Llanfihangel Rogiet, but despite this plurality of post and income, Stephen's financial affairs continued to flounder.

When presented to Magor, letters testimonial for Stephen were signed by the incumbents of Caerleon, Llangybi and Usk, who signed the usual declaration that they had known him for the three years past, during which he had 'lived, piously, soberly and honestly'.[85] Had they any idea of the severe financial problems into which Stephen was falling?

At Magor, Stephen inherited James Hodges as churchwarden,[86] and James James as parish clerk – a position he had held for nearly twenty years.[87] As for assistant clergy, prior to Stephen's arrival, James Yorath had been appointed curate of Redwick with a stipend of £40 per annum,[88] but by 1829, he appears to have given way to John Beynon, who served Redwick until November 1836 with a stipend of £50.[89] By now, Stephen's livings had been sequestered and so, when early in 1837 David Jones was appointed to serve both Magor and Redwick, it was with a stipend of £120 and the surplice fees, and a requirement to live in the parish.[90]

Alas, for David Jones, in 1842 the Redwick portion (of £50) was reduced by £10 to pay for Stephen's house rent.[91] Stephen perhaps never cared for Jones, attempted in 1851 to remove him[92] and, when finally the sequestration was lifted, replaced him in 1855 with Joseph Maddy.[93] Maddy was to receive an annual stipend of £80, and in addition the surplice fees, except those for 'burials inside the church', which Stephen reserved for himself. He was permitted to reside at Ash cottage in Undy, no more than half-a-mile by road from Magor church. It was Maddy, as noted later, who saw a decent school built at Magor. At both Magor and Redwick, the curates assumed practically all the pastoral responsibility onwards from 1833 when Stephen was suspended from duty. Stephen did conduct a baptism at Redwick in 1838,[94] and began serving the church in November 1854.[95]

Magor and Redwick churches

The bishop's visitation of 1848[96] and the religious census of Wales three years later[97] tell of the pattern of worship in both the churches. The Sunday services were held at 11am and 3pm, alternating between the two churches, so that each church had at least one Sunday service. At Magor, every other Sunday, there was from Easter to Michaelmas an additional service at 6pm; sometimes this was conducted in Welsh. The average attendance was eighty people and thirty Sunday School

---

84 NLW/LL/MISC CORR/18845.
85 NLW/LL/P/2387.
86 NLW/LL/QA/28.
87 NLW/LL/MISC CORR/18782.
88 NLW, LL/SC/2247L; he was to take charge during Stephen's time in The Fleet.
89 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18845, 18944. Beynon, from 1832, was also vicar of Whitson.
90 NLW, LL/SC/965L; MISC CORR/10185–6.
91 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/10191, 10198, 10216.
92 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/19037. In this letter to Mr Huckwell, David Jones wrote: 'Mr Williams was almost the first person I met this morning ... he will do nothing of what I recommended to him ... better wait a little till he comes to himself, for he rides the high horse just now'.
93 NLW, LL/SC/2257.
94 Parochial registers. The baptism was of the quintuplets of William Williams, gent., of Redwick – perhaps the brother of Abigail Williams mentioned above.
95 NLW, LL/S/259.
96 NLW, LL/QA/37.
97 Jones and Williams, *op. cit.*, 95.

scholars at Magor; thirty and ten respectively at Redwick. The Eucharist was celebrated quarterly, and the offertory was given to the sick and the poor. In 1848, the number of Easter communicants was but eleven, though normally it ranged between fifteen and twenty.

Little is known of the state of the fabric of Magor church during Stephen's incumbency but when, on 25 August 1854, it was visited by members of the British Archaeological Association, it was reported that over the years 'the church had been very barbarously used, and it does not seem to be in much better hands at present'.[98] Not a happy reflection on patron, vicar or curate! Following Stephen's death the church underwent a considerable restoration.[99]

As for Redwick, at the diocesan chancellor's visitation in 1829, he was not pleased to find that in Redwick church there was 'no flagon or paten for the Communion, (and) no covering for the reading desk nor a table of legacies'. He demanded immediate remedial action, and the diocesan registrar queried: 'Who does the old monument in the north aisle belong to?'[100]

As for Magor churchyard, in 1826 part of the boundary wall was out of repair because George Jones of Pwll-meurig had not maintained his section of it; previous owners of the adjacent land had done so.[101] Sheep, but not cattle or horses, were allowed to graze in the churchyard (1827)[102] – which was larger in extent than today, and part was given over to the cultivation of hay and wheat (1839).[103] It was a state of affairs not unusual at the time.

As well as the Magor glebe-lands, the lands pertaining to the vicarage included Graigmaster in Newchurch parish, and Penybank farm in Llangatwg-iuxta-Caerleon. In 1827, these were leased to James Edwards and Walter Morgan respectively.[104] The incumbent also held, 'eight acres in the parish of Christchurch adjoining a wharf on the bank of the river Usk below Newport bridge'.[105] During the period of sequestration noted later, the income from these properties passed to the sequestrator, and so, in 1834, Walter Morgan wrote to the bishop of Llandaff asking for time to pay his rent; he said he had 'a family to support and was greatly distressed'. [106]

By 1855, when the sequestration was lifted, John Morgan had succeeded his father in the tenancy of Penybank. Stephen, and his family, alleged that John had let the farm run down, and were determined to evict him in favour of John Howel, the tenant of their choice. After some six months of acrimonious exchanges, John Howel received the tenancy on 2 February (Candlemas) 1856, but by 24 March, 'old John Morgan' had not yet been evicted.[107] No more is known of the matter, but Stephen in his old age could be a very determined and perhaps difficult man.

---

98 *The Times*, 25 Aug. 1854. (Bishop Copleston wrote in 1829, after a tour of southern Monmouthshire: 'The churches are many of them in a state of squalid neglect ... the destruction of ivy and other vegetation in towers and the walls of churches .... There are quite ruins enough in Monmouthshire to serve for young ladies' sketch-books, without making a building destined for religious service subservient to such a purpose' (Copleston, W.J., *Memoir of Edward Copleston, D.D*. London, [1851] 131.)

99 Lambeth Palace Library. Incorporated Church Building Society, file 05728; Newman (2000) 373–4.

100 NLW, LL/LB/4, p. 7.

101 NLW, LL/LB/2, p. 285.

102 NLW, LL/QA/28.

103 NLW, LL/S/259A.

104 LL/S/259.

105 GRO, Evans and Evill Deed 0503 (of 1847).

106 NLW, LL/S/259. (Penybank was only an eleven-acre holding.)

107 LL/S/259 (various deeds); some repairs had been carried out at Graigmaster and Penybank in 1849 (NLW, LL/Tithe Papers/453).

Early Indebtedness

By 1820, Stephen was either having difficulty making ends meet, or needed money for a specific and expensive purpose. That year he borrowed of his uncle John no less than £256, which sum his uncle raised by selling four shares in the Brecon and Abergavenny canal. In his will, dated 8 March 1821 and proved on 19 April 1822, John bequeathed to Stephen 'the said principal sum of two hundred and fifty six pounds, so that he shall not be called upon after my decease for any part thereof'. He had also (perhaps a few years earlier) lent Stephen a further eighty-five pounds; in his will, Uncle John also 'forgave Stephen the eighty-five pounds, both principal and interest'.[108] By this time Stephen may have been growing estranged from the Williams family for, strangely, he found it necessary to write in November 1824 to the Llandaff diocesan registrar, Edward Stephens, trying to ascertain where the grant of probate of his uncle's will had been made.[109]

On 11 November 1821, Stephen mortgaged for £250 with five per cent interest to be paid, to Francis McDonnell and Henry Mostyn, gentlemen, both of Usk, 'all that rectory or parsonage situate in the parish of Llanfihangel iuxta Rogiet'; referring to the glebe-house and glebe-lands there.[110] Then, on 12 July 1823, Stephen and his wife jointly assigned a policy of assurance [valued at £400] by way of mortgage to James Hodges, esq. of Magor. Why this pressing need for such large sums of money? Was it because Stephen wanted to build a parsonage for his growing family, or because he was setting up (it opened in September 1822) a charity school in Magor?[111]

Despite his successive promotions, Stephen Williams from 1824 onwards found it difficult to make ends meet, or was incapable of managing his finances, or both. Problems surfaced in the summer of 1824 when Stephen sought an assistant curate on account of his recent illness.[112] He seems to have failed to pay off his mortgage, and the Llandaff diocesan registrar, Edward Stephens, much of whose time was to be taken up in the coming years with Stephen's affairs, wrote that Stephen was 'in very indifferent circumstances, and if legal proceedings were adopted he would go to prison, and his living [only Llanfihangel Rogiet then] is still in the hand of the mortgagee'.[113] He was not the only cleric with fiscal problems; another at this time was Isaac Morgan who served Dingestow and Tregare.[114]

First Sequestration

As early as 1825, Stephen secured a loan of £1,200 from a Miss Elizabeth Jones of Chewton Magna, near Bristol, with a further advance from her of £400, in 1827; the total of debt in to-day's terms amounted to well over £70,000. These loans were secured on the security of his livings of Llanfihangel Rogiet (for the £1,200), Magor and Redwick (for the £400), on four life policies with the Norwich insurance office and of one policy with the Globe.[115] What is unknown is why he needed this colossal amount of money, why Elizabeth Jones loaned Stephen these large amounts and what, if any, connection there was between them.[116]

---

108 TNA (PRO) PROB 11/1656.

109 NLW, LL/LB/4, f.100.

110 GRO, D. 43/M. 423.5; I am grateful to Angela Saunderson of the Gwent Record Office for perusing this deed for me. In the mid-1840s, the glebe-land amounted to little more than eight acres, and the house was occupied by Thomas Pride (NLW, LL/Tithe Papers/352.)

111 GRO, Evans and Evill Deed 0496.

112 NLW, LL/LB/2, pp. 73–4 (23 July 1824).

113 NLW, LL/LB/2, p. 63 (5 July 1824).

114 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/10,415 (1 Feb. 1823).

115 NLW, LL/S/259.

116 She was 'a young lady' (NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18789, of 16 June 1828).

Stephen himself later wrote that his 'labyrinth of trouble' was 'entirely owing to my serving a friend who has deserted me'.[117] When, on 24 July 1826, within weeks of his institution to the parish, Williams demised the vicarial tithes (of grass, hay and cattle) of Magor, to two local farmers – James Leonard and James James, for £120 per annum, was he thus hoping to slowly repay the first loan?[118] Another debt (of £100 borrowed from Mr Waters, a Caerleon solicitor) was, Stephen wrote, to pay for the expenses of his induction.[119]

Acting on the orders of the court of Common Pleas, the bishop of Llandaff on 2 February 1828, sequestered Stephen Williams's churches of Magor, Redwick and Llanfihangel Rogiet; Williams being in debt to the tune of £2,800 to Elizabeth Jones, spinster, and others. The order was read publicly in Magor church on Sunday 10 February by Jonathan Williams taking Stephen's place as officiating minister. The following year, when the deed of sequestration had to be repeated in public, Stephen wrote: 'I have not spirits sufficient to read or to hear the sequestration tomorrow. I shall get my friend John Williams to officiate, and I will take his churches'.[120] This first sequestration lasted until 27 November 1841, by which date Miss Jones's debt had been repaid, but immediately a second sequestration was issued on account of other outstanding debts. It was not until 30 May 1854 that Stephen Williams regained his livings, and even then there was to be a further brief period of sequestration.[121]

Throughout this first period of constant indebtedness (1825–31), Stephen Williams surprisingly, and constantly, received much credit for goods and services. He did not, it seems, 'live frugally' – as later Bishop Copleston was to advise him. He obtained credit from a succession of tradespeople and solicitors, as well as a number of loans – mostly from local farmers. It appears that having chalked up credit at one supplier (who perhaps was demanding payment) he turned to another in the same trade.

By the time Stephen was committed to The Fleet prison he admitted debts unpaid totalling almost £3,000,[122] equivalent in today's terms to around £150,000.[123] There was little cause for this, as the bishop had in 1828 allowed him £200 yearly out of the sequestration monies for serving the churches of Magor and Llanfihangel Rogiet, and because he had to support 'a wife with four children'.[124] After his incarceration in The Fleet and an appearance at the Llandaff consistory court, this sum was reduced to £80 per year – for serving only Llanfihangel. A further £10 was found to pay his rent by reducing the stipend of the Revd John Beynon for serving Redwick from £50 to £40.[125]

Incarceration in Monmouth Gaol

His inability to pay his creditors, despite a substantial allowance, must imply gross financial mismanagement on Stephen's part; it resulted for him and his family in distress and indignity. First, some of his goods were seized; then, on 14 October 1828, he wrote from Penhow cottage to the diocesan registrar: 'Since my troubles of yesterday, I have been apprized that a fresh seizure is to

---

117 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18802 (9 Feb. 1829).
118 NLW, LL/S/259/CORR.
119 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/ 18792.
120 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18802.
121 NLW, LL/S/259L.
122 NLW, LL/S/259.
123 Bank of England, *Equivalent Contemporary Values of the Pound: A Historical Series 1270 to 2004*.
124 NLW, LL/S/259L; the Revd John Beynon received £50 for officiating at Redwick (NLW, LL/S/259A). Charles Mullins, Miss Jones's agent, thought that this allowance was too liberal (NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18783, of 5 Jan. 1828).
125 NLW, LL/S/259 and 259A.

take place. I have accordingly removed everything I have purchased, and am now left without a single thing in my house'. He was writing for help and sympathy, but there is some reason to believe that Stephen coloured some of his distress letters rather too colourfully. Indeed, the diocesan registrar pointed out that he had received £200 in the year which had just ended at Michaelmas.[126]

A year later, by 19 October 1829, Stephen had been cast as a debtor into Monmouth prison; the Revd David Jones of Llandeilo took his services until his release.[127] Fortunately for Stephen, Trophimus Fuljames referred to before, a Monmouth land agent and surveyor, took an interest in his case. He visited Stephen in Monmouth, and later referred to him as a 'poor and persecuted man by the lawyers of this country', and also to 'his late and present embarrassments, and mental as well as bodily suffering'.[128] He persuaded Stephen's detaining creditor, William Cullimore of Magor, to agree to his discharge from confinement, on Stephen's allowance for his ministry being reduced from £200 to £100, and the balance being shared between his creditors.[129] A deed drawn up to this effect on 5 December 1829, assigned to Mr Fuljames £100 and a policy on Stephen's life.[130] Stephen wrote to the diocesan registrar giving him this news, and asserting that his 'poor wife and children are starving'.[131] It is uncertain when Stephen was liberated, and the Revd David Jones conducted his Christmas services.[132]

The drawing up of the deed, and other work done for Stephen, meant an account for £40 due to Mr Ives, a Monmouth solicitor. The chronology of these weeks is not entirely precise, but Stephen, unable or unwilling to pay Mr Ives, was (again it would seem) committed to Monmouth gaol, being taken on the road whilst journeying to Llandaff to see Edward Stephens.[133] He was certainly in prison on 28 December 1829,[134] but penned a New Year letter addressed from 'Penhow'[135] – though this may have been in anticipation of release. Indeed, still in gaol on 7 January 1830, he wrote to the diocesan registrar for an advance of money as he said that, if he paid Mr Ives, he could be released the following Tuesday.[136]

It is far from certain that liberation came so quickly, for on 17 April the diocesan registrar wrote to the bishop of Llandaff saying, that as Stephen had not served his churches for the whole of the last half-year, he was doubtful whether he should receive his stipend for that period.[137] This was yet another problem for Stephen, soon to be compounded by his falling out with Mr Fuljames and his wife's consequent imprisonment. Mr Fuljames does appear to have been helpful, having attended a meeting with Edward Stephens, the diocesan registrar, at the *Lion* inn in Magor on 11

---

126 NLW, LL/LB/4, p. 36 (25 Nov. 1829).
127 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18810, 18818.
128 NLW, LL/S/259 (of 11 April 1830).
129 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18842 (of 18 Nov. 1829).
130 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18832 (later reference of 21 June 1830).
131 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18800 (not dated).
132 He appears to have been freed by mid-February 1830, as a list of debtors then confined in Monmouth does not contain his name (GRO, D.749/258). Might he be the solitary communicant to whom the gaol chaplain administered the sacrament that Christmas Day? (GRO, chaplain's journal, 1822–38, Q/MG 13).
133 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18852 (not dated).
134 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18847.
135 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18813 (21 Dec. 1829).
136 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18814. Stephen added, 'I trust you will not be instrumental in detaining me in this place'.
137 NLW, LL/LB/4, pp. 66–7.

April that year. Fuljames referred to the Revd David Jones as also being present: 'A person that I do not altogether like, nor his behaviour to Mr Williams'.[138]

Stephen did not agree that he should not receive his full stipend, although he had been absent from duty for so long. He wrote to the diocesan registrar (2 April 1831) to tell him that his wife would come to Llandaff 'to receive £100 due Lady Day past'.[139] Three days later (5 April) he reminded Edward Stephens that his salary due had not been paid, that he and his family were 'in a state of almost starvation', and that the previous Saturday the Revd David Jones had walked eighteen miles to receive the balance due to him.[140] On 8 April, Stephen was at the *White Lion* inn in Bristol, to meet Mr Mullins, his principal creditor's agent.[141] On 31 August he went to Llandaff to see the diocesan registrar, but had to leave a note for Edward Stephens, saying: 'I am much disappointed in not seeing you, having rode down this morn for that purpose'. [142]

The Fleet Prison

A month later, Stephen wrote again to the registrar saying that he was determined to take the benefit of the Insolvent Debtors Act of 1823, which allowed beneficed clergy in debt to be released from prison, their livings to be sequestered, and the income used to pay off their debts. The diocesan registrar, Edward Stephens, wrote to the bishop of Llandaff on 23 October 1831, saying that Mrs Williams had told him that Stephen 'was gone into the King's Bench Prison with the view of taking the benefit of the Insolvent Debtors Act'. He also wrote that 'many have said that they will not attend his churches when he returns', and also that 'Mrs Williams and the children are not in that destitute state as represented by Stephen Williams, as I advanced her sufficient for present purposes'.[143] He told how Stephen had defaulted on a payment promised of £25 to Mr Joseph, 'a small shopkeeper' at Magor, to whom he was indebted to the tune of £60 for 'absolute necessaries'. Edward Stephens added that he was 'truly concerned to see that that part of the diocese is very unfortunate with regard to the clergy'.

As a debtor, Williams was 'taken and acknowledged' on 8 November 1831,[144] but remained on bail until 11 January 1832 when he was rendered to The Fleet by the court of the Exchequer 'on discharge of his bail'. The bailers were William Powell and Thomas White.[145] On New Year's day 1832, seemingly at home in Magor, he wrote to Edward Stephens asking him to pay the Revd Yorath for his services,[146] and complaining that the tithe defaulters caused his debt repayments to be

---

138 NLW, LL/S/259.

139 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18855.

140 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18819.

141 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18856.

142 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18860.

143 NLW, LL/LB/4, 218–19.

144 An undated letter may refer to this period. Stephen writing to Edward Stephens says, 'I am much distressed. I now find it prudent to go to London and to become Insolvent as soon as I can. ... I shall go to London on the 27th and come out in five or six weeks' (NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18799).

145 TNA (PRO), PRIS 2/142, (No. 27,410); on 25 Jan., Lewis Edward, draper, and Richard Mullock, dealer in china and earthenware, both of Newport, were appointed assignees of Stephen's estate (NLW, LL/S/259), and Mullock still acted in this capacity in 1851 (NLW, LL/LB/4, pp. 43–4).

146 The Revd Yorath served in Stephen's absence, from 2 Oct. 1831- 25 March 1832 (NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18880). Bishop Coplestone writing to the diocesan chancellor (Bruce Knight) on 7 Feb. 1832 said: 'The churches are served by [James] Yorath, a Deacon only, and at all events not a fit person to be permanently entrusted with such a charge' (Brown, R.L., *The Letters of Edward Copleston, Bishop of Llandaff, 1828–1849* (Cardiff, 2003) 91 [No. 58]). Yorath, still a deacon, went on to become curate of Goldcliff and Bishton, despite – as the bishop pointed out – 'having no scholarship' nor any 'readiness in composing sermons', yet he had

slow.[147] The court for the relief of insolvent debtors ordered his release on 16 March 1832;[148] he was freed on 21 March ('as to the Detainer of William Ives').[149] The next day, Stephen wrote to the bishop, thanking him for his assistance in enabling him to return home to his family; Bishop Copleston had given him a £25 loan.[150] The court appointed Lewis Edwards and Richard Mullock as assignees of Stephen's assets. [151]

During Stephen's time in The Fleet, a detailed account was compiled as to the extent of his insolvency.[152] Two-thirds of his total debt was the result of money advanced him either with or without security. Apart from the £1,270 remaining unpaid to Miss Jones in 1831, about £1,100 was owing to other creditors, including six local farmers and Richard Harris, 'Guard of the Bristol Mail, near St James' Church, Bristol'. The loan (of £100) from one of the farmers, James Hodges of Magor, was secured upon 'my life interest in 8 acres of land in the Parish of Christchurch'. A total debt of £1,200 owing to James Hodges and Daniel Baker, both of Magor, was secured upon a policy they held on Stephen's life, effected in the Globe insurance office for the sum of £400. Stephen also owed £51 to the duke of Beaufort for three years' unpaid rent (1827–9).

A substantial element in his indebtedness (£322) was the need, or craving, for legal assistance. Stephen Williams employed no less than ten solicitors in the short period from 1828 to 1831. Most perhaps refused to serve him further after he ran up legal bills, though he acknowledged indebtedness to Mr Hill, a Chancery Lane, London, solicitor, over a three-year period, and Mr Greville, of Smale Street, Bristol, for services rendered between 1828 and 1831. Stephen Williams was also indebted (£108) to Mr Trophimus Fuljames, a land agent of Monmouth, for assistance from 1825 to 1829.

By the time of his admission to The Fleet, Stephen Williams had run up unpaid bills for groceries (£109), beer and spirits (£116), and clothes (£86). The creditors for groceries included shopkeepers in Bristol, Newport and Magor (Mr Samuel Joseph). Alcoholic refreshment was obtained from no less than eight different innkeepers between 1825 and 1830; once again, Williams probably had constantly to seek a fresh supplier. He also obtained porter from Waring and co., Bristol. His personal clothing included shoes from Mr Spear in Newport and Mr James Thomas in Bristol, and tailors of the same towns. Goods for his wife were purchased from milliners in Bristol, Chepstow and Newport, and from Mrs Cary, a bonnet-maker, of the Arcade, Bristol.

That (in his earlier years at Magor) Stephen Williams endeavoured to farm the glebe, may be indicated by purchases of seed (in 1825, from Mr Miller, seedsman, Bristol), and of cattle (in 1827, from Mr William Bowler, farmer, Llantrisaint). From 1826 to 1828 his medical needs were met by Mr King, surgeon, of Chepstow. Home improvements were perhaps reflected in the debts due to William Barclay, clockmaker of Nicholas Street, Bristol; Richard Mullock, earthenware dealer of

---

'conducted himself well' (Brown, 108 [No.85]).Whilst looking after Magor, Yorath received £65 p.a. (NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18898).

147 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18875.

148 TNA (PRO), PRIS 3/31 (No. 32,450).

149 TNA (PRO), PRIS 1/2, f. 67.

150 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18879; the bishop wrote to Chancellor Bruce Knight on 22 March 1832, 'Stephen Williams is this day liberated from the Fleet Prison, under the Insolvent Act, & returns to Magor. What a deplorable state that part of Monmouthshire is in! Williams of Goldcliff is in town, absconding from debt ... and returns to Magor'. (Brown, 92 [No. 60]). The bishop later remarked: 'I have just such a sad set in Monmouthshire. The two Williams's, Morgan, and Callowhill. These *mauvais sujets* [ne'er-do-wells] give me more plague than all the rest of the Diocese' (1 Aug. 1832; Brown, 101 [No. 72]).

151 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18881 [17 April 1832].

152 NLW, LL/S/259 (32450).

Newport; and Mr Chapman, painter, also of Newport. Travelling from home saw Stephen Williams board at the *Swan*, Skinner Street, Snow Hill, London (1831), and take meals at the *King's Head* inn, Monmouth (1830), and at the *Dophin* inn, Bristol (1831).

The most touching debt (of £27), owing since 1827, was to Mrs Hancock, schoolmistress, Hope cottage, Clifton, near Bristol, 'for the education of my children'. One wonders how the children fared thereafter! As for Mrs Hancock, by 1834 the debt had risen to £41, and she wrote to Edward Stephens, the Llandaff diocesan registrar, that she had been 'deceived by repeated and solemn promises by the parties'.[153]

Released from Prison

Back at home, Stephen wrote to Edward Stephens (23 April) saying, 'I presume Mr Basset has informed you of the barbarous treatment I have experienced ... I am with my family reduced to absolute poverty'.[154] On 2 May, he complained that he had not received a stipend payment due;[155] again on 6 June he had to request that arrears of his salary be paid up.[156] These were but two of many begging letters, but Edward Stephens had to inform the bishop that he knew Stephen's creditors 'would not grant him any indulgence on account of his conduct towards them'.[157] A further cause of resentment was that, due to the sequestration, Stephen had no control over the administration of Magor parish, and he wrote that: 'If the burial ground inside of the Church is at liberty for people to take as they think fit without the consent of the Vicar, of course the Pavement of the Church will be knocked to pieces in taking up the same'.[158]

In August 1832, the bishop wrote a very strong letter to Stephen, telling him that he was bound 'by every tie of justice, of honour, and of religion, to live as frugally as possible, and to save what you can out of this income for the benefit of your creditors'.[159] The bishop also sent a third party to visit Stephen. He found him 'in a state of destitution, without clothes, without furniture, his children lying on the floor, and without credit even for necessaries'. Of the sequestration income, the bishop allocated £120 to be paid to Stephen for serving the churches of Magor and Llanfihangel; £40 (a reduction of £10) to Mr Beynon for serving Redwick. The remainder of the income ('beside what may be requisite for the repairs of the Glebe house at Llanfihangel' – though this never happened), was to be paid to the creditors.[160]

Later that month, the bishop promised to pay the £6 half-year rent due for Stephen's cottage, and to forego a further £10 he had lent Stephen in London. The bishop noted that of £132 due to Stephen, £50 had been placed in the hands of a Mr Wise to lay out for Stephen's benefit, but the bishop complained: 'I am afraid he [Stephen] is quite incorrigible. Mr Wise complains that after he and his wife had made out an inventory of articles of furniture, etc. to be bought at Newport with the £50, they obtained different articles, such as gowns instead of beds, which were among the things specified'.[161]

Despite this, the bishop wrote to the diocesan chancellor, Bruce Knight (9 September 1832), that he would advance Stephen £20 from the stipend payment due to him at Christmas, but he

---

153 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18933 (24 Feb. 1834).
154 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18882.
155 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18885. [There is also note of help given at this time by Mr Pride: £4 in cash, and a bushel of wheat].
156 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/188892.
157 NLW, LL/LB/4, pp. 243–4 (8 June 1832).
158 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18886 [22 May 1832].
159 NLW, LL/MISC COTT/10,170 (3 Aug. 1832).
160 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/10,171 (of 16 Aug. 1832); *Cf*. MISC CORR/10,165–8.
161 *Ibid*., 10,172 (of 28 Aug. 1832).

added: 'his word is worth nothing. What can be done with him?'[162] A few days later, the bishop feared that if Stephen was 'left to himself, he must again go to prison, and his wife and children to the workhouse'.[163] He added that, 'If I had not given him money, he must have gone to the parish officers for relief'. Later that month, Stephen's eldest son died. In December that year, the deputy registrar at Llandaff had occasion to remonstrate with Stephen for his conduct to those who had tried to help him,[164] while the bishop noted that 'that wretched man has become a pensioner upon me at the rate of £1 a week to keep him alive'.[165]

Suspension from Parochial Ministry

The effects of his imprisonment, his continuing financial dilemma, and the death of his eldest son, all perhaps combined to drive Stephen into a life completely out of character. Early in March 1833, the bishop received a petition purportedly from the inhabitants of Magor imploring him to suspend or remove Stephen from his pastoral ministry. The bishop was given to understand that 'his character is so completely gone that no one will go near him', and that although the population of the parish was eight hundred souls, 'the church was deserted.'[166]

The bishop suspended Stephen from taking any services, but then received a counter-petition which implied that some of the original signatories had not been parishioners, that some persons signed twice, that some signatures were forgeries, and others were against the will of the person named. The thirty signatories to the counter-petition requested Stephen's reinstatement, and added that 'in his public character we hold him faultless. Never having known him neglect his duty, or get intoxicated, and having heard of innumerable instances of his goodness and liberality.'[167] The bishop requested the rural dean, the Revd Edward Lewis, assisted by the Revds Charles Salusbury and Richard Roberts [vicar of Christchurch] to enquire into the truth of the charges.[168]

Their enquiry was held at the *Rock and Fountain* inn, Penhow, on 23 April 1833, but this meeting led to further problems, as aggrieved supporters of Stephen claimed to the bishop that they had not been allowed to speak on his behalf.[169] Feelings ran high at Magor, and the bishop was apprehensive that when the Revd William Thomas next came from Llanhenwg to do Stephen's duty there might be a riot.[170] The bishop also felt that the affair was 'a war of party in the parish, the dissenters fomenting it for the sake of mischief to the establishment'.[171]

Unfortunately for Stephen, the commissioners did not find in his favour, and on 17 June, he was cited to appear at the consistory court of Llandaff ten days later, charged with 'neglect of duty, improper and irreligious performance, drunkenness, and other crimes and immoralities'.[172] The proceedings of the court are not extant, but at a later hearing in the autumn Stephen was

---

162 Brown, 109 (No. 87).
163 Brown, 109–10 (No. 88; 13 Sept. 1832).
164 NLW, LL/LB/4, p. 276.
165 Brown, 88 (No. 48; 28 Dec. 1832); NLW, LL/MISC CORR/10,173 (of same date: the bishop writing to Chancellor Bruce Knight, said that he had advanced Stephen with 30s. each week, through David Jones, curate of Caldicot, 'but this it seems is all consumed'. *Cf.* NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18906.
166 Brown, 121 (No. 113).
167 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18915 (of 26 March 1833).
168 Brown, 120–1 (Nos. 112, 114).
169 Brown, 124 (No. 118); NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18919.
170 Brown, 125 (No. 120).
171 Brown, 126 (No. 122).
172 NLW, LL/CC/C(G)2657; *Cf.* Brown, 128 (No. 125); NLW/MISC CORR/10180; LL/LB/4, p. 320 (where John Burder, the bishop's London secretary, described Stephen as a 'sad fellow').

discharged.[173] The verdict remains unknown, but seemingly there was no formal suspension, and certainly not deprivation.[174] The upshot, however, was that Stephen's licence was withdrawn, and he was therefore no longer permitted to officiate in Magor and Redwick churches, but the bishop did allow him to 'continue to serve Lanvihangel, which is a small place, and where the people like him. There he will be on his good behaviour, and will have a bare subsistence if he behaves well'.[175] The 'bare subsistence', paid out of the sequestration income, was to be £80 per year.[176]

Tithe Collection

In the ensuing years, life was clearly difficult for Stephen with a wife and a son to support. In 1834, he wrote to the diocesan registrar that he lacked clothes and shoes for the family, and that it was 'utterly impossible for me to appear in public'.[177] In 1838, he wrote to the bishop alleging that during the past severe winter, they had been obliged to cut up blankets to make clothes for the family. Referring to his allowance of £1 5s. per week, he itemised how it was spent: bread (3s.6d.), cheese (2s.), butter (3s.), sugar (2s.4d.), bacon (2s.3d.), meat (6s.), tea (1s.6d.), soap (6d.) and candles (4s.). He said that he had almost paid off the coal merchant, but grumbled at 'not being allowed even a drop of small beer'.[178] In this, and other letters, Stephen showed himself to be able to reason well, and to be adept with figures.

In a series of letters, stretching from 1838 to 1850, Stephen Williams constantly blamed Edward Stephens for failing to collect in all the tithe payments due from his parishes.[179] That failure, he felt, meant that the sequestration income was considerably reduced, and the greater therefore was the delay in satisfying his creditors. In 1838, he took legal advice from Charles Greville, a Bristol solicitor;[180] and again in Bristol, in 1841, had another lawyer, Edward Hutchins, write to the Llandaff diocesan registrar, suggesting that the backlog of tithes unpaid at Redwick amounted to no less than £1,000 in value.[181]

In a letter of 1843 to the registrar, Stephen set out in great detail the tithe arrears in Magor for the year 1841, and noted that some dated from 1834.[182] In 1843, he instituted proceedings against the registrar, but complained that 'my solicitor foolishly compromised with him'.[183] Stephen was not the only person dissatisfied. From 1832 to 1840, Charles Mullins, Miss Jones's solicitor at Chew Magna, also wrote very firm letters regarding the incomplete collection of the tithes, to the pecuniary disadvantage of his client.[184]

Sympathy should be shown to Edward Stephens, the diocesan registrar and therefore the sequestrator, for with his manifold duties he faced an almost impossible task. He was frequently not

---

173 NLW, LL/CC/G 2081A.
174 *Cf.* Brown, 128 (No. 125).
175 Brown, 139 (No. 142).
176 Brown, 130 (No. 127).
177 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18934; *Cf.* Brown, 139 (No. 142), 212 (No. 270).
178 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18949.
179 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18951, 18955; LL/S/259 CORR; LL/Tithe Papers/453 [25 Nov. 1849] – the registrar now was Joseph Huckwell.
180 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18951 [19 Oct. 1838].
181 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18992 [25 Nov. 1841]; *Cf.* LL/MISC CORR/19010 [28 June 1843]; in 1834, almost one-third of the tithes payable that year were in arrears, partly because of one offender, John Long, who owed twelve guineas [NLW, LL/Tithe Papers/431(a)].
182 LL/MISC CORR/19008 [29 Oct. 1842]; in 1837, of eighty-seven tithe-payers in Magor, twenty-six had not paid or were in arrears [NLW, LL/Tithe Papers/435].
183 NLW, LL/S/259.
184 NLW, LL/S/259 CORR; LL/MISC CORR/18925, 18954, 18959, 18963, 18968, 18980.

in the best of health,[185] he had once suffered a severe riding accident, and even the bishop doubted whether he was up to the mark for the job in hand.[186] In the field he had to employ agents to gather in the tithe payments, and sometime they met with refusal and hostility. For some years, Margaret James was the registrar's agent in Magor. In 1842, she wrote to Edward Stephens telling him: 'I asked Mr Musgrove for his tythe, he said he never would pay it, he said he would see you in hell first'.[187] In 1844, when she told Mr Prichard that he owed two or three years tithe, 'he told me very savagely that he had paid Mr Stephen Williams all he owed'.[188]

Second Sequestration

By 27 November 1841, the enormous debt due to Miss Jones of Chewton Magna had been repaid in full, and the sequestration on Stephen's livings was relaxed; only for a fresh sequestration to be ordered – at Stephen's request, to shield himself from his other creditors. The new Llandaff registrar, John Huckwell, was appointed sequestrator.[189] Very charitably, Charles Mullins, Miss Jones's attorney, wrote that he was 'very sorry to hear there is another sequestration'.[190] In 1846, Stephen's kinsman, the Revd Charles Williams of Llwyn-celyn, Caerleon, tried to come to his assistance and manage his affairs. Unfortunately, and at a time when there was a real possibility the second sequestration might be ended, Charles Williams had to report that although Stephen had 'promised me that he would not in any way interfere till all was complete ... I fear Mr Williams has been meddling on the business, and ... I shall have nothing more to do with it'.[191] Even the bishop was taken by surprise – he thought that the sequestration had been relaxed.[192]

Stephen Williams' problems were not yet over, even though in 1848 five of his creditors released him of his debt to them, considering his 'difficulties and distressed circumstances'.[193] He continued to receive his allowance of £80 yearly,[194] together with £10 towards his house rent[195] and some clothing money.[196] The future of this arrangement was temporarily in doubt when in 1849 Bishop Copleston died.[197] That was a year of sorrow as both his wife and younger son passed away. It is little wonder that, at the age now of seventy and perhaps suffering mental anguish, Stephen ran up a bill for a new suit of clothes which by 10 June 1850 had not been paid.[198] It may be on this account that Stephen was sued in the county court in January 1852.[199]

---

185 *Cf*. NLW, LL/LB/4, p. 121 (of 1830). There are other such references.
186 Brown, 131 (No. 129), 139 (No. 142), both of 1833.
187 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/19002
188 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/19012; Margaret James was still the agent [now for the new registrar, Joseph Huckwell] in 1848. She was probably the same Margaret James who had to sign an apology to Sarah Williams years before. She now occupied part of the Magor glebe-land, but she was not very sympathetic to Stephen Williams (NLW, LL/Tithe Papers/450, 453).
189 NLW, LL/ MISC CORR/18998, 19053; LL/S/259.
190 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18993.
191 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/19021–2.
192 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/10217.
193 NLW, LL/CC. Reference misplaced.
194 NLW, LL//S/259.
195 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/19048.
196 For details of his clothing allowance, *see* NLW, LL/Tithe Papers/453.
197 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/19031 (3 Nov. 1849, when Stephen was tenant of Lewis Williams of Redwick, and under notice to quit). That month also, Stephen was trying to resume duty at Magor and Redwick (NLW, LL/Tithe Papers/453).
198 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/19034.
199 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/19044. The county court sat in Newport on 19 and 20 January that year. The *Monmouthshire Merlin* [23 Jan. 1852] reporting the proceedings, said that there were a large number of cases

It is in these years Stephen 'rode the high horse', as the Revd David Jones put it,[200] and saw fit to take further legal action against the former Llandaff registrar. In 1852, he sued Stephens in the Queen's Bench for £259, which he felt was due to him for tithe composition in Magor and Redwick between 1833 and 1842.[201] The outcome has yet to be traced. In a further action, handled in 1853 by his solicitor, Edward Hutchins, Stephen did successfully claim £40 from the registrar as regarding the 1841 settlement when his second sequestration came into force. [202]

The Closing Years

A helping hand came to Stephen in late 1853 in the person of the Revd James Booth, vicar of Wandsworth;[203] the connecting link may have been Stephen's son-in-law, John Aspinall.[204] James Booth, writing to the now Llandaff registrar, Joseph Huckwell, described Stephen as 'an old man, and entirely unequal to the management of pecuniary affairs', and said that 'the continued suspense and protracted delays are telling severely upon Mr Williams's health'. [205]

James Booth undertook to put Stephen's affairs in good order, providing that he did not interfere in the administration of his livings. Stephen was 'to receive a weekly allowance, besides rent, clothes and other necessaries'. Booth sounded a note of caution: 'I cannot permit him to break his engagements with me and with his family; while he remains in debt to me and others, he must live within a fixed sum'. The result of Booth's intervention was that, by early May 1854, the Insolvent court had discharged Stephen from its jurisdiction, and on 13 May the sequestration of his livings was relaxed.

On 24 July, to enable himself to be free of further problems, Stephen demised to James Booth and to John Aspinall, 'for twenty-one years if the lessor shall live so long, all glebe lands belonging to the rectory of Llanfihangel Rogiet and the vicarage of Magor and Redwick, with all messuages erected thereon, except the rectory and vicarage houses, also all rectorial and vicarial tithes'.[206] Stephen was to receive an annual rent of £200. (It was also a time of change in Magor, for enclosure of the fields was taking place[207]). A week later, Booth recovered in the court of Exchequer against Stephen the sum of £200 6s 1d.; his livings were again sequestered. It is not clear whether this was an outstanding debt, or a procedural device to ensure Booth had full control of Stephen's income. He had requested John Huckwell to continue to collect for him the tithes and rents due.

In the autumn of 1855, Stephen had a piece of good fortune as Booth related:

> Mr Williams is now in town, having come up to receive a large sum of money which has most unexpectedly turned up for him in the Bounty Office, 43 years arrears of a yearly sum he was entitled to receive or of which he never knew anything until within the last ten days. He is in a position at once to discharge all his debts and every incumbrance on his livings.

---

listed, but some did not proceed because of non-appearance of plaintiffs, and others had been settled out of court. Of those pleas which did proceed, the newspaper only published those of 'public interest'. Stephen Williams's case does not appear amongst them.

200 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/19037; with the Great Western Clothing Establishment in Newport.

201 NLW, LL/S/259; at that time the livings were sequestered, and nothing was directly due to Stephen.

202 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/19055.

203 He also had a residence at 22 Sussex Gardens, Hyde Park, where some of his letters were dated.

204 Said, in 1854, to be of Tavistock Square, perhaps his business rather than residential address.

205 NLW, LL/S/259.

206 NLW, LL/ MISC DEED/176.

207 The Magor Enclosure Act had been printed in 1852: *The Times*, 22 Dec. 1852.

This Stephen did not do! He and his daughter, Mrs Aspinall, persuaded James Booth to retain control of his livings, making regular payments to himself and to both his daughters. Booth agreed, providing that the Llandaff registrar continued to 'take up the tithes as they are collected'. James Booth did become somewhat exasperated with Stephen's behaviour: 'I cannot understand Mr Williams at all ... He took home £50 in loose cash. What has he done with it all?' He disapproved of Stephen's declared intention of giving a dinner (at a cost of 1s.6d. per head) to the tithe-payers of his parishes:

> If he chooses to squander his own and his children's and grand-children's property in such a foolish and thankless way, how can I help it. Only think of his feasting people, many of whom during the last twenty years would not have given him so much as a cup of cold water.

In March 1856, Stephen moved into a cottage in Magor, and Mrs Aspinall wrote to the Llandaff registrar that he had no furniture and she wished 'to make him comfortable'. Stephen was still in debt to James Booth, who was anxious to see the whole affair ended. It was only in June 1856 that his livings appear to have been once again fully his own, but he had only a few years left to enjoy his new freedom.

The Last Days

On Sunday, 18 March 1860, Stephen's daughter (presumably Mrs Keene who lived locally) found her father dead in his bed. The death certificate does not convey the cause of death, but simply states that an inquest had been held the following day. Stephen was laid to rest on 21 March in Llanfihangel Rogiet, presumably next to, or in the same grave as, his son Stephen and his wife Sarah.[208] Several of the local papers recorded his sudden death, in the usual column of death notices, but only one, *The Star of Gwent*, gave his passing space in its local news columns. It told how 'the reverend gentleman had retired to rest in his usual health and spirits', and that 'he had occupied the time up to eight o'clock in writing a funeral sermon, which he intended to preach on the day he died.'[209]

It is pleasing that there was no mention of the financial problems that had beset his life; rather the paper told how 'his family have to deplore the loss of a truly kind and indulgent father, and the poor of his parishes a liberal and benevolent friend.' Whatever else had passed in his time on earth, that latter statement speaks volumes. He had been rector of Llanfihangel for forty-eight years, and vicar of Magor with Redwick for thirty-four. The newspapers gave his age as eighty-two years old, his death certificate as being eighty-three; but from the entry in the Llangybi parochial register many years before, there is no doubt that the tablet set up on Llanfihangel Rogiet church some time after his death, was correct; Stephen had just attained fourscore years.[210]

Stephen's will, made on 10 January 1855 – he being no longer an insolvent debtor – was proved at the district registry at Llandaff, on 2 August 1860, by the oath of Ellen Maria Keene (wife of John Keene), the daughter and one of the executrices. The other executrix was his other daughter, Caroline Henrietta Aspinall. To both daughters Stephen bequeathed his entire estate and effects, valued at less than £100. He was succeeded at Magor on 1 May 1860 by the Revd Arthur Cardinal Saunders, MA. Almost immediately a vicarage was built in Magor, and over the next few years, the

---

208 NLW, BT/LL/097/11.
209 *The Star of Gwent*, 31 March 1860, p. 5.
210 Bradney, *Volume 4 Part 2 Hundred of Caldicot (Part 2)* (1994) 270.

church there underwent considerable restoration. The parish of Llanfihangel Rogiet was grouped with Rogiet with Ifton.[211]

Magor School [212]

On 14 September 1822, *The Cambrian* newspaper reported that: 'On Monday last [9 September], a Charity Day School was opened for the first time at Magor, for the education of upwards of fifty poor children, totally at the expense of the Rev. Stephen Williams, curate of that parish, who has made a deduction of twenty-five per cent in his tithes out of a living, the total amount of which does not produce £120'. Was this one reason for his early borrowing of money? The school was still in existence in 1827, when the churchwardens reported that it was still kept partly at Stephen's expense.[213] No details are known of it, as to who did the teaching (Williams himself?), or where it was situated. It was seemingly held in the vestry room, perhaps using the 'long bench' which was the accommodation provided for the children of the parish in 1831.

Writing to the bishop in November 1830, Stephen asked 'if your Lordship would be pleased to favour me with your instructions in regard to a Day School in Magor'.[214] The next year he applied to the National Society for a grant for the '*enlargement* of the Sunday and daily school for the boys and girls' of Magor, but in other parts of his application he makes it clear that a new building, adjoining the church, was intended. He even suggested taking stone from the large churchyard – which was not all used for burial purposes – for building material. His application for financial assistance from the Society fell on deaf ears, as there was 'no security for the permanence of the school'. Stephen did not altogether abandon his educational beliefs; in 1843, and perhaps at other times, he made a personal donation of £5 to the National Society.[215]

With his own problems, nothing further was done for a quarter of a century, until his sequestration had been lifted, when almost immediately Stephen Williams wrote to the diocesan registrar asking him 'to point out to the Lord Bishop the propriety of establishing a Day School at Magor, having at least two hundred poor children brought up in a total state of ignorance'.[216] It was not the elderly Williams who undertook the task, but the new and energetic curate of Magor he appointed, the Revd Joseph Maddy. Maddy, formerly a student of divinity at Lampeter, was a native of Monmouthshire, for his letters testimonial on ordination were signed by the incumbents of Panteg, Trefethin and Llanfihangel (?Pontymoel). Made deacon in 1852 and ordained priest in 1853, his served as stipendiary curate of the Maesteg licensed school room in the parish of Llangynwyd, before moving back to Monmouthshire.[217]

At Magor, Maddy set to with zest as 'Correspondent of the Promoters' to provide for education for the young, and remarked that 'the parish has for years been sadly neglected, its pastors proverbial for their intemperance and inconsistencies'. (Here he must have been referring to Stephen Williams and perhaps the former curate, David Jones). Maddy's committee raised £173 by subscriptions and collections, £203 by Government grant, £10 from the Monmouthshire Education Board, and £30 from the National Society. Maddy reported to the Society in February 1857 that 'we propose building our proposed school-room in the middle of next month'.

---

211 NLW, LL/OC/71 [27 Aug. 1860].
212 National Society records, NS/7/2/728.
213 NLW, LL/QA/28.
214 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18840 [18 Nov. 1830].
215 *The Times*, 4 Sept. 1843. In 1848, there was 'no Free School, but a Sunday School held before Service' (NLW, LL/QA/37).
216 NLW, LL/S/259 (of 13 June 1854).
217 NLW, LL/O/911, 954.

The building cost £399, with extras in the way of fittings and legal expenses. In December 1857, Maddy could report that, 'The building is a most excellent one, and very thankful am I for it, for the sake of the poor children'. The architect was Mr Seddon of Prichard and Seddon. The trust deed, executed on 21 December 1856, was held then by Archdeacon Crawley and seems thereafter to have been lost. Stephen Williams, as rector, presumably supported the project, but seemingly had nothing to do with its fruition – beyond having appointed Maddy as his curate. The name of Joseph Maddy should loom large in the educational annals of Magor. He was rightly rewarded with the living of Penhow in 1861.[218]

By the time of the 1861 census, a British School had been established in Magor – presumably that shown on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map as attached to the Particular Baptist chapel. In 1861, three schoolmistresses were resident in Magor, one of them being a pupil teacher at the British School. This may have been a transient endeavour, for while the chapel Sunday school registers survive from 1858,[219] the Baptist day school is noted as opening in 1871.[220]

Redwick School [221]

At much the same time (1831) that Stephen Williams failed to get a grant from the National Society, his curate at Redwick, John Beynon, attempted the like. In his application to the Society, he told how the small school he ran received annually £1 10s. from the bishop; the rest of the expense he bore but it was 'more than I can afford, being only curate of the parish at £50 a year'. He said that in Redwick parish were at least forty poor children between the ages of seven and fourteen who were 'utterly destitute of the means of instruction, except what my little school affords'. A request from Beynon to the bishop for his annual subscription survives for 1833.[222]

Beynon also referred to nearby Magor where he said, 'the education of the poor has for years been sadly neglected'. This was not entirely true, given Stephen Williams' own earlier endeavours, but he may have written this in support of Williams' own application. Beynon does not appear to have received a grant, and it was to be 1876 before a new school opened in Redwick, the work of Williams' successor, the Revd A.C. Saunders. In the meanwhile, Maddy's school in Magor served all three of Williams' parishes: Magor, Redwick and Llanfihangel Rogiet.

Conclusion

Might the sad and somewhat tempestuous life of Stephen Williams have been different if he had not been a bastard child, and perhaps received fuller support from the entire Addams-Williams family?; if he had been provided reasonably early on with a decent living of his own, rather than having to be the lowly-paid curate of two or three parishes simultaneously? – he was after all forty-six years old when appointed to the vicarage of Magor; and if he and his family had a decent and permanent roof over their heads – a place they could call their own?

Stephen did try to ensure an education for the children of his parishes, and there is evidence that he would waive church fees in favour of the poor. His ministry might have been so very different, if from the outset the conditions of his life had been more favourable. He might never have developed into the somewhat cantankerous old man he appears to have become. Bishop

---

218 NLW, Church in Wales records, Glyn Simon 1968 Deposit, Box 1, Diocesan memorandum book.
219 GRO, D. 2845. 1.
220 Blackaby, E., *One Hundred and fifty Years of Baptist Witness in Magor* (non-paginated; Forest of Dean Newspapers, 1966.)
221 National Society records, NS/7/2/91.
222 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18921 (of 30 April 1833) and 18922 (of 12 May 1833).

Copleston called Stephen a 'wretched man',[223] and the Llandaff registrar said that he was 'unhandsome' in his attitude to those who served him.[224] Certainly he became a time-consuming thorn in the side of the ecclesiastical authorities, and generated a multitude of letters and deeds relating to his affairs.

Stephen was accused of financial mismanagement, yet he could master figures and prepare proper accounts. He undoubtedly often acted unwisely, but at times he must have been driven to his wit's end. He split his parishioners – he told how one, Hodges of Lower Grange – 'takes delight in my misfortune',[225] but other spoke very highly of Stephen.

Does the key to his troubled career lie in his assertion that his 'labyrinth of trouble' was 'entirely owing to my serving a friend who has deserted me'?[226] Was he referring to a human friend who had let him down badly, or was he implying neglect by the Almighty?

---

223 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/10,173.
224 NLW, LL/LB/4/270.
225 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18799.
226 NLW, LL/MISC CORR/18802.

APPENDIX
MEMORIAL TABLETS TO THE WILLIAMS FAMILY

In Magor church:[227]

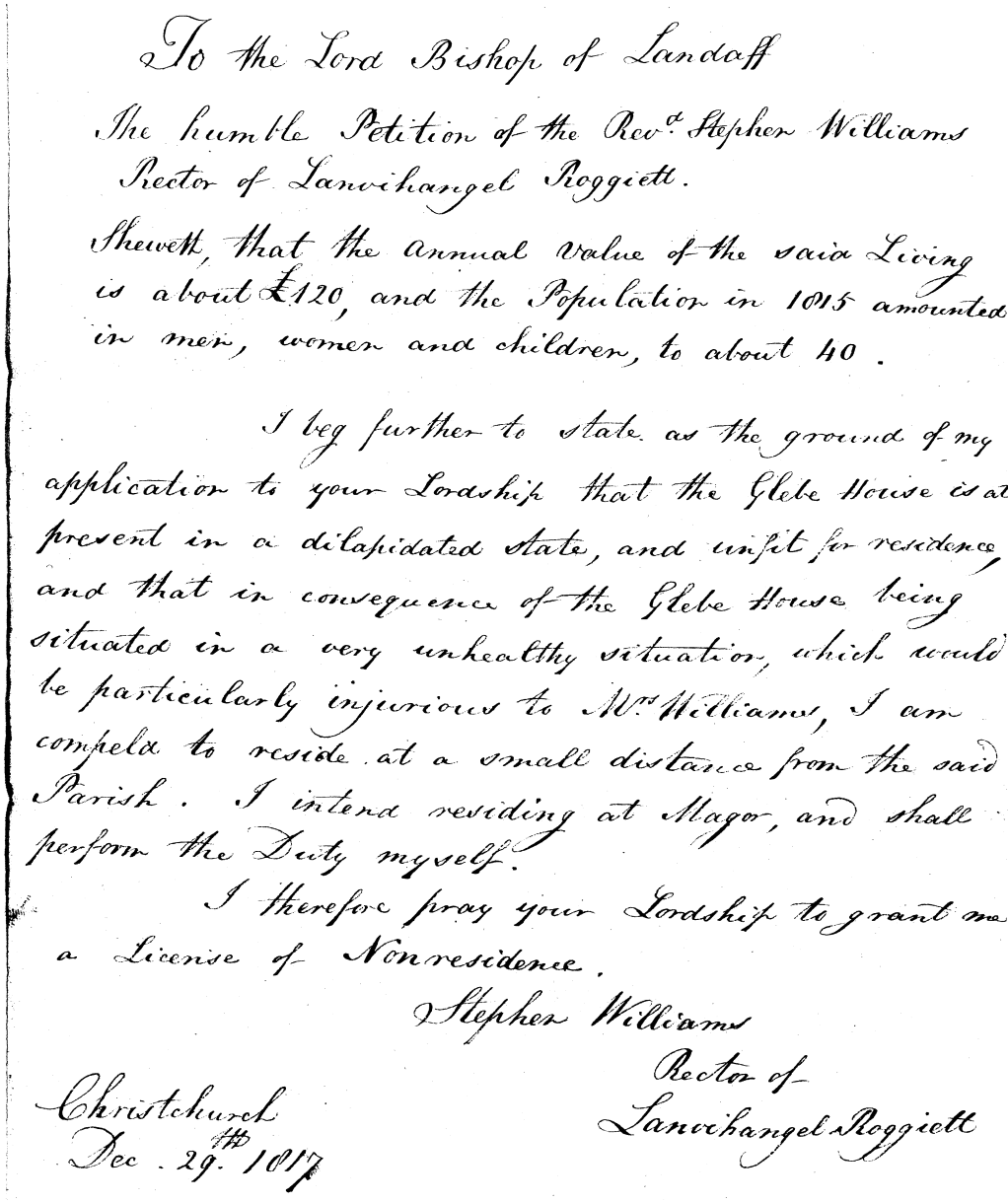
Sacred to the memory
of ANNA MARIA WILLIAMS
Daughter of the late D^{r} James Ford
PHYSICIAN EXTRAORDINARY
To her late Majesty Queen Charlotte
died March 15th, 1822,
Aged 74 years.
Also JOHN WILLIAMS HERBERT
Son of the Rev. STEPHEN WILLIAMS
vicar of this parish,
who died September 25th, 1832,
Aged 12 years.

In Llanfihangel Rogiet church:[228]

Sacred to the
Memory of Sarah Temperance
Williams wife of the Rev^{d} Stephen
Williams who Died Feb. 21st 1849
Aged 57 years.
Also
Stephen Charles his son who
Died March 10th 1849 aged 21 years.
Also
His Grandaughter Anna Maria Keene
who died Feb. 10th aged 8 years.
Also
The Reverend Stephen Williams
forty three years rector of this parish
who died March 17th 1860
Aged 80 years.

---

227 Bradney, *Hundred of Caldicot*, 235.
228 *Ibid*., 270.



To the Lord Bishop of Landaff

The humble Petition of the Revd. Stephen Williams
Rector of Lanvihangel Roggiett.

Shewett, that the annual value of the said Living
is about £120, and the Population in 1815 amounted
in men, women and children, to about 40.

I beg further to state as the ground of my
application to your Lordship that the Glebe House is at
present in a dilapidated state, and unfit for residence,
and that in consequence of the Glebe House being
situated in a very unhealthy situation, which would
be particularly injurious to Mrs. Williams, I am
compeld to reside at a small distance from the said
Parish. I intend residing at Magor, and shall
perform the Duty myself.

I therefore pray your Lordship to grant me
a License of Non residence.

Stephen Williams
Rector of
Lanvihangel Roggiett

Christchurch
Dec. 29th 1817

Fig. 1: A typical letter from Stephen Williams (NLW, LL/NR/989P).
Reproduced by kind permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.

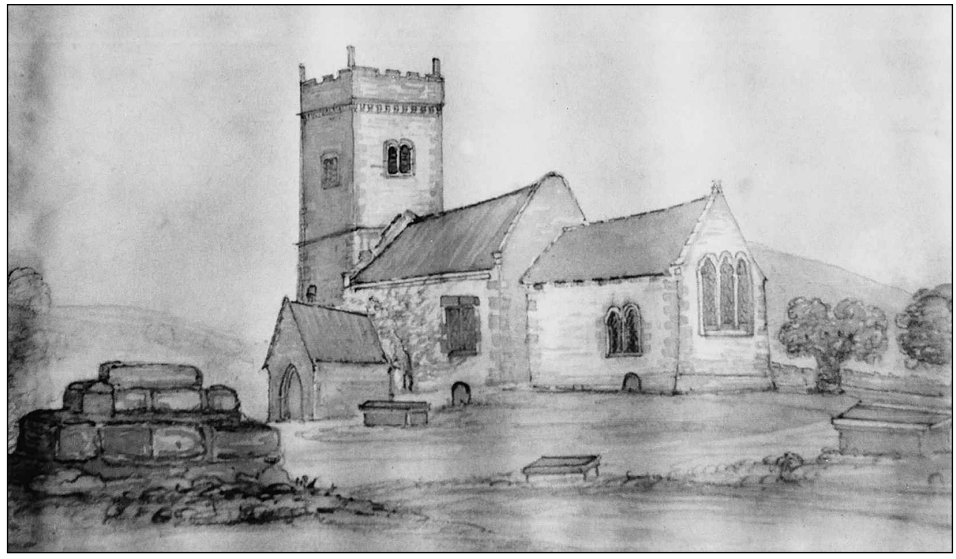


Fig. 2: Llanfihangel Rogiet church in Stephen's time (*Gwentia. Eccles. Antiq. II*, plate 30).
Photographed by Mr Bernard Nurse, FSA.
Reproduced by kind permission of The Society of Antiquaries of London.

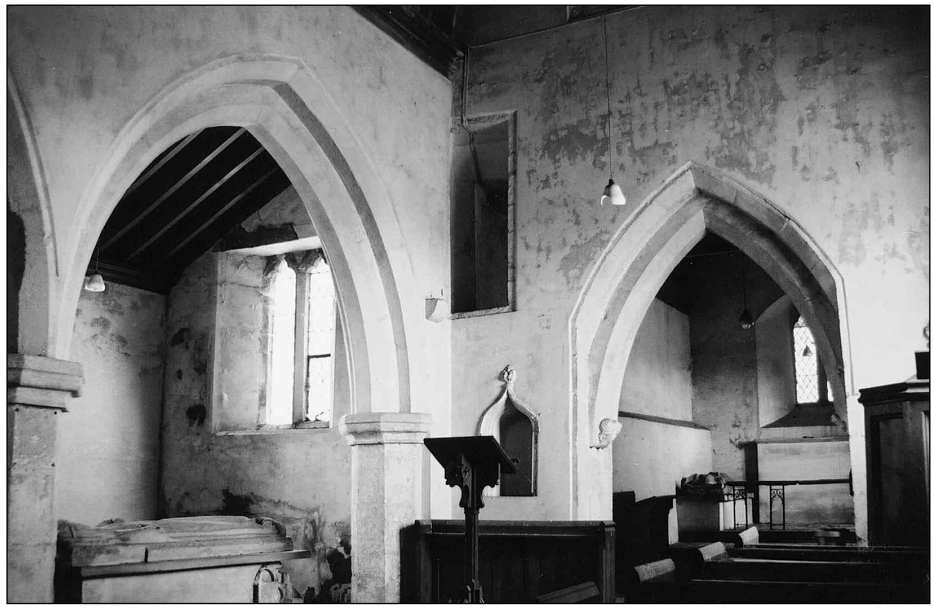


Fig. 3: The **i**nterior of Llanfihangel Rogiet church today.
Photographed by David H. Williams.
(The author is grateful to the Revd Lyndon Harrison, Mrs Barbara Parke, and Mr H.B. Phillips, for facilitating this photograph).

OBITUARIES

LEONARD ALLAN PROBERT (1932–2007)

Leonard Allan Probert died on 21 November 2007, after a prolonged illness. He was a much-respected figure in Welsh archaeology, a leading authority on the Pre-Roman Iron Age and particularly its hill forts. Born in a small house just outside the gates of Abergavenny castle, he attended Abergavenny Grammar School, but family circumstances prevented him from proceeding to higher education and he was apprenticed to a painter and decorator. After service in the Royal Military Police, he became for a short while, somewhat improbably to those who knew him in later life, a policeman in the Monmouthshire valleys. Later, he took over his wife's family off licence business and ran a building firm.

I first met Allan, when on holiday from London, I took part in what was probably the first planned urban excavation programme in Wales, in Abergavenny, with the Dominican Father Fabian Radcliffe and Eric Talbot. Resources, financial and otherwise, were minimal and it is somewhat frustrating to think what the sort of larger scale urban research programme which became feasible a few years later might have achieved. Even so, the excavation revealed something of the town's pre-history from Neolithic times onwards and first located the pre-Flavian Roman fort of *Gobannium*, as well as much of the town's later history down to the recent past. With the generous assistance of George Boon and his colleagues at the National Museum of Wales, we were able to bring the results to publication in *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, Vol. II, Part IV (1968–9) and Vol. III, Part II (1972–3).

Allan then moved his activities to the hill fort of Twyn y Gaer north of Abergavenny. He brought to the excavation his understanding as a builder and skilled craftsman as well as excavation skills of a high order. The late Professor Leslie Alcock, not a man who gave praise easily, once remarked how refreshing it was to see an amateur excavation carried out to the highest professional standards. Each year, Allan would meticulously apply to what is now Cadw for official permission to continue his excavation. Visits to Twyn y Gaer were usually concluded in 10 Union Street with Allan and Jean over an excellent steak and a bottle of red wine, carefully selected from the stock of the off licence.

At Twyn y Gaer, Allan revealed for the first time in South Wales, the complex history of an Iron Age hill fort. More limited earlier work at Llanmelin and Sudbrook had suggested a relatively brief and simple sequence before the Roman conquest. Twyn y Gaer began, perhaps about 450 BC, as a promontory fort with a palisaded outer enclosure for stock. Later, the earthworks were extended to include this outer enclosure before contracting once more to a small defended enclosure at the top of the promontory. Each of these periods was accompanied by complicated gateway arrangements. Even in the interim report, which is sadly all we have at the moment, it can be seen how Allan's skills as a countryman and builder were brought into play in interpreting these, whether in the practicalities of building a pleached birchwood fence and using it to enclose cattle, or in the problems of hanging a substantial hill fort gate. He was elected a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1977.

Allan belonged to a tradition of rural political radicalism strong in parts of Monmouthshire. A nonconformist in the literal sense (he insisted on a Humanist funeral), he could be truculent when confronted with what he saw as officialdom, and at times showed scant understanding of the constraints under which such people had to operate. He had, however, an often humorous awareness

of this. The branch of a prickly plant, placed at his own request, on top of his coffin, told its own story.

Allan nursed Jean through a long terminal illness. Sometime after her death, he remarried and Allan and Sarah moved to Skenfrith. He was now working towards the final publication of Twyn y Gaer, but as anyone who has written up a large excavation knows, this is a daunting task, even with the resources and colleagues of a university or museum department. He felt frustration at the report's slow progress, but the countryman, fly fisher, beekeeper and in his younger days, bellringer, found contentment in Skenfrith, where he grew a variety of vegetables (and gave most of them away). If the Twyn y Gaer report could finally be brought to publication, it would be a fitting memorial.

Jeremy Knight

Allan Probert on the occasion of his marriage to Sarah Wuller, 24 March 2000.
Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Sarah Probert.

ANDREW GEOFFREY MEIN (1922–2008)

I first met Geoff Mein in 1983. Over the last twenty-five years, I got to know him as an enthusiastic and talented archaeologist, a historian of considerable intellect, a legal expert, and a campaigner on a wide range of local and archaeological issues, and also as an advisor, a colleague and a friend.

Geoff was associated with so many organisations and people that I cannot begin to do justice to all his activities – but whatever he undertook he threw himself into it with a zest, enthusiasm and commitment that will long be remembered.

Geoff was born at Nottingham on 23 July 1922, the only son of Andrew and Madeleine Mein. He was educated at the Boys High School in Nottingham and showed an early passion for archaeology, fuelled by exploring the caves beneath Nottingham castle.

One of his teenage exploits included finding a brick wall in the caves, and when he and his friends decided to investigate by breaking through the wall with a crowbar they were lucky not to be killed. They had broken into an old reservoir beneath one of the Georgian houses. Somehow I am not surprised.

He joined The Thoroton Society (Nottinghamshire's principal historical and archaeological society) and carried out digs on Bronze Age and Early Medieval sites around Nottingham.

He took his law degree at Nottingham and then worked for a local firm before joining the National Coal Board as a solicitor in 1947.

Five years later, his legal career took him to the Durham coalfields. There he and his first wife, Betty, raised two sons, Christopher and Alastair – but he still found time to pursue archaeology, with excavations and lectures all over Northumberland and Durham, and up into the Scottish Borders. He was amongst the early excavators of the Roman fort of *Segedunum*, at the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall, and also of Tynemouth priory. By all accounts, Christopher and Alastair spent half their formative years being dragged along Hadrian's Wall.

Geoff's other great passions were sailing and fishing. He would take his sons out fishing on the North Sea and spent many happy hours sailing the North East coast. He was also a founder member of the Friars Goose Marina on the Tyne.

In 1972, he moved south, to be the Coal Board's legal advisor in South Wales. He settled in Usk, and it was there that he married his second wife, Patricia. Geoff continued his very active life and in 1973, became a long-time member of the Usk Civic Society. He kept that link for the rest of his life, and was still the events secretary at the time of his death. Apart from assisting the society on a range of planning issues he became the foremost authority of Usk's history, and in 1986, published his book *Norman Usk – the Birth of a Town*. This showed his meticulous scholarship and helped provide material for the Usk town trail and for the preservation and promotion of historic Usk.

Geoff was always involved in numerous societies and organisations, and he was particularly good at encouraging others to take part. He helped establish the new *Gwent County History*, and was a member of the committee of the County History Association. He was also heavily involved in the Gwent Local History Council and was the field research secretary for the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association. On behalf of them he organised and directed excavations at Llantarnam abbey and more especially at Trostrey, where a number of spectacular discoveries were made – including the remains of a moated medieval castle, a major prehistoric site, a Roman military post, and sites of other periods.

In 1984, Geoff retired from the Coal Board and was able to devote himself to his archaeological and historical research. Geoff knew everybody and it was about this time, as a new curator at Newport Museum, that I assisted him in identifying his finds from Trostrey, many of which were of considerable importance.

Geoff enticed me up to the idyllic setting of his Trostrey excavations – a wonderful escape from the pressures of life elsewhere, in the company of members of the Trostrey excavation group.

I will always have fond memories of Geoff discussing possible interpretation of an extremely complex archaeological site, with his beloved dogs in attendance.

He was one of those people whom you automatically called on for help, and this help was always cheerfully given. For many years I was chairman of the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust – the largest field archaeological service in South Wales. Thankfully, he agreed to join me on the Board of Trustees. Here again his legal expertise, his business acumen, his archaeological knowledge, and his common sense were constantly in demand. Whenever I needed advice my first port of call was Geoff.

I have also many reasons to be thankful to Geoff and his second wife, Pat, for their kindness and support – and I knew there was always a welcome at Buxton House, Usk. He was always a compassionate man, despite his extreme bluntness at times. His many idiosyncrasies are legendary and the source of numerous anecdotes!

Needless to say he had a strong sense of humour, in particular about himself. For most of his life he had had an artificial leg – which was constantly the butt of his jokes, this despite the pain he suffered. Nothing, including serious illness, would stop him from living his life to the full.

I will certainly miss him – but to me he was a source of inspiration of how life can be lived. He had the energy and determination of a man fifty years younger, and it is fitting that shortly before he died he finished a major contribution to a new history of Usk. His legacy to archaeology and to the heritage of South Wales is a fitting memorial.

Bob Trett

Geoff Mein with his dogs – a familiar sight to visitors to his excavations at Trostrey castle.
Photographed by Anne Leaver.

REVIEWS

Howell, Ray, *Searching for the Silures: An Iron Age Tribe in South-East Wales* (Tempus, Stroud, 2006); ISBN: 0 7524 4014 4; 248mm x 172 mm; 160pp., 15 col. pl., 41 figs; £17–99.

In his search for the Silures, Ray Howell has produced a most useful, readily accessible summary of our current knowledge of late prehistoric, Roman and early medieval south-east Wales. From the evidence presented he finds the Silures to be 'a resilient and sophisticated clan-based tribal confederation. Their martial traditions [were] expressed through material culture', and found further expression in their long resistance to the Romans. He sees that 'elements of their traditions survived the extended period of occupation which followed to be reasserted in post-Roman south-east Wales' (p.113). How far one goes along with this picture of the world of the Silures drawn from the evidence will depend on one's view of the interpretation of archaeological evidence. The author's conclusions may fit comfortably into the current main-stream of later prehistoric studies, but will probably not entirely convince those of a more traditional bent.

The hundred or so pages of actual text are divided into eight chapters. The first is an introduction covering the historical evidence for the Silures, i.e. Tacitus, and an overview of the archaeological evidence. The next three chapters cover the Iron Age looking in turn at religion and belief; hillforts and other settlements; and objects. There then follows two chapters on the Roman period, military and civilian, and one on the early medieval period. The final chapter summarizes conclusions of the proceeding chapters. These chapters are comprehensively illustrated with over fifty images, which are generally well-selected to support the text. It is a slight pity, therefore, that these illustrations are not directly referred to in the text.

The rest of the book is made up of a glossary, bibliography, endnotes and an index. These additional pages set the book above many a title in the Tempus series and shows an author who has thought about the needs of the wide range of readership the Tempus series aims at, straddling as it does the academic and the general markets. The use of endnotes, rather than footnotes or the Harvard system, to provide the references so vital to an academic work, leaves a main text more approachable to the general reader. Such a reader might, however, do well to read the last chapter, which succinctly summarises the author's thesis, before tackling chapters 2–7 and the mass of evidence they contain. These central chapters of the book with the full referencing provided by the endnotes and the substantial bibliography, for a book of this size, provide a valuable resource for anyone wishing to know about the evidence currently available for Gwent and Glamorgan in the late prehistoric, Roman and early medieval periods.

Evan Chapman

David H. Williams, *Images of Welsh History. Seals of the National Library of Wales* (National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2007); ISBN 978–1-86225–062–8; 46 pp.; 127 b.&w. figs; £4–50.

David Williams has contributed a great deal to the understanding of Welsh seals, by his catalogues and also by the admirable introductory book on *Welsh History through Seals* for the National Museum of Wales in 1982. He has now provided us with a most valuable introduction to the fine

collection of some 30,000 seals (both attached to documents and detached) in the National Library at Aberystwyth. He focuses on the images used and selects some 127 examples of nineteen different types of seal based sometimes on the nature of the people or institution using them, and sometimes simply on the imagery.

He offers insights into the use of imagery on all 127. They are all illustrated in black and white, though the absence of measurements or scale sometimes makes the impression of size misleading. The only use of colour is on the cover and it is sad that this excellent photo has part of this most important Welsh seal cropped off by the designer. The National Museum was able to provide their readers with a full colour photo of this seal in the text (no. 36). Comparing the two publications, the quality of the original photos and their reproduction in the National Museum publication is so much better that this Library publication. The photos should have come out sharper.

The range of history covered runs from the medieval equestrian seals of medieval lords to the industrial revolution. These latter are particularly interesting and deserve much closer attention, since they have a charming combination of iconography ranging from heraldry to scenes of industrial activity. An area of seals that I would have expected, but which does not occur, is those from the nonconformist chapels that can be widely seen across Wales. Did they never use seals?

The book gives a wide range of seals and there is much that is new. There is a particularly good range of personal seals and heraldic seals. I was delighted to see the seal of Reginald de Grey, Lord of Weysford and Ruthin (28) which from the date must have been engraved after he had won the case in the Court of Chivalry entitling him to use the arms of Hastings. Some minor points: I was particularly interested in the similarity of the seals of Caradoc and his brother on compensation to Margam Abbey (48), which may indicate a case where the beneficiary institution caused the seals to be made, a practice that was discussed recently by Paul Harvey. The book is free of mistakes though Thomas, the engraver of the Commonwealth seals (115–6) is usually Simon rather than Simonds.

Wales is very fortunate that both its national institutions have provided David Williams with the opportunity to provide these excellent introductions to their collections.

John Cherry

Hughes, TJ., *Wales's Best One Hundred Churches* (Seren, Bridgend, 2006, paperback, 2007); ISBN: 978 1 85411 426 6 hbk, 978 1 85411 427 3 pbk; paperback, 140mm x 215mm; 304 pp.; 5 maps; numerous colour illus.; £20–00 HB, £12–99 PB.

This splendid book should be on the shelves (or better still in the car or the backpack) of everyone who is interested in heritage and the importance of religious belief in history. T.J. Hughes has set out to provide us with a list of buildings of interest and beauty, and he has succeeded admirably in that. His detailed descriptions are well-researched and well-judged. A specialist might want more detail on (for example) the Romanesque carvings of St Woolos, but Hughes whets the appetite for more. There are some errors and omissions – no mention of the fragmentary Sunday Christ at Skenfrith, the Image of Pity on Bishop Bromfield's tomb at Llandaff mis-identified as the Resurrection – but these are very minor points.

What makes this book particularly valuable, though, is its focus on the church as part of a wider physical and spiritual landscape, and its very intelligent introduction. Hughes has chosen to concentrate not just on the more spectacular churches like Tenby and Gresford but on the little

churches of the uplands, churches like Llangelynin and Llanrhychwyn in the Conwy valley and our own Cwm-iou and Penallt, which seem to grow out of the bones of the hills. Hughes writes with great sensitivity about the place of the church in Welsh society and the Welsh landscape and about the intense spiritual relationship between the Welsh and their land.

Of course, there are bound to be quibbles about any book which lists the Hundred Best of anything. Why no Chepstow – why no Llangatwg Lingoed – why (amazingly) no Llangwm – but of course, for every new church included, one would have to be deleted. Hughes has cast the net more widely than Simon Jenkins did in his volume on English churches. The Welsh book includes cathedrals (including St Woolos) and some of the more spectacular monastic ruins (including Tintern and Llanthony). As well as these, the Gwent list consists of Abergavenny, Betws Newydd, Cwm-iou, Llanfair Cilgedin, Penallt, Skenfrith and Usk.

The one major omission is the great chapels of nineteenth-century Nonconformity. Hughes deals very well with the little rural chapels of the early Nonconformist tradition but includes only a token couple of examples of the giants, none of them from Gwent. He is quite open about his reasons for this: there are simply too many 'masterpieces in the grand style' but they are almost all of them locked outside service times. Nevertheless, this is a lost opportunity. Perhaps we need another book?

Madeleine Gray

Hoselitz, Virginia, *Imagining Roman Britain. Victorian Responses to a Roman Past* (Royal Historical Society. Studies in History. New series. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2007); ISBN: 978 0 86193 293 1; ISSN 0269 2244; 234mm x 155mm; 220pp., 5 b.&w. illus.; £50–00.

The Victorian period saw remarkable advances in the study of the early history of Britain, not least of the Roman period which is the subject of Hoselitz's book. Although there is some discussion of the wider background, the major part of her book is concerned with the work of a number of individual scholars and their part in the creation of local archaeological societies. In particular she discusses the foundation of the Caerleon Archaeological Association (1847), the Essex Archaeological Society (1852), and the Chester Architectural, Archaeological and Historical Society (1849). Her fourth case study is of Cirencester where a museum was built by Lord Bathurst, the local magnate, to house the fine mosaics found in the town in 1849.

Much of her discussion concerns the social context within which such societies existed, Hoselitz seeing them as one aspect of a struggle between 'the growing numbers of the professional middle class and the traditional social networks of authority and control'. As she notes, the local societies were composed of 'individuals who played a major part in all aspects of town life .... It was through their dominant position that these groups were able to retain and control local power (p.56)'. In fact, as her four detailed studies show, the new societies were almost always the creation of one or two dedicated individuals who, for purely practical reasons, had to involve the local 'elite' in their project if it was to flourish.

Hoselitz makes full use of Charles Roach Smith's publications and of his *Recollections* in particular. Roach Smith was a London chemist who did more than anyone else to preserve the artefacts found during the early Victorian rebuilding of the city. She tends to present him as a man outside the antiquarian establishment, which in some ways he was, but not to the point where he was not able to play a full part in founding and running a major national society, and both his work

and publications were widely appreciated. When, in 1856, he had to sell his collection it was purchased by the British Museum for the not inconsiderable sum of £2,000.

Readers of *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* will be particularly interested in her account of the foundation of the Caerleon Archaeological Society, which later became the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association (here wrongly called the Monmouthshire Archaeological Association). Hoselitz rightly emphasizes the part played by John Edward Lee in the foundation of the society, and his determination to use it as a means of establishing a museum in Caerleon. Lee was a wealthy man but he was not a native of the area having come to Newport from Hull in 1841 as a partner in a Newport nail works. His primary interest was in geology (the title of his autobiography was *Notebooks of an amateur geologist*), but in common with many other Victorian antiquaries he regarded geology and archaeology as being closely allied. His interest in the Roman period undoubtedly arose from his living at Caerleon, and he was notable for the assiduity with which he published his discoveries and catalogues of the museum's collection in a series of important books and papers.

It is a shame that Hoselitz's account of his work is prefaced by a distinctly garbled summary of the history of Roman Caerleon, where even the name of the fortress (or fort as she repeatedly and wrongly calls it) is incorrect. The Roman name was not *Isca Silures* (p.81), nor even *Isca Silurum*, but simply *Isca*. Indeed Roman names in Monmouthshire are not her strong point for Caerwent appears on p. 90 as *Venta Silures* not *Venta Silurum*.

In some ways the book fails to deliver what its title promises for it effectively ends in the middle of Victoria's reign, before the systematic study of Roman Britain had really become established. Thus while Joyce's excellent work at Silchester in the 1860s is discussed there is no mention of the great series of excavations which began in 1890, eleven years before Victoria died. Nor are the remarkable excavations and publications of General Pitt Rivers considered. In fact the great advances in the study of Roman provincial archaeology came in the later-nineteenth century, and here the seminal work of Mommsen and Francis Haverfield is largely ignored. The popular image of Roman Britain in the earlier-nineteenth century had been that of the Roman legions either forcibly civilizing the native barbarians, or being valiantly resisted by the noble Britons; in both cases an image deriving almost entirely from the fragmentary historical accounts. By the beginning of the twentieth century, it was possible for Rudyard Kipling to create a sympathetic and not unrealistic view of Roman Britain in *Puck of Pooks Hill* (1906), a vision which owed far more to the evidence of archaeology than to the Roman historians.

The book contains a number of unnecessary errors; thus the British Academy is confused with the Royal Academy (p.23); Thomas Bateman's main interest was not in opening long barrows but round barrows (p.34); Coxe refers to the amphitheatre at Caerleon as King Arthur's Round Table, not King Alfred's (p.52). Nor do we know that Ptolemy's *Geography* or the *Notitia Dignitatum* were written in CE 146 and CE 408 respectively (p.126), would that we did!

William Manning

Evans, Eric and Prosser, Jean, *A Country Church: A Guide to St Cadoc's Church, Llangattock Lingoed, Monmouthshire* (Llangattock Lingoed Parochial Church Council, Yew Tree Farm, Llangattock Lingoed, Abergavenny, NP7 9NS, 2006); paperback, 207mm x 198mm; 53 photographs and line drawings, mostly in colour; £6 (inclusive of postage).

Earlier this decade, this fine church standing on a religious site which, its dedication affirms, well pre-dated the Norman Conquest, was saved from possible closure and eventual ruination, by generous grants, by the industry and concern of the priest-in-charge and her parishioners, and by the skill of the craftsmen employed. Their fine work in the restoration of St Cadoc's church has now been complemented by an equally fine church guide and history.

The opening pages of this profusely illustrated booklet tell of the patron, St Cadoc, and of how the first church in Celtic times may have appeared. There is a comprehensive review of the churchyard and adjacent glebeland; not only of the medieval cross base and of notable tombs, but very importantly of the active policy of conservation encouraging a 'mosaic of habitats with rare flowers, lichens, small invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles', as well as an important colony of Lesser Horseshoe bats. Oak and rowan saplings planted in 2006 were presented to Llangattock Lingoed as the *Gwent Best Kept Hamlet Award 2005*.

The recent renovation of the church made some very significant discoveries, not least a mid-fifteenth century wall painting of St George on horseback trampling a dragon underfoot. This had lain hidden since being covered by whitewash at the Reformation, but now finds a learned and beautifully illustrated account in this booklet. Removal of the organ for restoration revealed a further wall painting on the north chancel wall, possibly depicting the life of St Cadoc. Conservation work has also preserved the remnants on the west face of the chancel arch of the royal arms of Queen Anne, painted subsequent to the 1707 Act of Union. This painting also receives a fully illustrated and expert description, as do the remnants of medieval glass and of the rood screen, of which only the vine-bearing decorative bressemer beam survives.

The booklet contains an informative section entitled 'Death in Llangattock Lingoed' which describes the parish bier (preserved in the church) and the hearse (wooden framework) which was placed over the body as the deceased were borne from their homes to the parish church. The bier is inscribed 1741 and, as the parish accounts for 1742 reveal, cost – together with '10 foot of boards to repair ye pulpit' – the total sum of thirteen shillings; in to-day's values that would have amounted to around £55. Members of the Association who heard Mrs Elizabeth Pitman's lecture in 1999, or who visited Llangattock Lingoed led by Dr Maddy Gray in 2005, will not be surprised to read of the three Brute monuments the church contains.

In 1982, whilst rector of Llangattock Lingoed, your present reviewer published a brief guide and history of its church. His pamphlet now pales into insignificance before this painstaking new booklet, which deserves a place on the bookshelves of all those devoted to the history of our county. The booklet, incidentally, makes mention of James Davies, the schoolmaster of Devauden fame, but born and buried in Llangattock. The year before he died he established, despite his age, a school in the village here which served generations of Llangattock children until its closure in 1963. Next year (2009) will see the 160th anniversary of his death, commemorative events are planned, and hopefully an equally splendid booklet will relate the life story of that great man.

David H. Williams

FIELD EXCURSIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES, 2007

Day Outings

This year, for the first time ever, we had insufficient support for one day outing by coach, let alone two. Having had to cancel an excellent outing to Llandeilo, we hoped that members would manage to keep our tradition alive and support a day outing in 2008.

Evening Visits

In May, we had a preview of the exhibition to commemorate the Great Flood of 1607, at the lovely medieval church at Redwick on the Gwent Levels, distinguished as being the only church in the area with a spire. Mark Lewis, of the National Roman Legion Museum, who had played a large part in assembling the exhibition, spoke with great knowledge and expertise on the flood and its devastating effects on the area.

In July, we visited with Ian McFarlane the Neolithic burial chamber at Gaerllwyd and Monmouthshire's extinct volcano. Gaerllwyd is the best-preserved and most characteristic of the Neolithic tombs in the county. Later in the month, Dr Peter Guest guided us around the rather soggy Priory Field and Golledge's Field in Caerleon, to see some of the results of the 2007 excavations there, which were adding greatly to knowledge of the history of the Roman fortress.

In August, on another damp evening, we visited Cadw's new interpretation centre at the West Barns in Caerwent, after which we were guided around some of the excavated buildings of the Roman town, *Venta Silurum,* by Richard Brewer, keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum of Wales, who had conducted the excavations there. It was an opportunity for some of us to re-visit the scene of our labours many years ago!

The final evening visit of the season was to Lancaut church, Tidenham, a tiny, remote twelfth-century church, now roofless, situated on a bend of the Wye, which had contained one of the six Gloucestershire fonts now in use in Gloucester cathedral. Charles Parry from the Gloucester Record Office, explained its history and the steps that had been taken to investigate its construction and plan its conservation. The evening was memorable, not only for the beauty of the site, but also for the difficulty of getting down the steep and uneven path between the trees to reach the church and the subsequent climb back in the dark up the said path or through the very long grass of nearby fields. Needless to say, everyone arrived back intact, thanks to the doughty Antiquarian spirit.

Half-Day Outing

Our new formula, a half-day visit by car midweek in June, to two local sites, proved very popular. We visited first Sedbury Park, outside Chepstow, a house begun around 1797 for Colonel Sir Henry Cosby and later remodelled by Sir Robert Smirke. Here, Keith Underwood guided us around the building, now a retirement home and also spoke later, when we visited Tidenham parish church, dating mostly from the thirteenth century, with splendid views over the Severn and containing another of the six late-twelfth century fonts in the county, interesting Victorian glass and a tower screen by Sidney Gambier-Parry. We ended an excellent afternoon with afternoon tea at the *Old Ferry* hotel, Beachley.

Annual General Meeting: 28 April 2007

The meeting was held at the Junior Endowed School, Caerleon and was well-attended After the business meeting, Mr Julian Mitchell delivered an illustrated lecture on 'The Wye Tour, 1750–1830'.

Annual Public Lecture: 10 November 2007

A large, appreciative audience congregated to hear Professor Mick Aston deliver the annual public lecture at the Junior Endowed School. His illustrated lecture was entitled 'The Making of Time Team'.

Gwenllian V. Jones

Gwenllian Jones and Keith Underwood in the imposing entrance to Sedbury Park, home from the 1820s to George Ormerod, historian and antiquarian, and his wife, Sarah.
Photographed by Christabel Hutchings.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Jane Bray is a member of Monmouth Archaeological Society who has been a professional archaeologist working with Monmouth Archaeology, its professional wing, for over ten years. An active field archaeologist, she is also responsible for the artwork in the unit's reports and oversees the production of its publications. Jane Bray is an associate of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

Evan Chadwick is a curatorial officer in the department of Archaeology and Numismatics of the National Museum of Wales. He studied history and archaeology at Cardiff University, and now specializes in the Roman period. His main research interests are the Roman army and Roman small finds, particularly brooches. He has recently published a catalogue of the Roman military equipment in the museum's collection, and is currently writing up the small finds from the Caerwent *Basilica* excavations.

John Cherry worked from 1964 to 2002 in the British Museum, retiring as keeper of Medieval and Modern Europe. During his career, he specialized in medieval archaeology and art, and wrote many articles on medieval jewellery, seals and seal matrices, metal and leather work. He contributed to Dominique Collon, *7000 Years of Seals* (1997) and co-edited and part-wrote a book on *A. W. Franks: Nineteenth century collecting and the British Museum* (1997). He was a visiting fellow at All Souls College, Oxford in 2003, and is preparing a catalogue of the Rawlinson collection of seal matrices in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Stephen Clarke, born in Skenfrith and now a resident of Monmouth, has progressed from amateur archaeologist to much-respected professional, an achievement recognized by the Society of Antiquaries who elected him a fellow, and the Institute of Field Archaeologists who made him a member. He says that his MBE, awarded in 1996, recognizes the work of the Monmouth Archaeological Society as a whole, especially in Monnow Street (1987). Steve Clarke also heads Monmouth Archaeology, the professional wing of the society. His book, *'Down the Dig'. Monmouth – An Adventure in Archaeology*, was published in 2008.

Madeleine Gray is senior lecturer in history in the University of Wales, Newport, a contributor to the recently-published second volume of *The Gwent County History* and one of the editors of the forthcoming volume 3, *The Making of Monmouthshire, 1536–1780*. She has a long-standing interest in pilgrimages and saints' cults and in the visual imagery of medieval religion, and she chairs the National Museum of Wales advisory committee on the wall paintings at the reconstructed Llandeilo Talybont church.

Gwenllian Jones read modern languages at Manchester University and trained as a teacher at Liverpool University. Later, she graduated in archaeology at Cardiff University, where she also gained an MA in local history. She has been honorary secretary of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association since 1986, and is also honorary secretary of the Gwent County History Association.

Jeremy Knight, who was born in Caerleon, read archaeology at University College, Cardiff (Cardiff University). For over thirty years, he was an inspector of ancient monuments, whose wide area of responsibility included Monmouthshire. He has undertaken a major excavation at Montgomery castle; written many guidebooks to monuments; and has published numerous articles.

A major work, *The End of Antiquity,* was published in 2000 (2nd revised edit., 2007), whilst his book, *Civil War & Restoration in Monmouthshire*, was published in 2005.

Mark Lewis was born and raised in Monmouthshire. His interest in archaeology began at the age of twelve, digging first at Trostrey, near Usk and three years later, at Caerwent sites. He studied for his BSc in archaeological conservation and his MSc in conservation, at Cardiff University. He is currently writing up his PhD on aspects of iron corrosion, researched for the preservation strategy of the *ss Great Britain*. This work was short-listed for the 2007 conservation awards for conservation, research and innovation, and cited when the 2006 Gulbenkian prize was awarded to the *ss Great Britain* Trust. Since 2000, Mark Lewis has been a curatorial officer at the National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon, and an archaeological conservator at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, since 2006.

William Manning is emeritus professor of Roman archaeology, Cardiff University. From 1965–76, he directed a series of large-scale excavations on the legionary fortress at Usk, the results of which were published in seven volumes by the University of Wales Press. He has published several books and many papers on various aspects of Roman archaeology, in particular on iron tools and implements and the early Roman military archaeology of Western Britain.

Ian McFarlane graduated in physics from Merton College, Oxford, in 1966 and pursued a career in systems analysis, marketing and general management in the UK and abroad. Following an early retirement, he has indulged an interest in local history and archaeology. He was a founding member of both the Chepstow Archaeological Society (CAS) and the Shirenewton Local History Society serving on the committee of the former since 1996. He trained with Sussex Archaeological Society at Fishbourne and has volunteered in many local excavations, helping to supervise one of the CAS's training digs at Shirenewton, where he has lived for thirty years.

Neil Phillips is a BHPA chief flying instructor and former outdoor pursuits school proprietor, who did a combined archaeology and history degree at what is now University of Wales, Newport. In 2005, he was awarded a PhD for his research into the earthwork castles of Gwent and Ergyng, He is director of A.P.A.C. archaeological consultancy, specializing in survey work.

Bob Trett has had a long career in museums. He is a former curator of Chertsey Museum, then of King's Lynn Museum and finally of Newport Museum and Art Gallery. He retired in 2000, and since then has been actively involved in historical tours and lectures on the history and archaeology of Gwent. His research interests include early Caerleon and Newport, and in particular the Newport medieval ship.

David H. Williams was born in Newport, and educated at Bassaleg School and Trinity College, Cambridge. Throughout his adult life, he has had two main research interests, the study of seals (his latest work on seals is reviewed in this journal) and also Cistercian studies on which he has published numerous works, leading him to be acknowledged as one of the foremost scholars in this field. David Williams accomplished this whilst serving as an Anglican priest in Wales, Libya, and Poland, from which he returned in 1997 to settle near the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.