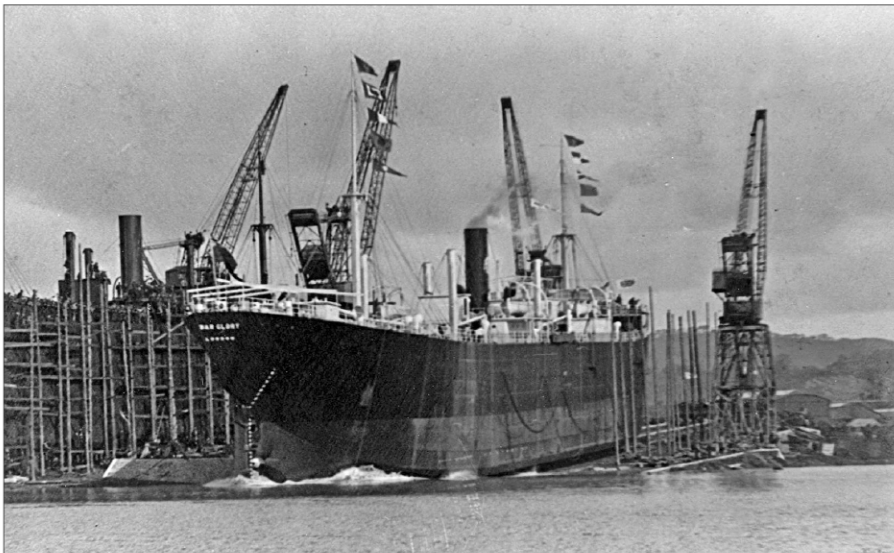


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Front cover: the *War Glory*, at that time 'the largest ship ever launched in Great Britain with full steam up', sliding into the river Wye from National Shipyard No. 1 at Chepstow, with full ceremony, on 21 April 1920. *See* pp. 95–6 and 108. (Claire Field Collection).

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CONTENTS

		<i>Page</i>
The Defences of <i>Venta Silurum</i> (Caerwent): A New Analysis of the Building Programme	J.R.L. Allen	3
Contested Beliefs: Material Culture in Roman South-East Wales	Helen Forshaw	33
Four Russian Bale or Bundle Seals from Moun-ton, Monmouthshire	Mark Lewis with Edward Besly and John Sullivan	47
Robert Fitz Martin and Tregrug in Monmouthshire	Peter Bursey	55
Strangers and Brothers: Lodgers in the western valleys of Monmouthshire, 1851–91	Colin Thomas	65
Chepstow Ships of World War I	Naylor Firth	83
Gwent Seals XII	Mark Lodwick and David H. Williams	117
Reviews:	Reviewers:	119
Suggett, Richard and Stevenson, Greg, <i>Cyflwyno cartrefi cefn gwlad cymru, introducing houses of the Welsh countryside</i>	Ray Howell	
Kennedy, Dina, <i>Magor – Fragments of History</i>	Mark Lewis	
Williams, Chris and Williams, Sian Rhiannon (eds), Griffiths, R.A. (general ed.), <i>The Gwent County History. Volume 4. Industrial Monmouthshire, 1780–1914</i>	David Rimmer	
<i>The True Anti-Pamela: Scandal and Skulduggery in 1730s Ross and Monmouthshire. An addendum</i>	Charlotte Mitchell and Julian Mitchell	124
Field Excursions and Other Activities, 2011	Christabel Hutchings, Keith Underwood and Jeremy K. Knight	125
Notes on Contributors		129
Members of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association (as at 31 Dec. 2011)		131
Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association: Patron, President, Officers and Committee		<i>opp.p.</i> 136

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS TO *THE MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARY*

Intending contributors to *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* are requested to obtain a copy of the 'Guidelines for Contributors...' from the honorary editor, who will be pleased to answer any queries that they may have. The closing date for articles to be considered for Vol. XXIX (2013) is 31 August 2012.

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Email: monmouthshireantiquarian@googlemail.com

Website: Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association:
<http://www.monmouthshireantiquarianassociation.org/>

THE DEFENCES OF *VENTA SILURUM* (CAERWENT): A NEW ANALYSIS OF THE BUILDING PROGRAMME

By J.R.L. Allen

Viewed from the valley to the south, the much-illustrated masonry defences of the Romano-Celtic town of *Venta Silurum*, modern Caerwent (Monmouthshire), rise majestically to shape perhaps the finest monument of the period surviving above ground in Wales. The wall, preserving much facing, is 5m high in places, roughly 3m thick at the base, and about 2m wide where tallest.

The town of *Venta*, lying 15km to the east of Newport, has an irregular rectangular ground plan with a slight west–east elongation (Fig. 1). The masonry wall reveals the usual four stone gates, the West and East Gates apparently being the largest and most important, at or near to each of which the wall flexes outward a little. Six semi-octagonal bastions occur butted at an uneven spacing along the South Wall and on the North Wall five more are known; present along the inner side of the wall are a number of counterforts intended either to give access to the rampart walk or to support small artillery pieces (Manning, 2003). The north-west, south-west and, it is generally assumed, the south-east corners of the wall are broadly rounded, but the north-east corner is a sharp, double angle. The earliest defences of the town consisted of one or a pair of ditches and an inner earth bank, including at some stage the present masonry gates (Manning, 2003), erected most probably in the mid-to-late second century AD (Casey and Bennett, 1983; Manning, 1983). Much later, around AD 330 or soon after, it has been argued, the earthworks were replaced by the present masonry wall and a pair of outer ditches. Frere (1999, 245) and Wachter (1995, 450) disputed this date, arguing for a somewhat earlier construction, in the late third century according to Manning (2003, 177) who reanalyzed a critical pottery assemblage. The bastions, however, do appear to date to close to AD 349–50 (Casey and Bennett, 1983), although they do not differ significantly from the main wall in materials and building style. In the Norman period, the south-east corner was replaced by a motte (Brewer, 1997).

Although the masonry wall has been much robbed, and parts of the circuit are obscured or difficult of access, large areas of well-preserved facing and wall-core remain on view on the South-west, South and East Walls and provide important clues as to how the structure was built. Ward (1916, 10–11), in a general account of the defences, noticed that the core consisted of ‘rough pieces of limestone more or less inclined on edge’, and that at a place in the (inner) south-west corner where there appeared to be a break in the masonry of the core ‘the stones on one side...are roughly inclined in one direction and those on the other on the contrary’. This style corresponds to Adam’s (1994, 144–5, figs. 287, 341–3) *opus spicatum*, for which the general term ‘shingling’ may usefully be substituted (*see below*). Ward clearly understood that he had before him evidence for the *directions* in which the masons had worked, and consequently concluded that ‘the structure was built by different gangs of men’. The significance of Ward’s discovery has not hitherto been fully appreciated either at Caerwent or more widely. Excavating along the inner side of the South Wall, Nash-Williams (1930, 1956) recorded a large number of what he called ‘breaks’ in the facing, illustrating his Nos 3, 9 and 15 (actually a unique temporary roadway through the wall with a counterpart on the outer side, *see below*), and speculating that a sixteenth occurred at the site of the motte. He therefore concluded that the South Wall had been built in [at least] fourteen conjoined lengths by a number of gangs working more or less simultaneously (Nash-Williams, 1930, 270; 1956). Turning to the South-west Wall, Nash-Williams (1933; 1956, 112) noted a break where the wall butted against the West Gate and another on the inner side *c.* 108m from West Gate; a possible third was thought to occur *c.* 43m to the south of this gate. It was suggested that this part of the circuit was built in two or possibly three

lengths, a very different distance from that implied for the South Wall. What Nash-Williams did not do, however, was to test his conclusions about building-lengths based on breaks in the facing with building directions that could, as Ward (1916) had appreciated, be demonstrated from shingling in the core. Excavations on the North Wall (Grimes, 1931) have added nothing to an understanding of the construction of the masonry defences. On the South-east Wall, however, Craster (1954) found evidence that the wall and the East Gate had been built separately. This joint therefore forms another example of a Nash-Williams break, of which a number of kinds can be distinguished.

The purpose of this paper is to describe a further attempt at an analysis of the building programme behind the defences of *Venta Silurum*. Acting on Ward's insight, the method was to map onto enlarged, overlapping, scaled photographs the changing directions of shingling evident in the core exposed on accessible, unobscured parts of the circuit. These photographs were not rectified – a prohibitively expensive step in the case of a circuit more than 900m long – and the resulting plans of the wall illustrated below must therefore be considered no more than fair approximations. The core is largely exposed in the form of an irregular, longitudinal section that, because of robbing, slopes obliquely downward toward the outer side of the wall over a space of up to *c.* 2m. Only in a few places is the masonry seen in cross-section; good horizontal sections at the level of the middle or top of the surviving wall can, however, be inspected at many places.

The North-east and North Walls have been examined as far as proved practicable, but not mapped in the manner of the rest.

ARCHITECTURAL MATERIALS, ELEMENTS AND FEATURES

Building stone

Geologically, the fabric of the defences of *Venta* is of local provenance and remarkably homogeneous. Predominant among the building materials are various facies mainly attributable to the Whitehead Limestone and Drybrook Limestone in the Carboniferous Limestone Series outcropping within a few kilometres to the north, where there are extant quarries, and to the west and south of the town (Welch and Trotter, 1961; BGS 1981). Especially conspicuous are various micritic limestones, including a delicately laminated variety, and there are some oolitic rocks and dolomitized limestones, together with a scattering of dull yellow sandstones probably from the Lower Drybrook Sandstone lying between the Whitehead Limestone and the Drybrook Limestone. Seen very occasionally are blocks of Quartz Conglomerate from the base of the local Upper Old Red Sandstone (Devonian). This formation crops out *c.* 4km to the north and *c.* 6km to the west of Caerwent, that is, beyond the outcrops of the limestone formations that largely provided the fabric. All of these beds have afforded relatively durable building stone; it is mainly the dolomitic limestones and sandstone that show noticeable signs of weathering.

Although very occasional overall, blocks of Quartz Conglomerate are a notable presence, together with a few fragments of Lias (Lower Jurassic) cementstone, in a curious, tower-like structure of confused stonework that occupies the full width of the South Wall (West) *c.* 90m west of the South Gate. This structure is clearly of Roman build, as blocks of the conglomerate also feature noticeably in a number of facing courses on the inner side. The source of the cementstone is unknown, but outcrops of the Lias occur in the Langstone-Bishton area 8km or more to the south-west and, on the coast of the Severn Estuary, at Sedbury and Aust *c.* 10km away in easterly directions. This curious mixture and proportion of building materials is unlike any other in the masonry defences of Caerwent, and may perhaps represent a single, job-lot of stone, acquired as the result of the demolition of a local building.

Generally very occasional, but much more plentiful in the North and North-east Walls than elsewhere, are water-worn large cobbles and boulders of various lithologies, mainly quartzitic and lithic sandstones; their source is uncertain but could be a local glaciofluvial deposit. Similar materials contribute significantly to the foundations of the wall. A single Roman brick was seen, low down in the facing at the south-west corner.

The gates built into the first, earthwork defence, as well as many buildings in the Roman town, make use of the Sudbrook Sandstone, a yellow, commonly red-streaked Triassic freestone cropping out on the coast *c.* 5km to the south-east, where there were probably quarries (Allen, 2005).

On the basis of the length of the masonry circuit, a height of at least 5m, and an average thickness of 2.5m a quantity of not less than the order of 40,000 tonnes of stone was imported to make the wall (bastions excluded). This is the equivalent of 80,000 standard Roman waggon loads, and probably up to half as many loads again must be added to account for footings and sand and lime for mortar. For comparison, at Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*) in Hampshire, a town a little over twice as extensive, the corresponding estimate is *c.* 150,000 waggon loads of stone (Boon, 1974, 101–2).

Wall facing

In many places the external facing of the defences has been completely robbed away or survives to the extent of just a few courses in sequence, but in others, especially on the South Wall, it is present to a height of over 5m (Nash-Williams, 1956). A sequence of over twenty courses is present at these locations.

The facing consists of roughly dressed, rectangular blocks of stone laid in fairly regular, level to gently sloping, mortared courses, the *petit appareil* of Adam (1994, 136), that can be traced laterally for considerable distances (Fig. 2). Here and there it can be seen that the blocks had been flush-pointed with a white lime mortar (Nash-Williams, 1930, 266; Casey and Bennett, 1983, 52). In contrast to many other Roman walls, there are no string courses at intervals at Caerwent and apparently no blocks so aligned that they extend significantly as bonding stones into the core. It is very rare to find that a course has been wedged into the sequence, an example occurring on the West Wall *c.* 40m to the south of the West Gate. The blocks vary in general size around the circuit (Allen, 2010, table 1) and on the whole are squarer in shape and larger on the West Wall and around the south-west corner than at many places on the South Wall (*see* also Nash-Williams, 1933). Typically, the joints between blocks are wide and uneven. The courses are roughly graded and varied (Allen, 2004, fig. 1.3D, E), that is, they tend to decrease in height upward in the facing but in an irregular manner. They are roughly 0.25m tall at the base of the West Wall but in many places on the South Wall average around 0.15m in height; at these places, thirty or more courses can be counted. Within individual courses blocks may vary in height over a two-fold range, the course appearing gradually to pinch and swell along its length. In places, however, courses also rise and fall relative to the base of the wall as the ground changes in shape.

Putlog holes

A total of 108 putlog holes for scaffolding were recorded on the exterior of the South Wall, as illustrated by Nash-Williams (1930, fig. 1), and a few may lie concealed behind the high walls of No. 4 Bastion. They are *c.* 1–1.5m apart horizontally in rows at two main heights, roughly 1.8–2.2m (*c.* 32%) and 3.0–3.6m (*c.* 37%) above the apparent foot of the wall (Fig. 3). The highest hole lay 4.1m up and the lowest were seen 1.3m above the base. The putlog holes are concentrated in broad height ranges, partly because rows of holes at several places change in vertical position by a facing course

or two. At *c.* 30m to the east of Bastion No. 2, for example, a row jumps up one facing course toward the east. At a distance of *c.* 20m to the east of Bastion No. 4 a row steps down eastward by four (thin) courses. Not included in Figure 3 are two doubtful putlog holes in the facing of the south-west corner and those in the bastions. Widely spaced horizontally, each at the corner occurs in a different course, one 0.8m and the other 1.0m above the apparent foot of the wall.

Judging by the putlog holes on the South Wall (Figs. 3, 10, 11), the ‘standard’ vertical spacing for scaffolding platforms, that is, lifts, adopted by the builders was shoulder-level and somewhat less than *c.* 1.50m, about the maximum height to which a substantial block of stone can be lifted by a strong person in a standing position without a mechanical aid. Only occasional putlog holes at this height above ground level have been recognized, however, suggesting that the lowest courses of the facing, generally involving the largest blocks, may have been laid partly from planks supported on low trestles, as illustrated by Adam (1994, fig. 182). Blocks were raised into the wooden scaffolding probably with the help of block and tackle and simple grips or stout baskets (Adam, 1994, 45, 50).

The putlog holes exposed today on the South Wall are relatively shallow. They could therefore have been intended merely as resting places for the horizontal elements of ascending scaffolding frames mounted on the ground. In contrast, the holes seen on the higher parts of the North-west Wall toward the West Gate penetrate horizontally into the masonry to a depth of many decimetres without obstructions. This suggests that here the working platforms were moved up the wall one lift at a time as the structure rose higher, either on cantilevered logs, clearly mechanically unsound as depicted by Adam, 1994, fig. 182, or supported on removable, transverse beams long enough to pass through the whole wall and thus support platforms on both sides (Adam, 1994, fig. 183). These alternative methods required less timber than would seem to have been necessary at the South Wall. There are stretches of the high South Wall where putlog holes are lacking from the lowest few metres; either they were infilled or the scaffolding was initially free-standing (Adam, 1994, fig. 180).

Breaks in the masonry

At many places on the wall there are abrupt discontinuities in the masonry (Fig. 4), the ‘breaks’ described by Nash-Williams (1930, 1933) from the inner footings and facings of the wall, and those reported below from the outer side. Several kinds are recognizable.

The four gates afford a distinct variety. Although these structures vary considerably in quality of preservation (Nash-Williams, 1930, 1933, 1956; Craster, 1954), there is sufficient evidence at each to show that they were all built earlier than and separately from the wall, which butts in straight joints against their piers or chambers (e.g. Manning, 2003, fig. 17.8). The total of these particular breaks is therefore eight. At the South Gate Nash-Williams (1930) numbered these No. 11 Break and No. 12 Break.

Closely akin to these is Nash-Williams’ (1930, 256) unique No. 15 Break which he observed on, and illustrated from, the inner side of the South Wall *c.* 9.5m east of Bastion No. 5. It is in fact a double break. As seen on the outer side (Fig. 5), it comprises two stacks of horizontally-laid, medium-sized to large blocks of stone that gradually slant upward through the facing and wall-core from ground level, where they lie a little over one metre apart, to the top of the masonry, where their spacing has grown to *c.* 1.5m. Combining the evidence from the two sides of the wall, this double feature was clearly, as Nash-Williams (1930) surmised, a means of access through the masonry as it was under construction. Roughly coursed blocks of variable shape plug the intervening gap. The opening is wide enough for narrow waggons or carts and would have allowed pack animals through comfortably. The intention behind Break No. 15 – conveniently placed for stone coming from the south – was probably to leave the South Gate unencumbered for normal traffic.

Nash-Williams (1930, 1933) identified numerous, mainly slanting breaks on the South-west and South Walls (Fig. 4). Such slanted joints he interpreted as indicating the relative date of the two portions of masonry, the later section lying above the joint. He recorded neither the character of, nor relative dating at, those he tentatively identified *c.* 43m south of the West Gate on the South-west Wall and, more firmly, *c.* 108m from the gate. The break discovered by Ward (1916, fig. 3) in the centre of the inside of this corner was reported by Nash-Williams (1930, 254, pl. XXX) as his No. 1 Break, the masonry to the east above the slant being the later and 'generally of poorer work'. His No. 2 Break lies in the south-west corner where the curved part straightens eastward; the masonry to the east was judged the later. No. 3 Break, *c.* 9m further east, is manifest in the footings (Nash-Williams, 1930 pl. XXXIX, fig. 3), the masonry to the east also being identified as the later. The eastern masonry at No. 4 Break, at No. 1 Bastion, was also considered the later. By contrast, at No. 5 Break, *c.* 10m east of this bastion, the western masonry was judged from the slant to be the later. The same relative dating was suggested for the parts of the wall at No. 6 Break and No. 7 Break, *c.* 10m and *c.* 16m respectively further eastward. No breaks occurred in the next 60m or so along the South Wall. At No. 8 Break, *c.* 23m west of No. 3 Bastion, the eastern wall-length was considered to be the later, a reversal of the situation at No. 7 Break to the west. At the vertical No. 9 Break at No. 3 Bastion Nash-Williams (1930, 255, pl. XXXIX, fig. 4) assigned the later date to the eastern masonry. Twelve metres short of Bastion No. 4, where the South Wall flexes slightly, occurs No. 10 Break, where the relative dating is reversed again. There are no more breaks until the South Gate is reached, where Nash-Williams (1930) listed the butt-joints of the wall as his No. 11 and No. 12 Breaks. No. 13 Break is vertical but displayed features suggesting that the wall to the east was the later. The only evidence for No. 14 Break lay in footings concealed beneath the post-Roman farm road that cuts the wall east of the South Gate; the later wall was suggested to lie to the west. Nash-Williams (1930, 257) conjectured that a sixteenth break occurred beneath the Norman motte. Other than at the East Gate, no breaks have been confidently identified on the East Wall, where very little facing survives.

The present survey identified a further eleven breaks expressed in different ways in the outer facing (Figs. 4, 6). Some appear as a course of large blocks that is replaced laterally by two courses of smaller ones (Fig. 6B). Others are expressed as offsets between courses (Fig. 6C). Where sets of courses are involved, the sequence of joints between the juxtaposed sets varies from roughly vertical (Fig. 6D), with blocks lying unmocked one directly above the other as at No. 15 Break (Fig. 5), to strongly slanted, with accompanying changes of block size, across the face of the wall (Fig. 6G).

Wall-core

From the standpoint of the present intentions, the wall-core is the most important architectural element of the masonry, as it largely defines the building-lengths and building-directions adopted by the masons at Caerwent. As seen in sub-vertical section (Fig. 2), and as Ward (1916) and Nash-Williams (1930) noted, the core consists in the main of thin slabs of limestone laid in rows on edge and overlapping, in places dipping to the left and in others to the right, over the top of which liquid mortar was poured. Locally, as on the South-east Wall and the South Wall (East), short sequences of thin slabs of stone were laid horizontally here and there over the inclined slabs, perhaps in an attempt to level up the courses. Instead of horizontal slabs, in other places a thick layer of hard lime mortar had been laid, now visible as short, level benches.

These arrangements of dipping stones constitute Adam's (1994, 144–5) broad *opus spicatum* building style, commonly termed 'herringbone' (e.g. Nash-Williams). The latter term is inappropriate,

however, as true herringbone work is a particular variety of *opus spicatum*. Instead, the general term ‘shingling’ is used here, qualified by the sense in which the slabs dip and were laid (Fig. 7A, B), that is, either right-shingled (laid from left to right) or left-shingled (laid from right to left).

The basic element of *opus spicatum* is thus a *unicourse*, or simply a course, consisting of a horizontal row of slabs inclined in a single direction (Fig. 7C). A vertical sequence of courses of the same sense of dip constitutes a *cocourse* (Fig. 7D), of which two examples, the left-shingled one capable of subdivision, can be seen in Fig. 2. *Herringbone work* deserving of the name is only found where unicourses of right-shingled and left-shingled slabs alternate vertically (Fig. 7E). Caerwent exhibits all these arrangements.

Fig. 2 illustrates only a limited, two-dimensional view of what in truth is a solid, three-dimensional wall of substantial thickness. An insight into the additional dimension comes from the more or less level sections through the middle and upper parts of the wall that can be seen by walking the top along the western and southern parts of the circuit. These reveal that, in the main, the inclined slabs, measuring 0.2–0.3m along the edge, lie at right-angles to the line of the wall in close, parallel rows, like a flat sheaf of square pencils, to form a *course-sheet* (Fig. 7F). Interlocking between courses is noticeable. As Fig. 2 makes clear, these course-sheets correspond more or less exactly in thickness and height with the facing courses on the outer and inner wall between which they lie, to define one of the most striking features of the masonry at Caerwent, an extreme rarity, but seen, for example, in the amphitheatre at Grand, Vosges (Adam, 1994, 139). This need not imply, however, that the two kinds of course were laid simultaneously. Unusually, the slabs that form the sheets are locally aligned obliquely to the line of the wall (Fig. 7G), perhaps in an attempt to accommodate rows without changing their number; this arrangement can be matched in some of the *opus spicatum* facing of houses at Catsgore (Leech, 1982). At a place on the South Wall (East) where a c. 15m length of the structure had collapsed, the slabs can be seen in a large vertical section (Fig. 8) and for some metres along the flat top to lie in rows at right-angles to the line of the wall (Fig. 7H), a change of alignment that may have favoured the fall. Such rows would appear unshingled in the oblique longitudinal sections that are the norm.

Markers

What are interpreted here as builders’ markers, akin to the ‘anchors’ postulated by Hill (2004, figs 11.4, 12.3) at Hadrian’s Wall, can be seen at many places in the core where the direction of shingling and, therefore, building changes. The marker seen in Fig. 2 is a slanted pile of nine blocks, laid horizontally one above the other within the courses, which are substantially larger than the adjoining tilted slabs. In contrast, most markers consist of just two or three piled blocks or of just a single course-high block, for example, at the ends of a unicourse. The markers are of two main kinds. At some, right-shingling lies to the right and left-shingling to the left; at such points the marker signifies a *divergence* in the core (Fig. 7J). The opposite is a *convergence* of building-directions, left-shingled courses occurring to the right of the marker and right-shingled ones to the left (Fig. 7K). In what survives of the wall-core at Caerwent there are overall roughly as many convergences as divergences denoted by markers (*see below*). However, no marker is visible at many divergences and convergences, including some major ones. Here and there what would otherwise be taken as a marker interrupts the core without any change of shingling across them. These unusual features may be termed *pseudomarkers*.

The slant to the blocks seen in Fig. 2 might be thought to imply that the sequence of courses to the left post-dated that to the right. This could be true in some instances but need not invariably be the case. The pile could have been erected as building proceeded on each side to separate cocourses

of different handedness, with the simple intention of defining the limit to the activities of two gangs working in harmony. The markers are without structural significance – many changes in shingling-direction of both kinds lack them as noted above – and there is consequently no reason for regarding them as other than denoting a boundary of significance to the builders. The significance of the pseudomarkers is unclear, but they could mean that the builders occasionally exceeded their set targets.

The four gates and the unique No. 15 Break contribute a kind of marker that must be included in any consideration of divergences and convergences, as will become clear when models of the construction programme are discussed (*see below*). At these markers the masonry is unsymmetrical, in contrast to the symmetry evident at those embedded within the core (Fig. 7J, K). A gate pier may therefore be said to define a *semiconvergence* where the shingling in the abutting core is directed toward it. The opposite case signifies a *semidivergence*.

Bastions

As noted above, these were added to the wall perhaps as much as a century after the latter was erected. They are considered here mainly insofar as they serve as convenient markers on the South Wall. It is worth noting, however, that these features are butt-jointed to the wall and, so far as the wall-core is concerned, are in some cases built partly in the same *opus spicatum* style as the wall itself, as can be seen at Nos 1 and 3 Bastions (but *see also* Casey and Bennett, 1983, 52). The facing is similar in style to that of the wall, though generally involving smaller blocks, and is well shown by No. 4 Bastion.

SOUTH-WEST WALL

This (Nash-Williams, 1933) ranges from the southern pier of the West Gate southward to the south-west corner and from there eastward for a short distance to within *c.* 20m of No. 1 Bastion (Fig. 9). Facing is continuously developed, up to ten courses high in the south. The southern pier of the gate is a semiconvergence and a major divergence in the lower part of the core conveniently ends the section. There are thirty-seven divergences and forty-nine convergences. Of the thirty-two markers, at least sixteen must be deemed substantial, although many changes in shingling-direction, some with a single marker block, occur at the ends of uncourses or thin cocourses. The total area of left-shingled work significantly exceeds the area of work to the right.

In the lower core, loosely defined, the semiconvergence at the gate is followed southward by a divergence (Fig. 2) and coincident Break I (Fig. 6A) at *c.* 45m, noted by Nash-Williams (1933), multiple convergences at 62–72m, multiple divergences at 88–95m, a convergence at *c.* 100m, a major divergence encompassing the whole surviving wall at *c.* 120m just after Break II (Fig. 6B), and a convergence at just over 160m with Break III (Fig. 6C) several metres ahead where the wall begins to bend (Fig. 4). The break seen by Nash-Williams (1933) *c.* 108m from the West Gate has not been recognized in either the facing or core. Break No. 1 of Nash-Williams (1930), recorded by him and Ward (1916), lies nearby on the inner wall in the centre of the corner but has no external expression. The lower wall may therefore have been constructed in seven unequal building-lengths. Of the breaks in the facing mentioned, only Break I finds expression within the core as seen from the outside. The sudden and pronounced upward slant of core courses at *c.* 170m is opposite in sense to the slanting discontinuity at Break No. 1. According to Nash-Williams (1930, 254), the younging direction at this break is eastward.

A similar complexity marks the upper core. The semiconvergence at the gate gives way to an irregular divergence at 20–25m, a convergence at 53m, a divergence followed by a convergence at

78m and 88m respectively, a further divergence at 103m, another convergence at c. 115m, the major divergence at c. 120m (also in the lower core), a convergence at c. 135m and, finally, a divergence at c. 170m. The number of discontinuities suggests the use of at least twelve building-lengths.

The South-west Wall is complicated stylistically but has little in the way of haphazard features in the form of embedded right-shingled courses. Something of an overall pattern or plan is evident, inasmuch as left-shingled and right-shingled sections tend to be offset between the lower and upper parts of the wall. The builders perhaps experienced difficulty in rounding the south-west corner, for at c. 165–175m, near No. 1 Break of Ward (1916) and Nash-Williams (1930), the core courses suddenly dip upward whereas those of the facing near the ground below tilt downward.

SOUTH WALL (WEST)

The South Wall (West) is the longest of the sections into which the circuit was divided (Fig. 10). It ranges unbroken for over 250m from a major divergence near the south-west corner of the wall eastward to the break at the western side of the South Gate (Nash-Williams, 1930; Manning, 2003). Comparatively low in the west, revealing little facing and much core, the wall grows taller eastward to reach c. 5m in height with an unbroken cover of *petit appareil* facing that fully conceals the core. Putlog holes abound. At five places the stonework has a confused appearance arising chiefly from poor restoration work. The tower-like feature with Quartz Conglomerate c. 90m west of the South Gate remains enigmatic. Although of Roman build, it appears to pass seamlessly to east and west into normal, shingled core courses without signs of breaks. Left-shingled work greatly exceeds right-shingled courses in visible extent in the South Wall (West). There are forty-one exposed divergences and twenty-five convergences; a total of twenty-one markers can be seen, of which about half must be considered substantial. Many of Nash-Williams' (1930) breaks on the inner face of the wall occur in this section, and others are here recognized on the outer side (Fig. 4).

Most can be said about the construction of the western two-thirds of the wall, where there is least facing (Fig. 1). Some parts could have been raised in up to three lifts, each with a largely independent sequence of unequal right-shingled (long) and left-shingled (short) building-lengths. For example, at c. 130, 155 and 185m along the wall vertical switches of shingling-direction are closely coincident with rows of putlog holes. Similarly, at 17, 145 and 180m there are other vertical changes in direction at roughly the same level. In other places, however, the same shingling-direction ranges over the full height of the wall, as at the start of the section and at 85, 100 and 112m, and no subdivision into lifts is possible. Almost no embedded unicourses or short cocourses are to be seen. There is little sense of the off-setting of differently shingled cocourses seen in the South-west Wall (Fig. 9). A major divergence, signified by a large marker, may occur about half-way along the largely concealed, final one-third of the wall (Fig. 10). The South Gate serves as a semiconvergence. Overall, right-shingled work is most in evidence.

The many breaks call for individual comment (Fig. 4). The eastward younging direction inferred by Nash-Williams (1930) at his No. 2 Break does not agree with the left-shingling seen there and has no clear expression in the core. At No. 3 Break, however, there is a prominent divergence and the eastward younging direction and shingling are in accord. Break IV (Fig. 6D) some 20m further east lies close to a tall convergence. No. 4 Break is not expressed in the core but the shingling agrees with the eastward younging direction; the younging direction changes to westward at No. 5 Break with Break V (Fig. 6E), but with no effect on the core in which right-shingling persists. At No. 6 Break, however, coincident with a prominent divergence, the westward younging and

shingling directions match. The two directions are opposed at No. 7 Break, where the core yields no sign of a discontinuity. They may similarly be opposed at No. 8 Break with Break VI (Fig. 6F), but here facing obscures the core. The core is also concealed at No. 9 Break and No. 10 Break with Break VII (Fig. 6G). According to Nash-Williams (1930), the wall youngs eastward at the former, in agreement with such core as is visible, but westward at the latter. At Break VIII and Break IX facing obscures the core. Nash-Williams (1930) found no break in the final one-third of the wall to match the conspicuous divergence at 223m.

SOUTH WALL (EAST)

The eastern section of the South Wall (Nash-Williams, 1930) extends for some 170m from the eastern portal of the South Gate to the Norman motte (Fig. 11). It is broken into three unequal segments by the post-Roman farm road near the Gate, the collapsed section at No. 5 Bastion, and Break No. 15. Facing is best seen between No. 5 Bastion and No. 15 Break, where it reaches up to thirty-four courses in height with many putlog holes. The section begins with a semidivergence at the eastern pier of the South Gate and ends in left-shingled work at the motte. A semidivergence occurs on each side of No. 15 Break. Embedded within the core are thirty-two divergences and forty-nine convergences. Of the thirty-two markers, fifteen are substantial; there is a pseudomarker within right-shingled work near the Gate. Right-shingled courses greatly exceed left-shingled ones in total area, as in the South Wall (West), but in contrast to the South-west Wall (Fig. 9). Poor restoration work obscures the upper wall between the Gate and No. 5 Bastion. The masonry in the affected areas has a confused appearance, having been relaid higgledy-piggledy and the otherwise ubiquitous regular coursing is no longer in evidence.

The section of wall between the South Gate and No. 15 Break represents four unequal building-lengths that encompass the full height of the structure, with between them a probably irregular convergence at or near Nash-Williams' (1930) concealed Break No. 14 beneath the farm road, a concealed divergence at the collapsed section, and another concealed convergence near the distant break. The western, right-shingled length includes Break X (Fig. 6K) in the outer facing, apparently corresponding to Nash-Williams' (1930) Break No. 13 on the inner side of the wall (Fig. 4). No features corresponding to these breaks have been detected in the core. A number of short (*c.* 5–10m), right-shingled, unicourses and cocourses with conspicuous markers interrupt the longer, left-shingled wall. Break XI (Fig. 6L) coincides with the tall divergence that begins the first of these. In the vertical cross-section at the eastern end of the collapsed section appear horizontal courses aligned across the wall (Fig. 8). There is clearly a sharp change in the structure of the core here, as the immediately adjoining longitudinal section reveals only right-shingled work.

The remaining *c.* 75m of the wall mainly represents a right-shingled, fifth building-length of 65–70m with a scattering of left-shingled unicourses and cocourses but without breaks. Following an irregular convergence affecting the full height of the wall, a mass of left-shingled courses ranges to the motte, and could represent the final parts of a sixth building-length (?perhaps beginning in the South-east Wall). The motte and associated field track conceal roughly 35m of the line of the wall. Nash-Williams (1930) speculated that a break occurred in this hidden tract.

Compared to the South-west Wall, the South Wall (East) presents a relatively simple structure of just three, unequal building-lengths and part of a fourth that each involved the whole wall up to its surviving height. It nonetheless includes some haphazard elements. It differs significantly from the section of the South Wall to the west in the large number of embedded unicourses and cocourses to be seen.

SOUTH-EAST WALL

The South-east Wall, like the South Wall (East), is incompletely exposed because of the presence of the motte at the south-east corner (Brewer, 1997). It ranges northward for *c.* 165m from this mound to the southern pier of the East Gate (Fig. 12), against which it is seen to be butted (Craster, 1954). The height reached is 3–4m but almost no facing has survived; very well exposed, however, are the regular courses of the core, between some of which short rows of thin, horizontally laid slabs are evident. A small area of core near the gate is hidden by clumsy restoration work. Fifty-five divergences and forty-six convergences can be counted. None of the fourteen markers are as substantial as those seen on other parts of the wall and most are just single, large blocks of stone; many changes of shingling direction lack a visible marker. Right-shingled work is in the minority. The only confirmed break in this sector occurs at the East Gate.

Stylistically, the South-east Wall consists of two intergrading parts and differs significantly from the rest of the circuit. Roughly the southernmost two-fifths consists of left-shingled work within which are embedded many, irregular, right-shingled cocourses and some unicourses. The terminus of the mass of left-shingled courses is unknown, but it is tempting to think that it could be the wall-high convergence seen on the South Wall (East) near the motte, although other solutions merit consideration. Grading from it, between 70 and 80m from the southern end, the remainder of the core is laid, exceptionally for Caerwent, in true herringbone style in up to sixteen courses (Figs. 7E, 13), except for a small area near the gate where left-shingled work is more prominent. Some of the right-shingled courses range laterally for as much as *c.* 75m and one extends for almost 90m. Craster (1954, 58) concluded from offsets seen in his excavation that a break occurred in the wall between 0.75 and 3m south of the East Gate. The core preserves no evidence for this break (Fig. 12).

Having regard to the predominance of left-shingled work and the structure of the South Wall (East), the break at the East Gate is best regarded as a semidivergence (alternatively, it is a unique ‘neutral’ break). On this basis, the South-east Wall emerges as a single, long building-length but in two parts, of roughly equal length if a conjectural, substantial, left-shingled segment existed at the site of the motte. The builders of the three-fifths of the wall nearest the East Gate repeatedly reversed their building-direction at the Gate and again on reaching positions *c.* 70–80m to the south. The scarcity of markers here could indicate that their activities were not sharply demarcated from those of masons working further south and that the teams were partly interchangeable. These builders worked in a more haphazard way, using smaller and closer, embedded unicourses and cocourses than are usual elsewhere on the circuit.

NORTH-EAST WALL

This final part of the publicly accessible extent of the exposed circuit (Brewer, 1997) begins roughly 6m short of the presumed position of the north pier of the East Gate and ends about 15m from the southernmost angle of the north-east corner (Fig. 14). It is presumed that at the north pier there was a break similar to that Craster (1954) recorded from the south side. No other breaks are known. The North-east Wall reaches a greatest height of over 3m and preserves long stretches of facing, but nowhere taller than four courses. Left-shingled and right-shingled courses are roughly equal in extent. Thirty-two divergences and twenty-six convergences are exposed, together with twenty markers, of which four are deemed substantial. As at the South-west Wall (Fig. 9), the lower and upper parts of the wall can be addressed separately.

In the lower wall a major divergence is seen *c.* 10m from the northern end of the section, that is, *c.* 25m from the corner, a logical position for another discontinuity. The divergence is succeeded to the left, and overlain, by a swollen but southward-thinning, lenticular mass of left-shingled work embracing several short, right-shingled unicourses and cocourses. How far to the south this initial phase of construction extended is difficult to say, but it is followed *c.* 40m from the South Gate end by another major divergence and need not have reached the Gate itself. Two building-lengths are encompassed by this work.

The main feature of the rest of the wall is a substantial mass of right-shingled courses that, from the divergence mentioned, drape up the swell of left-shingled work below until a convergence, introducing left-shingled courses, terminates it northward *c.* 30m from the end of the section. More left-shingled courses with subordinate right-shingled ones gradually expand southward from the divergence toward the East Gate. Thinly draped over this divergence and mass are right-shingled courses that range almost to the East Gate. Thus three building lengths are in evidence in the higher parts of the wall.

The North-east Wall is stylistically remote from the South-east Wall. It represents at least five building-lengths occupied in two successive stages. Initially, activity was concentrated in the northern part, where the wall was erected to a maximum height of just over 2m. Subsequent activity was greatest in the southern segment which had previously been little built up. A third phase of building may be indicated by left-shingled cocourses at the top of the wall *c.* 30–70m from the East Gate.

MODELS OF THE BUILDING PROGRAMME

Given above is a description and introductory analysis of the roughly two-thirds of the defensive circuit at Caerwent that is sufficiently accessible and exposed as to give a strong insight into the programme of construction. The style of construction – a core in *opus spicatum* between *petit appareil* facings – is clear enough, but were the various sections of the wall, as indicated by shingling in the core, built in strict sequence or more or less simultaneously or in some mixed mode? There are two limiting cases to address.

Consider first a circuit with the standard four Roman gates and, for illustration, one break similar to No. 15 Break of Nash-Williams (1930) above. The circuit is closed, finite and effectively continuous. Suppose that the builders, setting up markers within some of the sections, work all in the *same* direction until the wall is complete (Fig. 15A). The building-lengths are unequal. Half the gate piers and one side of the break contribute *m* semidivergences (SD); the other side of the break and the remaining half of the piers furnish *n=m* semiconvergences (SC). Each marker that is not a gate pier or one side of the break contributes one semidivergence and one semiconvergence, that is, if there are *p* markers then a total of *p* of each kind. The general formula for a circuit constructed in this ‘rotary’ mode is therefore

$$SC(n + p) = SD(m + p)$$

which is balanced, as topological considerations require, and independent of where the builders start, their common direction of working, or the number of sections in which they begin. There are $\{(m+n+2p) - 5\}$ building lengths, the bracketed number taking account of the gaps afforded by the four gates and the single break.

Consider at the other limit the ‘neutral’ model, in which work-gangs begin in a number of sections more or less simultaneously and build in directions away from or toward discontinuities in

the form of markers, breaks or gates. Fig. 15B illustrates one possibility. In this case each quadrant of the wall is divided into an *odd* number of building-lengths by an *even* number of markers. There are as before $n=m$ semiconvergences and semidivergences, but now accompanied by p divergences (D) and $q=p$ convergences (C). The general formula for this programme is

$$nSC + qC = mSD + pD$$

representing a total even number $\{(m+n+p+q) - 4\}$ of building-lengths, the bracketed number taking account of the gates. Although the formula is balanced, the total number of lengths built in one direction (e.g. clockwise) differs by two from the total built in the opposite sense. The formula is only approximately true if every quadrant of the wall is divided into an *even* number of building-lengths, the totals for the discontinuities differing by two and the total even number of building-lengths reading $\{(m+n+p+q) - 4\}$. Again there is a difference of two between the totals of lengths built in each direction.

A building programme executed in mixed mode would have properties intermediate between these two limiting cases. As there are many possible combinations, no formal analysis is presented for this case.

DISCUSSION

The briefest examination of the wall (Figs. 9–12, 14) suffices to show that the construction of Caerwent's masonry defences was executed broadly in accordance with the neutral model above (Fig. 15B). One implication of this model – increasingly true with growing numbers of building-lengths – is that the number of semiconvergences plus convergences is effectively the same as the number of semidivergences plus divergences, as also are the numbers of clockwise and anticlockwise building-directions. Counted at Caerwent are 200 semidivergences plus divergences, 196 semiconvergences plus convergences, and 119 markers. Right-shingled work is visible to the extent of 713 m² and left-shingled courses to a total of 727 m². Agreement with the neutral model is thus excellent, given that one-third of the circuit is excluded from the survey and the exposed two-thirds are either partly obscured by facing or lack the originally uppermost courses. It will be seen below, however, that there are significant *local* imbalances between the extents of the two shingling-directions.

Two aspects of Caerwent's masonry defences are especially striking. Firstly, there is the sheer complexity of the work as demonstrated by the present survey. Building-lengths are numerous and very unequal, the boundaries between right- and left-shingled cocourses tend to be irregular, in many places lifts within the core cannot be separately identified, and some parts of the core include numerous, short, embedded cocourses and unicourses while others seem tidier and lack such evidence of haphazard infilling. The breaks present in the inner and outer facings – the criteria advocated by Nash-Williams (1930) – prove to be an unreliable guide to both the limits of building-lengths and the order in which they were occupied; Manning's (2003, 173) bland statement that the wall 'was built in a series of separate lengths, their junctions easily recognisable in the core of the wall' does not do justice to this complexity. Many breaks have been found to have no representation within the core and at others the shingling and implied younging directions (as inferred by Nash-Williams) are opposed. The lack of agreement may perhaps mean that facing and core courses were not built at the same time, although the two are in the main rigorously aligned. Secondly, no two sections of the wall as divided above agree in general style of construction, within the limits offered by *petit appareil* and *opus spicatum*. A comparison of the putlog holes in the North-west

and South Walls suggests that scaffolding practices may also have differed. It would therefore seem that each section was built by a different work-gang and that the gang allotted to a section was free to exert a degree of autonomy over its manner of working, no one pattern having been imposed on the project as a whole. What is not known is if the same gang built a section in one or a number of seasons. The survey also yields no clues as to whether the various sections were erected more or less simultaneously, or whether a sequence of differently composed work-gangs was recruited to put up the sections successively.

The South-west Wall (Fig. 9) was erected in at least two and perhaps three lifts, each of several building-lengths with little infill from short courses. There is a strong tendency for right-shingled and left-shingled building-lengths to be offset between the two levels. That left-shingled work is the more plentiful to the extent of *c.* 41% may indicate that, regardless of where building started, the work-gang here preferred to build northward with the mid-day and afternoon sun behind them.

The South Wall (West) was built in up to three lifts in numerous lengths but with little off-setting (Fig. 10), in contrast to the South-west Wall. There was very little infilling with embedded short courses. Right-shingled work is almost three times as plentiful as left-shingled courses, a considerable difference from the South-west Wall. The mid-day and afternoon sun would again have been behind the builders as they worked mainly eastward from whichever point(s) they chose to start.

Many fewer, perhaps just six, building-lengths are present in the incomplete South Wall (East), but lifts are hardly evident and there is much haphazard infilling work in the form of short uncourses and thin cocourses (Fig. 11). As at the South Wall (West), there is a bias toward right-shingled work, perhaps for the same reason, but only to the extent of *c.* 18%, a much smaller differential.

No other section even remotely resembles the South-east Wall, with its perhaps singular building-length, abundance of short courses and prominence of true herringbone work (Fig. 12). As at the South-west Wall, left-shingled work exceeds right-shingled courses in area by about 34%. The same preference for working in relation to the position of the sun may have been exercised here.

The North-east Wall (Fig. 14) sees a return to the erection of much larger masses, but now of lenticular form over five building-lengths. There is a minor amount of haphazard infill in the shape of short uncourses and cocourses. The two kinds of shingling in this section are almost identical in amount.

The *opus spicatum* style, used for facings as well as wall-core, occurs at other places in the Roman world, although it may prove to be better seen at Caerwent than elsewhere. In Britain, it is recorded from the masonry wall of the Romano-British town of *Calleva Atrebatum* at Silchester (Allen, 2012), a fragment of the masonry defences of London (Maloney, 1983), at Lincoln (Jones, 1983) and at two of the Saxon Shore forts (Cunliffe, 1975; Pearson, 2002, 2003), as well as several other sites of the period, including villas at which true herringbone work tends to appear (Neal, 1996, Keevill, 1996). Well-formed *opus spicatum*, in slabs of Lias cementstone, abounds in the walls of houses and outbuildings at the Romano-British village of Catsgore in Somerset. At Great Casterton it was used in the foundations of a corn dryer (Corder, 1954). Use of the style in Britain persisted into Anglo-Saxon and Norman times; medieval and later brick-nogging reflects it. At Silchester evidence for the style can be seen at many places around the wall, especially in the string-courses, but more subtly in the irregular and heavily mortared flints used for the facing and core. Adam (1994, 144) records several examples of *opus spicatum* from the Roman European mainland, where it was used particularly in footings and under floors and roadways in order to ensure good drainage. According to him, the only building of any size in which it appears is in Thésée (Loire et

Cher), where it is combined in the walls with *petit appareil* and horizontal courses of brick. Further instances are described by Mertens (1983). The walls of Xanten (*Colonia Ulpia Traiana*) afford a fine display (Precht, 1983). Only at London and Silchester, however, has the style been exploited to demonstrate how Roman builders might have operated; it remains to be seen if it can be used elsewhere to establish building programmes.

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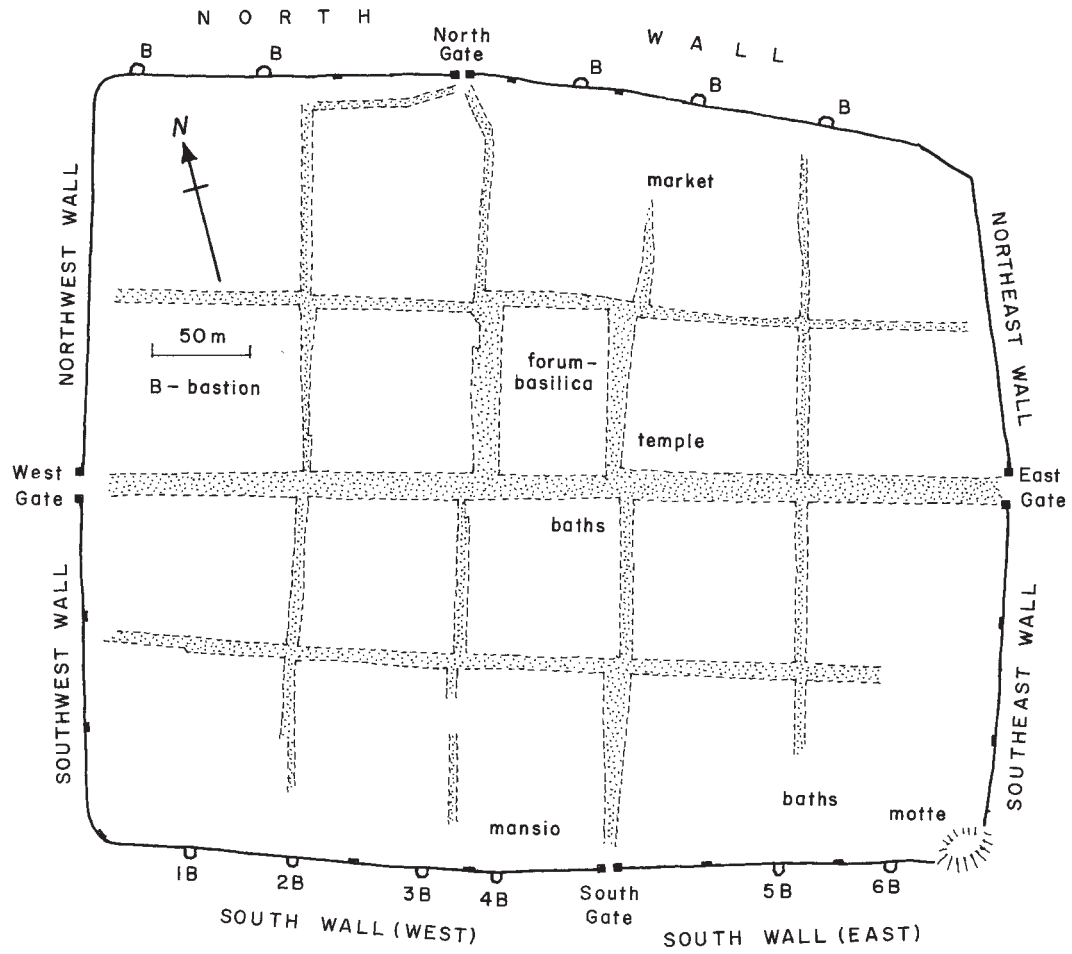


Fig. 1. Outline plan of *Venta Silurum* (Caerwent), adapted from Brewer, 1997.



Fig. 2. Portion of South-west wall of Caerwent, *c.* 45m south of West Gate, to show residual outer facing, core and a large marker at a divergence. The wall survives here to a height of *c.* 2.5m. *See* also Fig. 9.

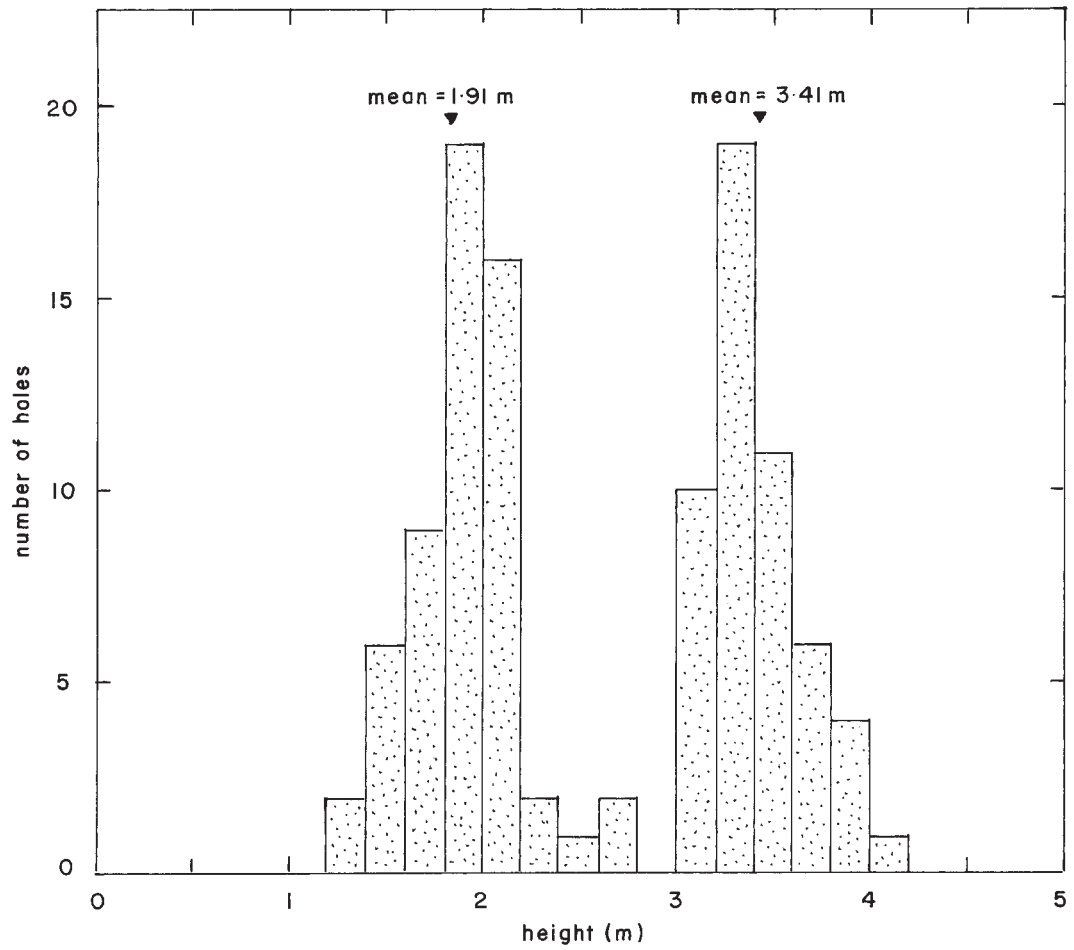


Fig. 3. Frequency distribution of the height of putlog holes above the wall-foot in the facing of the South Wall at Caerwent.

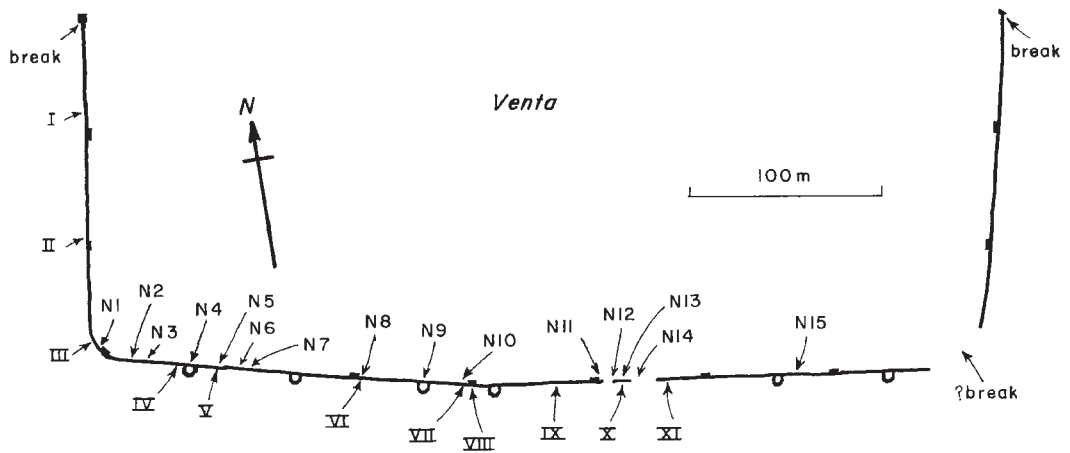


Fig. 4. Locations of breaks in the wall at Caerwent. Those recorded by Nash-Williams (1930,1933) are plotted as N1-N15 and those found during the present survey as I-XI. Additional breaks at the motte and gates are separately indicated.



Fig. 5. No. 15 Break of Nash-Williams (1930), c. 10m east of No. 5 Bastion, outer face of South Wall (East), Caerwent. *See also Fig. 11.*

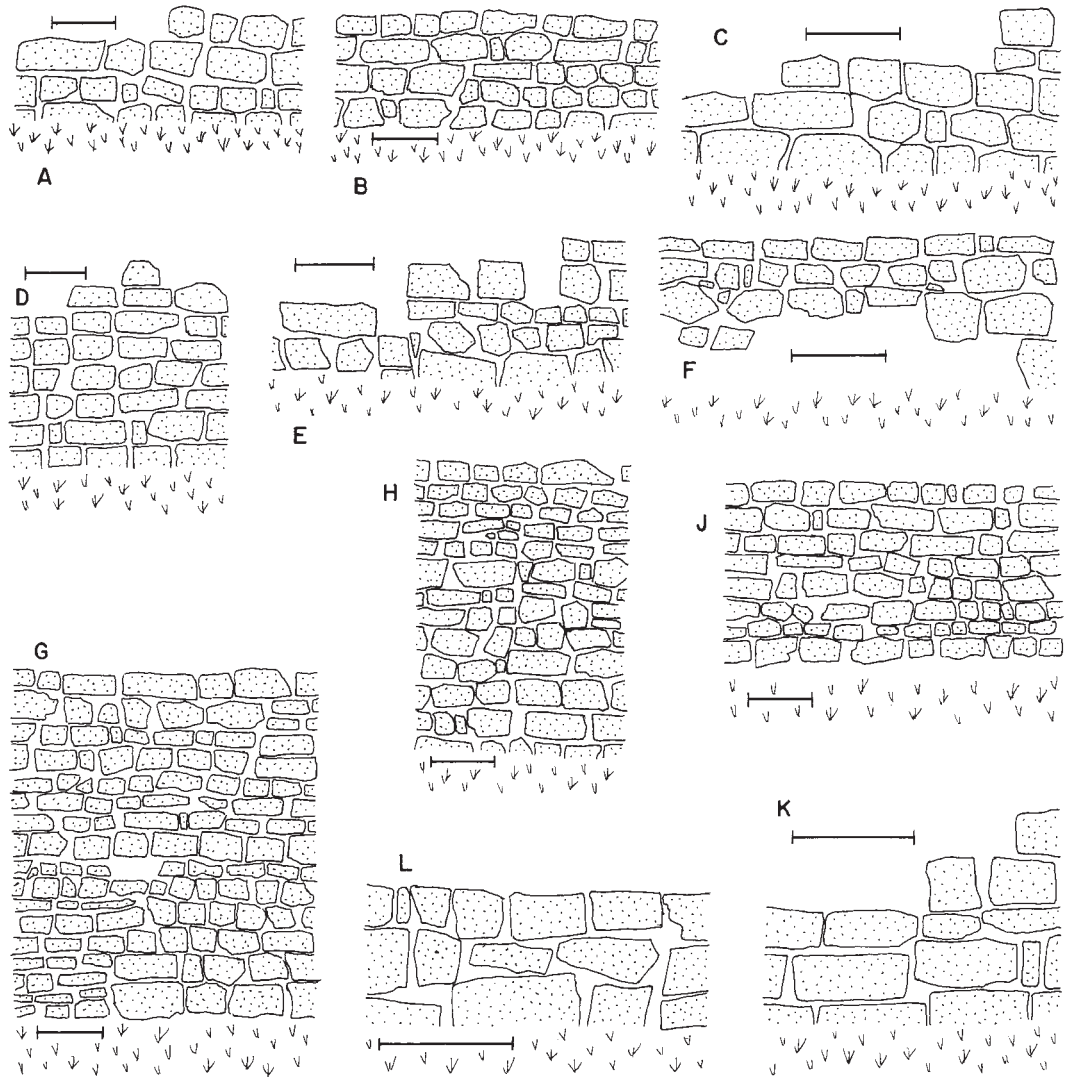


Fig. 6. Breaks in the outer facing at Caerwent, numbered anti-clockwise (scale bar 0.5m).

South-west Wall (*see also* Fig. 9): A = Break I; B = Break II; C = Break III.

South Wall (West) (*see also* Fig. 10): D = Break IV; E = Break V; F = Break VI; G = Break VII;

H = Break VIII; J = Break IX.

South Wall (East) (*see also* Fig. 11): K = Break X; L = Break XI.

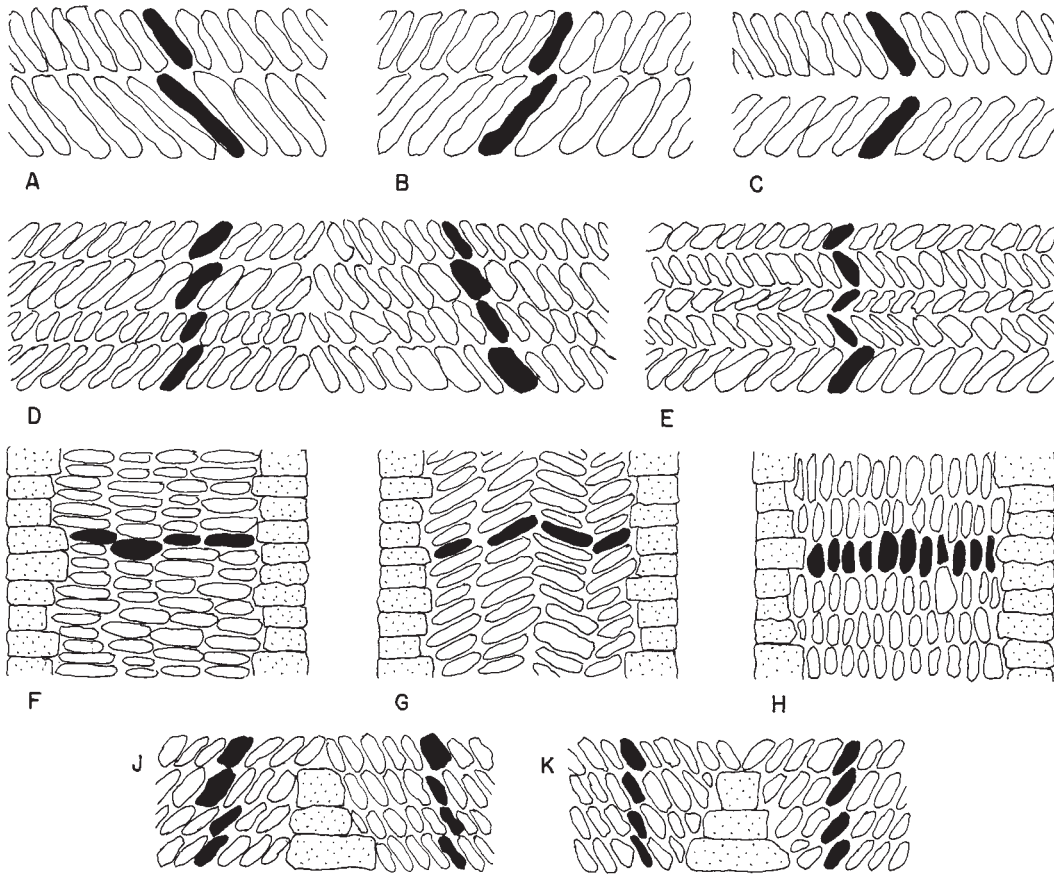


Fig. 7. Elements and variations of the *opus spicatum* building style (shingling) as seen at Caerwent.
 A = right-shingling; B = left-shingling; C = two uncourses; D = two cocourses; E = herringbone work;
 F = horizontal section through wall showing normal arrangements of shingled slabs in longitudinal courses;
 G = horizontal section through wall to illustrate longitudinal courses of obliquely arranged shingled slabs;
 H = horizontal section through wall showing shingled slabs in courses perpendicular to line of wall;
 J = courses at a divergence with a marker (*see also Fig. 2*);
 K = courses at a convergence with a marker.



Fig. 8. Cross-section of the wall at No. 5 Bastion exhibiting shingled courses aligned transversely to the line of the wall. *See* also Fig. 11. Scale 1.25m.

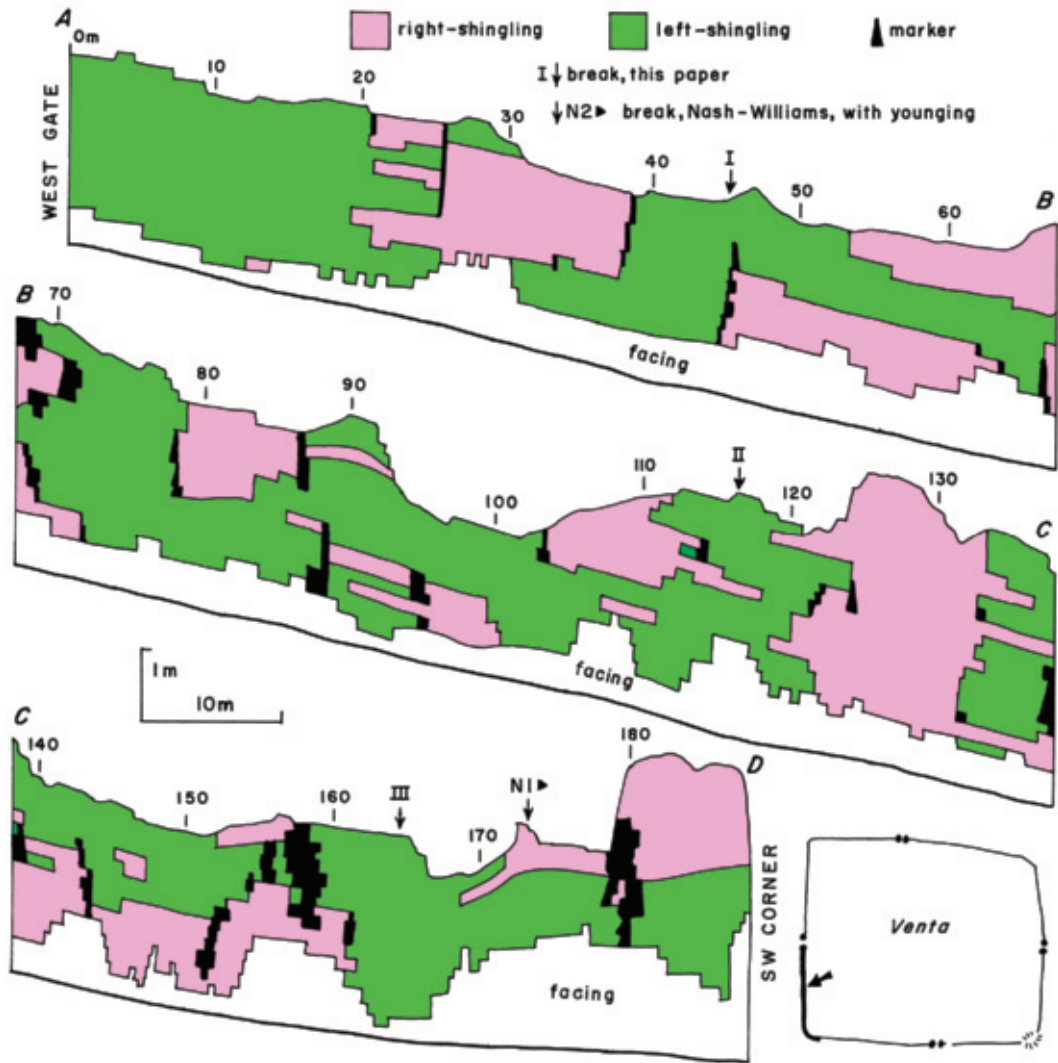


Fig. 9. South-west Wall at Caerwent, from the West Gate to the south-west corner.

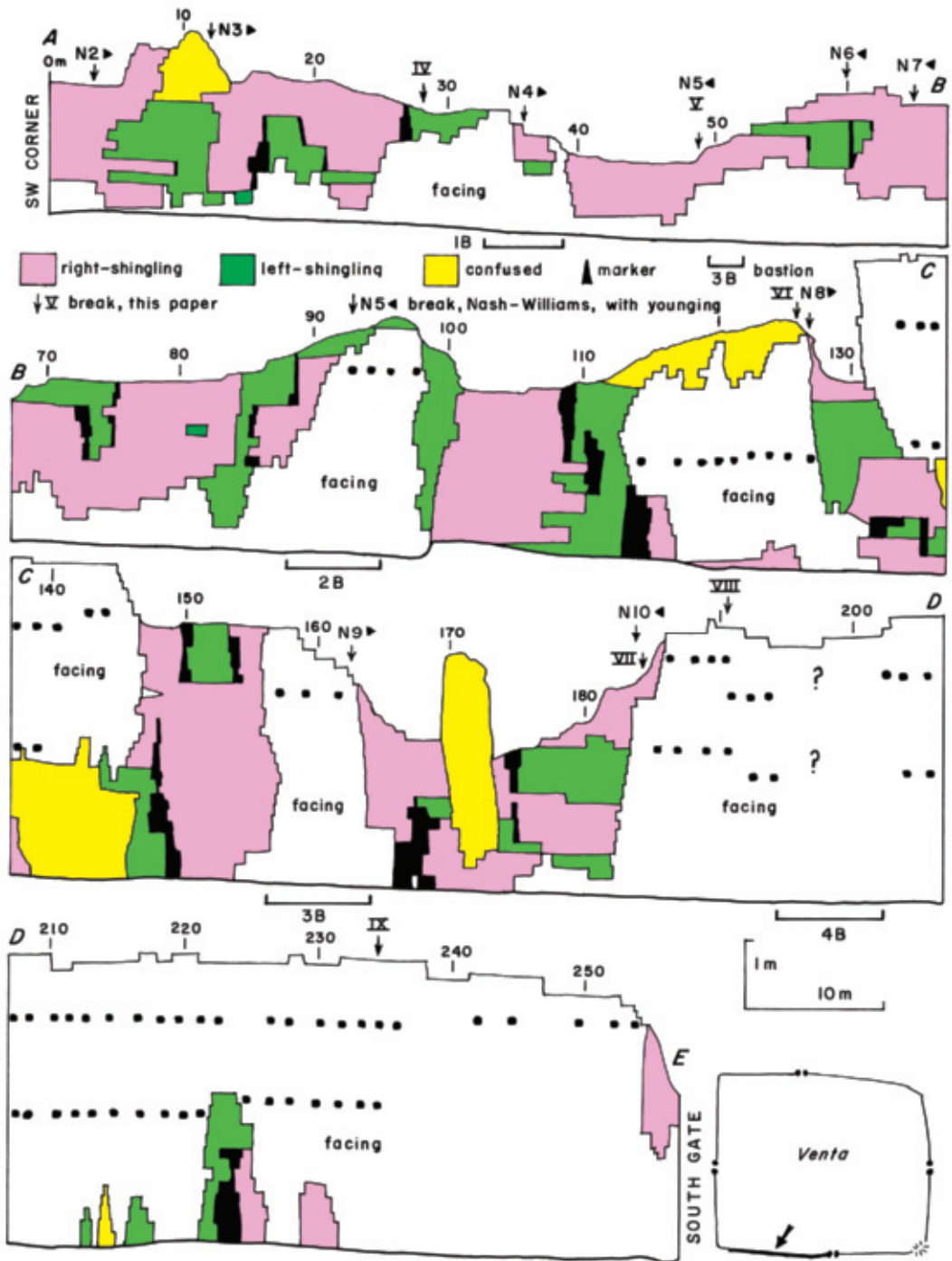


Fig. 10. South Wall (West) at Caerwent, from the south-west corner to the South Gate.

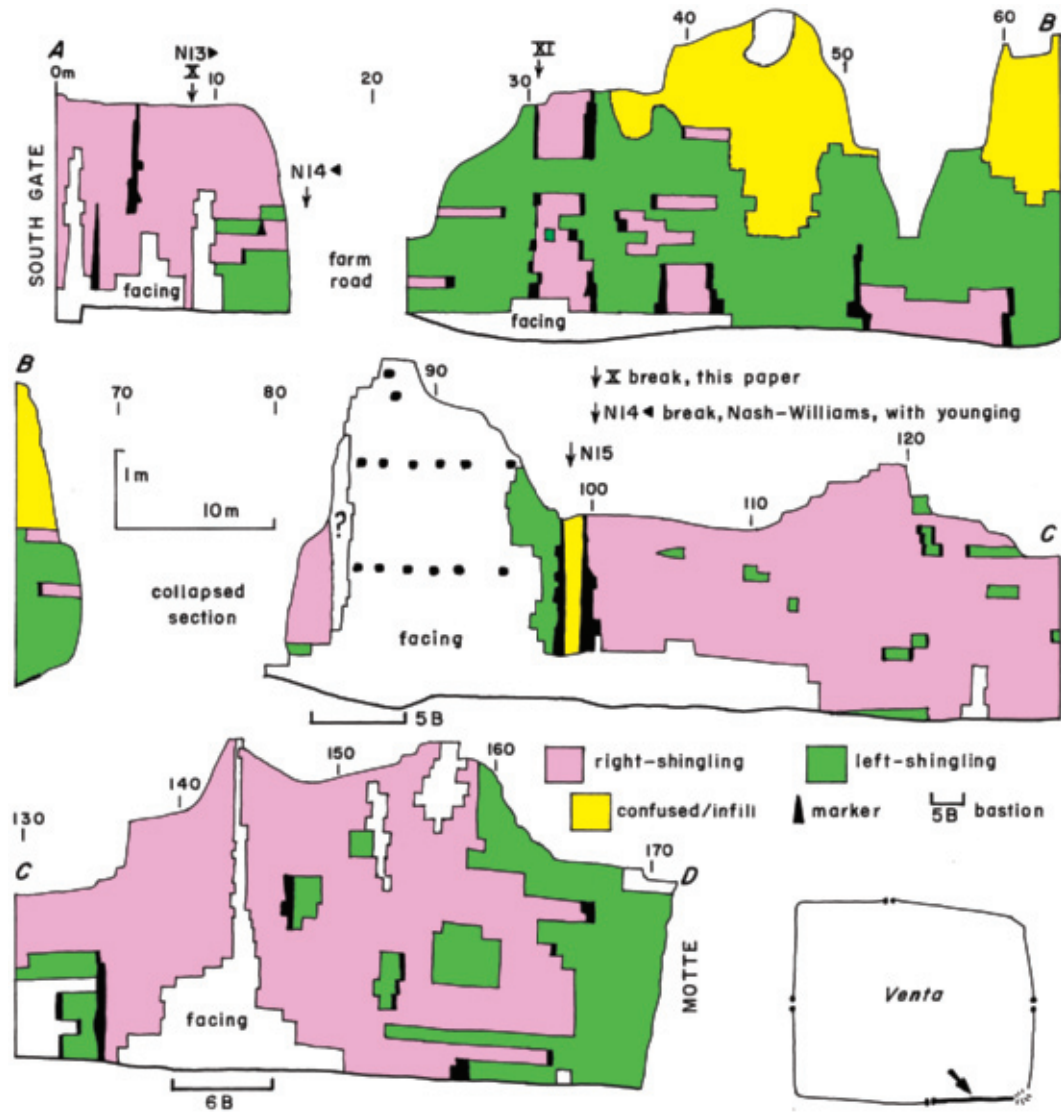


Fig. 11. South Wall (East) at Caerwent, from the South Gate to the motte at the south-east corner.

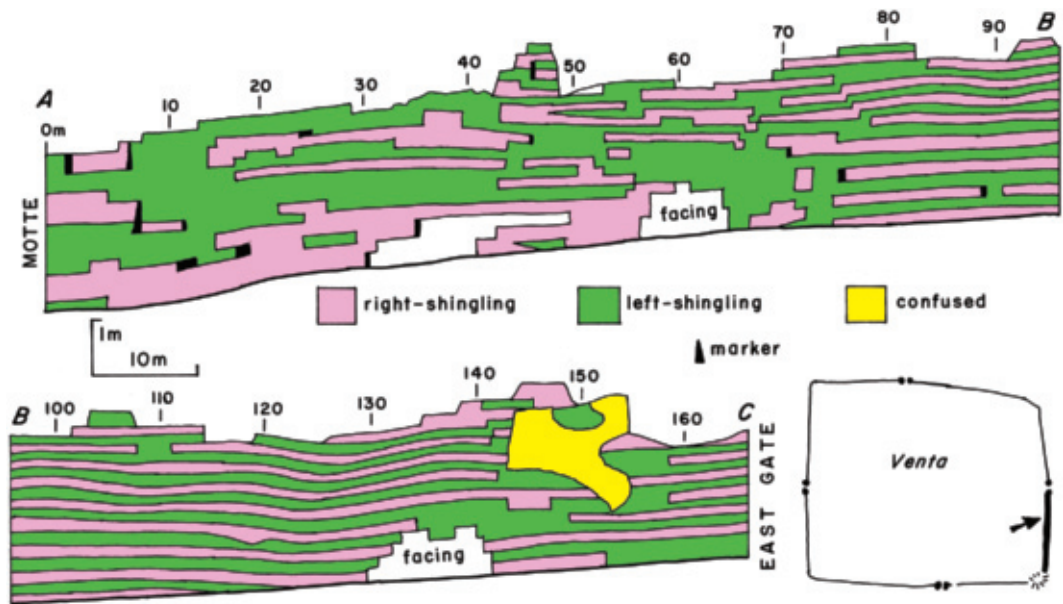


Fig. 12. South-east Wall at Caerwent, from the motte at the south-east corner to the East Gate.



Fig. 13. Herringbone work in South-east Wall at Caerwent, c. 60m from northern end of section.
The wall survives here to a height of c. 3.5m.

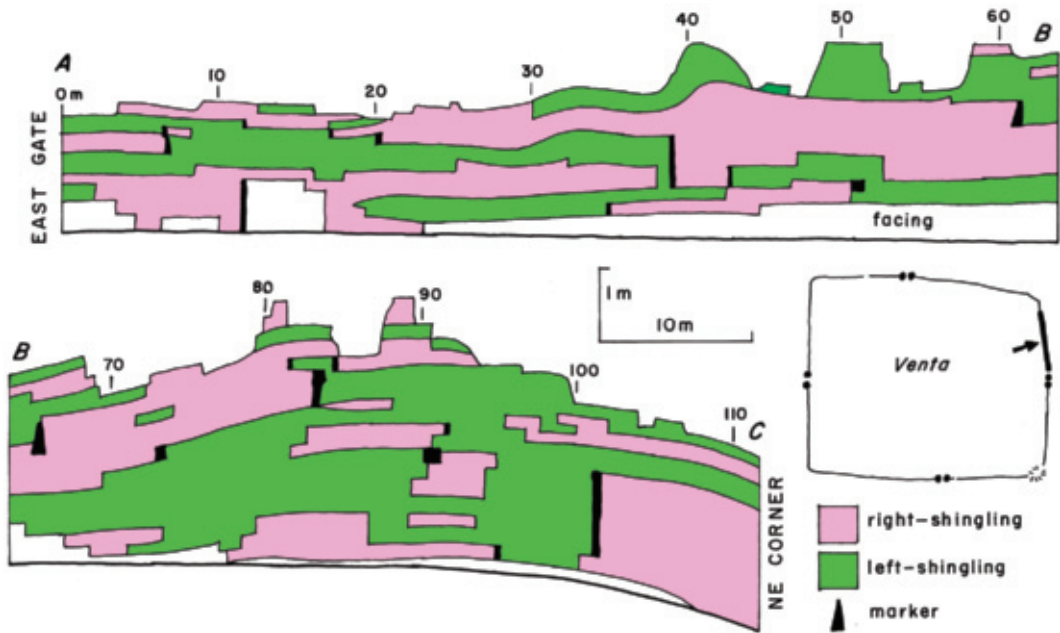


Fig. 14. North-east Wall at Caerwent, from the East Gate to near the north-east corner.

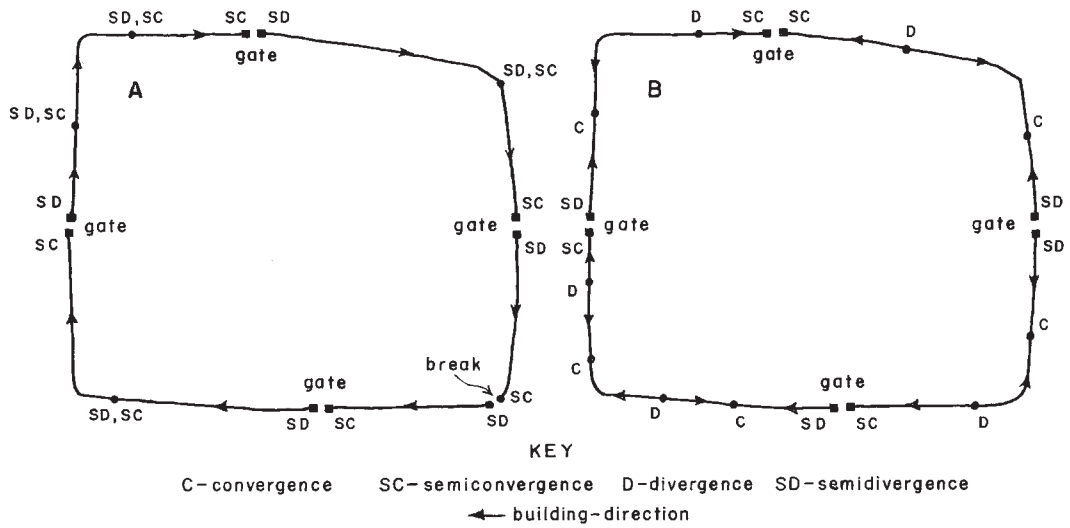


Fig. 15. Theoretical models for the building programme of the defences of a Roman town such as Caerwent. A = rotary model; B = neutral model assuming an even number of markers overall.

CONTESTED BELIEFS: MATERIAL CULTURE IN ROMAN SOUTH-EAST WALES

By Helen Forshaw

Two small carved stone sculptures, discovered at Caerwent in the early twentieth century, are displayed together in Newport Museum (Figs 1 and 2): a mother goddess statue, from *c.* second century AD, and a carved human head from *c.* fourth century AD.¹ They are very familiar to students of Roman Wales and, as a result, may be overlooked when considering questions of material culture and identity. This study is an attempt to re-evaluate the extent of Roman influence on the formation and expression of identity (or identities) using these two well-known artefacts.

Caerwent was made the focus of the study because, as the *civitas* capital of south-east Wales, it was where Roman and Silurian cultures met. The extent of this interaction is demonstrated by the



Fig. 1. Carved mother goddess statue,
(H) 0.27m. Sandstone.

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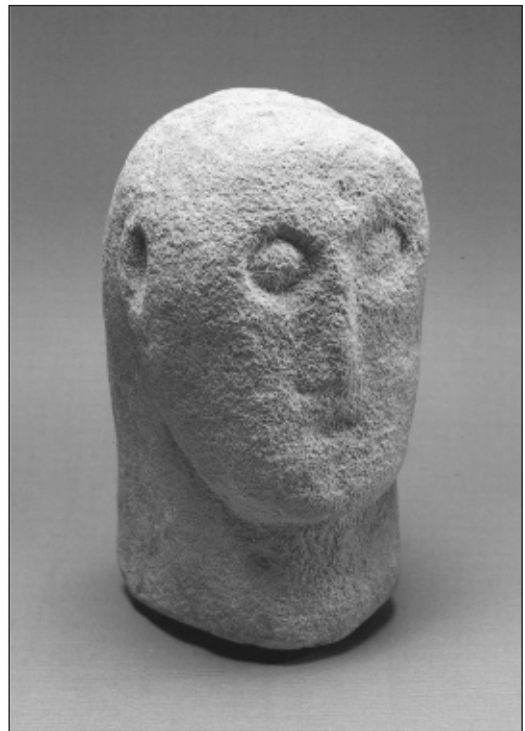


Fig. 2. Human head,
(H) 0.225m. Sandstone.

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¹ Brewer, R.J., *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani: Corpus of Sculpture of the Roman World – Great Britain. Vol. 1 Fascicule 5 Wales* (Oxford University Press for the British Academy, Oxford, 1986) 14, 37.



Fig. 3. Paulinus inscription, c. 3rd century AD, now in the church of St Stephen and St Tathan, Caerwent.
Copyright: Helen Forshaw.

Paulinus inscription from the town (Fig. 3), which marked an act of beneficence on the part of a former local legionary commander.

An initial literature search revealed the quantity of secondary material dealing with Roman and Celtic material culture, as well as the relationship between these two cultures. Therefore, it was decided to limit the detailed literature review to texts which proposed theories regarding the impact of Roman culture on peoples conquered by the imperial forces.

Following a literature review, key debates on Romanization are outlined. Twentieth-century scholarly writings about the two sculptures are then considered in order to ascertain whether interpretations of these artefacts have changed over time. Subsequently, the artefacts are each discussed in terms of religious and artistic practice to see whether there is evidence to support any, or some, 'Romanization' theories. These themes of religion and art were chosen because their manifestations can express the beliefs of their commissioners and/or creators.

As noted above, much has been written about the impact of Rome on its empire. Indeed, the effects of Roman conquest were recorded as early as c. AD 98, when Tacitus wrote of the Britons: '... the lounge, the bath, the elegant banquet. All this in their ignorance they called civilisation, when it was but a part of their servitude.'² This suggests that even the Romans were aware of the cultural confusion arising from their imperial aspirations. Much later, in the sixteenth century, William Camden described the Romans as bringing the 'society of civill (*sic*) life' and imposing it on their 'Colonies'.³ Indeed, such 'colonial' attitudes continued into the Victorian era when writers were 'influenced by the idea of the British in India as analogous to the Roman settlers of Britain'.⁴

However, somewhat different ideas on 'Romanization' were proposed in 1905 by Francis Haverfield.⁵ This was at a time when British imperial dominance was regarded as a 'civilising' tool.⁶ Indeed, all things Roman were viewed positively.⁷ In this context Haverfield put forward the view that native cultures were influenced by the presence of Roman conquerors so that they adapted, or 'Romanized', their own culture.⁸ He wrote:

*The definite and coherent culture of Rome took hold on uncivilised but intelligent provincials and planted in them the wish to learn its language and share its benefits. ... Rome made her culture more attractive by not thrusting it upon her subjects.*⁹

² Tacitus, *The Life of Agricola* [www] <http://agricola.org.uk/agricola.htm> (accessed 28/2/11).

³ Hingley, R., 'Not so Romanized? Tradition, reinvention or discovery in the study of Roman Britain', *World Archaeology*, 40 (3) (2008) 428–9.

⁴ Hingley, 'Not so Romanized?', 435.

⁵ Derks, T., *Gods, Temples and Ritual Practices: The transformation of religious ideas and values in Roman Gaul* (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 1998) 4; Hingley, 'Not so Romanized?', 434–7.

⁶ Hingley, R., 'The Legacy of Rome: the rise, decline, and fall of the theory of Romanization' in Webster, J. and Cooper, J. (eds), *Roman Imperialism: Post-colonial perspectives – Leicester Archaeology Monographs No.3* (School of Archaeological Studies, University of Leicester, Leicester, 1996) 35.

⁷ Derks, *Gods, Temples and Ritual Practices*, 2–3.

⁸ Clarke, S., 'Acculturation and continuity: re-assessing the significance of Romanization in the hinterlands of Gloucester and Cirencester' in Webster, J. and Cooper, J., *Roman Imperialism: Post-colonial perspectives*, 71.

⁹ Haverfield, F., *The Romanization of Roman Britain*. (4th edit., Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1923) 14. The original paper was written in 1905, published in 1906 and re-issued in 1912 and 1915 (1923, Prefatory Note and Preface to third edition).

Scholars subsequently took Haverfield's ideas forward. For example, Martin Millett suggested that local elites adopted Roman culture for the sake of expediency, in order to negotiate themselves powerful positions within the new political system.¹⁰ This was a 'bottom-up', more active approach, contrasted to Haverfield's ideas of passive acceptance.¹¹ However, it seems to exclude the possibility of purely cultural aspirations on the part of non-elites.¹²

Meanwhile, James Scott proposed that subtle resistance persisted in conquered cultures; i.e. the latter 'publicly acquiesce in the elite's "policy" of hegemony whilst, at the same time, privately resisting it'.¹³ Indeed, David Mattingly suggested that 'provincial landscapes were the product of complex processes of coercion, negotiation, accommodation and resistance'.¹⁴ The idea of covert defiance is echoed in Jane Webster's use of the term 'creolization' to help understand the effect of Roman culture in Britain.¹⁵ She describes this as 'the processes of multicultural adjustment (including artistic and religious change)' in which aspects of both Roman and indigenous British culture were used to create a whole new cultural lifeway which was neither Roman nor British.¹⁶ Therefore, in some ways, 'creolization' is 'a process of resistant adaptation', perhaps in line with Scott's theory of unwilling acceptance.¹⁷

Thus far, some of the key Romanization theories have been outlined. Twentieth-century interpretations of the Caerwent sculptures will now be briefly examined to see if modern writers have been influenced by any of these theories. At the start of the century writers seemed to suggest that the two sculpted artefacts had not been 'Romanized' but, rather, were measured against Roman sculptures and found wanting. For example, in the 1907 report, John Ward, one-time curator of Cardiff Museum, described the workmanship of the carved head as 'barbaric'.¹⁸ Meanwhile, in 1925, Wheeler described the head as comparing 'but poorly with the humblest African ju-ju'.¹⁹ Both these attitudes owe much to those of Victorian British colonists, who saw indigenous peoples in distant lands as 'Other' and in need of civilizing, in ways reminiscent of Roman imperialist ideas.

Nevertheless, later twentieth-century attitudes appear to have changed: for example the statue was said to be like other 'Mother Goddesses' with a 'stronger infusion of native influence'.²⁰ Furthermore, by 1986, the statue was listed under 'Romano-Celtic Deities' in the *Corpus Signorum*; whilst the head was placed in the section 'Unidentified Anthropomorphic Figures'.²¹ These views suggest a less judgemental acceptance of indigenous cultural artefacts.

¹⁰ Millett, M., *The Romanization of Britain: An Essay in Archaeological Interpretation* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992) 101.

¹¹ Webster, J., 'Creolizing the Roman Provinces', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 105 (2), (2001) 213.

¹² Webster, 'Creolizing the Roman Provinces', 217.

¹³ Fincham, G., *Landscapes of Imperialism: Roman and native interaction in the East Anglian Fenland – BAR British Series 338* (Archaeopress, Oxford, 2002) 3.

¹⁴ Quoted in Fincham, *Landscapes of Imperialism*, 94.

¹⁵ The term more usually refers to adjustments made by African-American or African-Caribbean societies to new situations in America or Europe (Webster, 'Creolizing the Roman Provinces', 217).

¹⁶ Webster, 'Creolizing the Roman Provinces', 209.

¹⁷ Webster, 'Creolizing the Roman Provinces', 218.

¹⁸ Boon, G.C. and Lewis, J.M. (eds), *Welsh Antiquity* (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, 1976) 167.

¹⁹ Wheeler, R.E.M., *Prehistoric and Roman Wales* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1925) 251.

²⁰ Nash-Williams, V.E., 'The Roman Inscribed and Sculptured Stones found at Caerwent (Venta Silurium) with notes on Mars-Lenus-Oculus and the Caerwent Temple', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 15 (1954) 89.

²¹ Brewer, *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani*, 13 & 37.

Moreover, by 2004, Miranda Aldhouse-Green had located the ‘stone severed head’ in the Iron Age.²² Similarly, the head and the ‘seated mother goddess’ were discussed under the heading of ‘A Sacred Setting?’ in Ray Howell’s *Searching for the Silures*.²³ Again, these views suggest that scholars now accord examples of Silurian culture their rightful independence, and no longer compare them unfavourably with the, apparently, hegemonic Roman culture.

Having placed the two sculptures in their historiographic contexts, the artefacts will now be discussed in order to assess the extent of Roman influence evident in each. This discussion will test the theories of Haverfield, Millett, Scott and Webster, outlined above, in relation to religious and artistic practice. As with so many two thousand year-old artefacts there is little, if any, contemporary supporting literature. Therefore, any interpretations are based purely on the objects themselves and their archaeological contexts.

Beginning with religion, there is evidence relating to the carved human head and mother goddess statue which suggests that Celtic beliefs continued in Caerwent. This indicates that Haverfield’s view of ‘bottom up’ Romanization is not immediately apparent in these artefacts. For example, the head can be placed within the Celtic head cult, which privileged the head as the site of the soul.²⁴ This cult was common in Britain and across southern Gaul and Germany.²⁵ Meanwhile, comparators from Britain, both described as Celtic, include the carved limestone head from Dorchester, illustrated in the *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani* for Bath and Essex, and the carved stone head of a Celtic god from Corbridge, identified by Toynbee.²⁶

Similarly, the mother goddess statue appears to represent a specifically Celtic belief, that of *deae matres*.²⁷ However, this was more usually depicted with three female figures.²⁸ Nevertheless, solitary types are known in Britain, e.g. from Carrawburgh on Hadrian’s Wall, as well as the mother-goddess with three apples from Cirencester.²⁹

Meanwhile, the iconography of the Caerwent mother goddess also indicates Celtic affinities, incorporating their symbols of fertility and eternity in the fruit and fir tree, respectively.³⁰ In addition, the find-spot of the statue – at the bottom of a pit – evokes the Celtic or pre-Celtic tradition of votive

²² Aldhouse-Green, M., ‘The Iron Age: Art, Ritual and Society’ in Aldhouse-Green, M. & Howell, R. (eds), *The Gwent County History Volume 1 Gwent in Prehistory and Early History* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2004) 172.

²³ Howell, R., *Searching for the Silures: An Iron Age tribe in South-east Wales* (Tempus, Stroud, 2006) 30.

²⁴ Green, M., *Symbol and Image in Celtic Religious Art* (Routledge, London, 1989) 211; Ross, A., *The Pagan Celts* (Batsford, London, 1986) 122–3; Megaw, J.V.S., ‘A Celtic Cult Head from Port Talbot, Glamorgan’, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 115 (1966) 94.

²⁵ Megaw, R. and V., *Celtic Art: From its beginnings to the Book of Kells* (Thames and Hudson, London, 1989) 74.

²⁶ Cunliffe, B.W. and Fulford, M.G., *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani: Corpus of Sculpture of the Roman World – Great Britain. Vol.1 Fascicule 2 Bath and the Rest of Wessex* (Oxford University Press for the British Academy, Oxford, 1982) 35, Plate 32 No.123; Toynbee, J.M.C., *Art in Roman Britain* (Phaidon, London, 1962) 146, Catalogue No.42 & Plate No. 49.

²⁷ Green, M.J., *The Gods of Roman Britain* (Shire Publications, Risborough, 1983) 51.

²⁸ Green, *The Gods of Roman Britain*, 51–2.

²⁹ Green, *Symbol and Image*, 34; Green, M., *The Gods of the Celts* (Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, Stroud, 1986) 86.

³⁰ Brewer, *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani*, 13; Green, M. and Howell, R., *Celtic Wales* (University of Wales Press/Western Mail, Cardiff, 2000) 65–6. Similar imagery appears on Dobunni pre-Roman coinage from the Cotswolds (Boon, G.C., *Laterarium Iscanum: The antefixes, brick and tile stamps of the Second Augustan Legion* (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, 1984) 9.

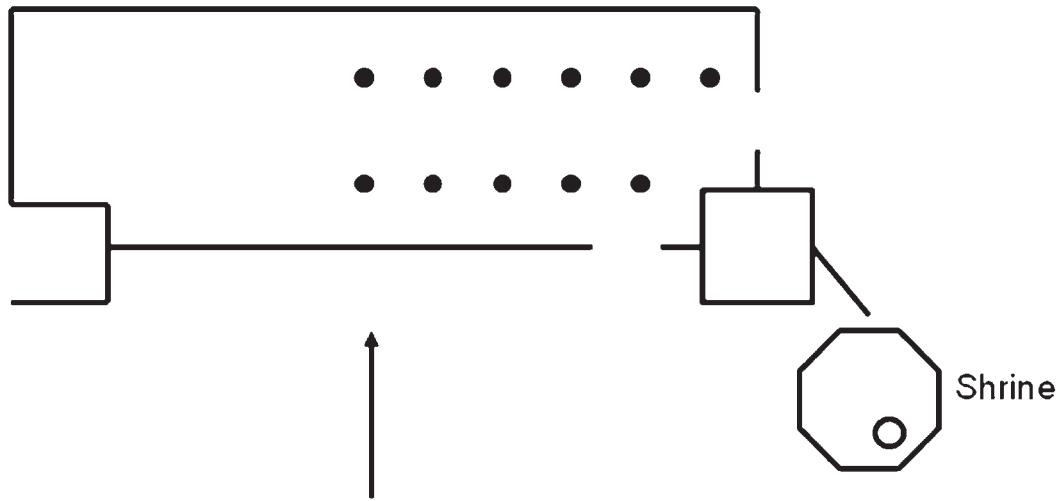


Fig. 4. Plan of aisled farmhouse at Stroud, Hampshire showing shrine (based on Applebaum, 1972, 175).

or ritual pits.³¹ These various aspects of the carved head and mother goddess statue rather suggest a lack of Roman influence on religion in Caerwent.

However, the context of the carved head – in the remains of a small building near the site of a house – may indicate some cross-over of religious practice. For example, a similar shrine has been found in another *civitas* capital – Silchester, as well as at Stroud in Hampshire (Fig. 4).³² These shrines were known as *lararia* where family gods were worshipped.³³

Meanwhile, Applebaum has suggested that a structure with a similar function can be identified in the Celtic settlement at Cefn Graeanog in Gwynedd, dating from the third century AD.³⁴ He proposed that such small buildings could represent the dwellings of the ‘deity of the homestead’.³⁵ Therefore, the Caerwent shrine, along with its carved head, may have had a similar function derived from an amalgam of Celtic and Roman beliefs.

This view perhaps echoes that of Scott who proposed a negotiated acceptance of conquerors’ beliefs, through the use of subtle resistance on the part of indigenous peoples. In the case of Caerwent, it is possible that a Silurian family may have adopted a Roman life-style, given the design of the residential property (VII: Fig. 5), in the grounds of which the shrine and carved head were found. However, they may have wanted to continue to practise their native head cult worship and, therefore, erected a suitable shrine at a distance from their home. This would have enabled them to continue their religious practices in an area not immediately obvious to visitors (VIII: Fig. 5).

³¹ Webster, G., *The British Celts and their Gods under Rome* (Batsford, London, 1986) 109–10.

³² Boon, G.C., *Silchester: The Roman Town of Calleva* (David and Charles, London, 1974) 161; Applebaum, S., ‘Roman Britain’ in Finberg, H.P.R. (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* Vol. 1: II A.D. 43–1042 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972) 175–6.

³³ Boon, *Silchester*, 162.

³⁴ Applebaum, ‘Roman Britain’, 46, 197, 198.

³⁵ Applebaum, ‘Roman Britain’, 46.

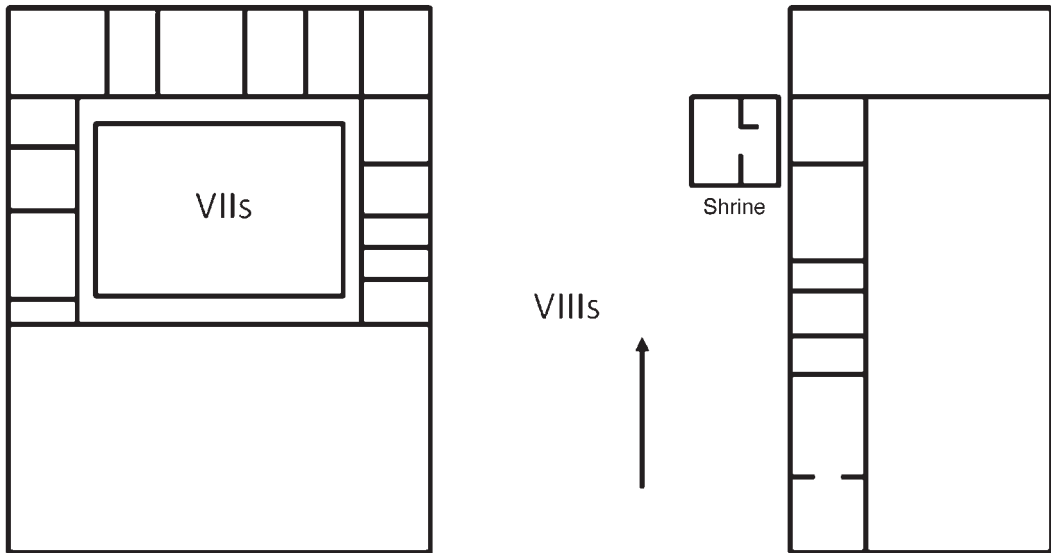


Fig. 5. Plan of Insula XI, Caerwent showing location of shrine in VIIIIs, east of residence VIIIs (based on Boon, 1976, 168).

Turning to artistic practices, Roman influence may be identified particularly in the carved head, suggesting that Haverfield's theory of adopted Romanization could apply in this case. For example, the workmanship can be described as solid but uninspired, echoing Collingwood and Myres' view that Roman art in Britain was 'dull, mechanical imitation'.³⁶ Indeed, in its simplicity it is not unlike the marble bust of Lucius Julius Ursus Servianus from Stratfield Saye House, which featured in the British Museum exhibition *Hadrian: Empire and Conflict*.³⁷ Furthermore, the apparent lack of finish may not indicate an absence of skill, but rather the nature of the local sandstone.³⁸

In addition, Roman sculptures tended to be naturalistic, representing living forms, such as the dolphin's head from Caerleon Roman Fortress Baths (Fig. 6). Thus, the style of the carved head contrasts with Celtic art which often rejected naturalism.³⁹ Indeed, the Celts often favoured 'superb ... craftsmanship', featuring curvilinear abstraction, e.g. the plaque found in Llyn Cerrig Bach (Fig.7).⁴⁰ Therefore, the head's execution may support Roman, rather than Celtic, attribution. Also, given that the head was associated with the remains of a large Roman-style house, it lends support to Millett's theory of adoption of Roman style sculpture by indigenous elites.

³⁶ Collingwood, R.G. and Myres, J.N.L., *Roman Britain and the English Settlements* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1937) 250.

³⁷ Oppen, T., *Hadrian: Empire and Conflict* (British Museum Press, London, 2008) 45, 235.

³⁸ This is harder to work than Bath stone (Brewer, *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani*, 37).

³⁹ Green, *Symbol and Image*, 214.

⁴⁰ Megaw, *Celtic Art*, 233.



Fig. 6. Dolphin fountain spout, Caerleon Roman Fortress Baths (GTJ31582).
*Reproduced by kind permission of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.
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Fig. 7. Circular plaque (top) from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Llanfairyrneubwll (GTJ31696).
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Furthermore, the head may have originally fitted into a torso, similar to one displayed in the Carnavalet Museum in Paris.⁴¹ This was an accepted Roman practice in which standardized statue bodies were created with sockets for the insertion of ‘portrait’ heads.⁴² Meanwhile, the different depth of carving evident in the left and right eyes may have been employed because of the head’s original location. This technique, which used ‘optical distortions due to the siting’, was commonly used when classical sculptures were to be seen from different angles.⁴³ It is also possible that the ‘ears’ may be holes which enabled the fixing of an ornament, as sometimes seen on other classical pieces.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, the carved head and the mother goddess appear to retain some Celtic influences, especially as they both seemingly symbolize indigenous religious beliefs, noted above. In addition, neither Caerwent sculpture carries an inscription which is fairly typical of Celtic artworks.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the ‘ears’ on the carved head may have been slots to accommodate detachable animal ears, seen in other Celtic statues.⁴⁶ Similarly, the over-large head on the statue fits with the head cult discussed earlier.⁴⁷

Furthermore, forms of possible resistance, which Green refers to as the ‘Celtic love of ambiguity’, can be seen in the mother goddess symbols.⁴⁸ Whilst these can be interpreted as Celtic (*see above*), similar forms have been identified either as victory palms or as marking the Roman occupation of Judaea.⁴⁹ Therefore, perhaps the choice of this imagery was a token acceptance of Roman culture through the incorporation of a deliberately ambiguous symbol into an otherwise Celtic representation. Equally, this could be an example of Webster’s ‘creolization’ where aspects of the two cultures were combined to create a new, distinct cultural type.

From the foregoing discussion, it seems that it is difficult to pinpoint definitive evidence of Roman influence (or lack of it) in the two Caerwent sculptures. Interestingly, in 2007, Andrew Gardner, a Roman historian with a particular knowledge of south-east Wales, wrote that:

*... it seems clear from the ways in which the ‘official’ spaces of Caerleon (and indeed Caerwent) were being used ... that the lifestyles of soldiers, administrators and farmers had impacted upon each other in this area, creating a common hybrid culture (for which there is no better term than ‘Roman’) ...*⁵⁰

It, therefore, appears that Romanization remains a contested concept. Furthermore, Gardner’s recent comment demonstrates that, even in the twenty-first century, artefacts can still be identified from an interpreter’s view point, rather than from a wider cultural perspective.

⁴¹ Ashby, T, Hudd, A.E. and King, F., ‘Excavations at Caerwent, Monmouthshire on the Site of the Romano-British City of Venta Silurum in the year 1908’, *Archaeologia*, 62 (1910) 16–17.

⁴² Honour, H. and Fleming, J., *A World History of Art* (4th edit., Laurence King Publishing, London, 1995) 172; Opper, T., *Hadrian: Empire and conflict*, 68.

⁴³ Honour and Fleming, *A World History of Art*, 114.

⁴⁴ Konsola, D., *Delphi: The archaeological site and the museum* (Olympic Color/John Decopoulos, Athens, n.d.) 27.

⁴⁵ Webster, J., ‘*Interpretatio*: Roman Word Power and the Celtic Gods’, *Britannia*, 26 (1995) 159.

⁴⁶ Ross, *The Pagan Celts*, 123.

⁴⁷ Green, *Symbol and Image*, 212.

⁴⁸ Green, *Symbol and Image*, 43.

⁴⁹ Morelli, A., *pers. com.*, 7 March 2011; Zienkiewicz, J.D., *Roman Gems from Caerleon* (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, 1987) 8.

⁵⁰ Gardner, A., ‘Fluid frontiers: cultural interaction on the edge of empire’, *Stanford Journal of Archaeology*, 5 (2007) 51.

In conclusion, the extent of Roman influence on culture in south-east Wales during the Roman occupation has been assessed by reference to two sculpted artefacts found in Caerwent. These have been discussed in the light of the extensive literature on ‘Romanization’ and by reference to secondary texts on Celtic and Roman religious and artistic practices. It has been suggested that, whilst arguments can be made for Roman influence on both the carved head and the mother goddess statue, there is also evidence of continuing Celtic cultural traditions. This suggests that Haverfield and Millett were correct in their views that Britons, in particular the local elites, adopted some aspects of Roman culture, such as the commissioning of naturalistic sculptures. However, there is putative evidence of some subtle resistance to Roman culture, as defined by Scott: for example, in the continuing worship of an old Celtic god in the head shrine, despite the adoption of a new Roman life-style. Meanwhile, the ambiguity of the mother goddess symbols may hint at Webster’s idea of ‘creolization’ of Celtic and Roman culture.

Nevertheless, the evidence is by no means overwhelming. Thus, the extent of Roman influence on material culture in Caerwent remains unclear and open to interpretation. Further investigation of other local artefacts may help clarify the situation. However, it is important, when undertaking such work, that the ‘tail does not wag the dog’ and that one resists the temptation to either find influences where there are none, or ignore those which do not fit a preferred theory.

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FOUR RUSSIAN BALE OR BUNDLE SEALS FROM MOUNTON, MONMOUTHSHIRE

By Mark Lewis with contributions from Edward Besly and John Sullivan

This note describes four Russian bale or bundle seals found as a result of metal detecting at Trap Hill, Mouton, Monmouthshire (NGR ST 514 934), and reported at the National Roman Legion Museum by Mr Anthony Blackley, their finder, under the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Seal 1

Measuring 28.52 x 25.03 x 4.26mm, weighing 22.38g, and made from lead or lead/tin alloy stamped with Cyrillic text on both faces, this disc is typical of bale seals originating from the port of Archangel during the 1830s and 1840s.¹ The seal was attached to the baled commodity *via* thread which has left two voids where it passed through the disc. The lead or lead/tin alloy discs were cast in special moulds in which the thread holes passed through the moulds at right-angles to the pouring sprues. The thread holes create two double-lunate interruptions to the otherwise circular seal, commonly at right angles to the casting sprue, as in this case (Fig. 1). The disc was then used to seal the bale by passing thread through the holes and pressing the disc with sealing irons to flatten the lead tightly onto the fibres and leave the quality control impressions in each face of the disc.

This find raises two obvious questions. Firstly, what did the bale contain? Secondly, why did the seal (and presumably the bale to which it was attached) find its way from Archangel, on the northern coast of Russia, to Mouton?

Fortunately, bale seals from Archangel tend to conform to reasonably standardized formulae.² The Cyrillic text on the Mouton seal can be translated as:

Seal 1, reverse (Fig. 2)

Cyrillic	Meaning	Description
АПХ – БРА	<i>Archangel B[rak]</i>	This is the quality control (brack) mark of the port of Archangel, Russia.
ОТБОРНЫ	<i>Otborni</i> or <i>Otborny</i> – ‘Select’	One of the two grades of flax exported from the port of Archangel, the other being the more commonly encountered КРОНЪ – Kron (Crown) grade. ³ Both are divided into 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd sorts.

¹ Sullivan, J., ‘Lead Seals of Russian Origin in Fife’, *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal*, 6 (2000) 211–27.

² Sullivan, J., *Russian Cloth Seals in Britain: A guide to identification, usage and Anglo-Russian Trade in the 18th and 19th centuries* (Oxbow Books, Oxford, 2011). The Mouton seal from Archangel (reported here as seal no. 1) is included in Sullivan’s catalogue as entry AB01.

³ Sullivan, J., *pers. com.* The author is indebted to Mr John Sullivan of the University of St Andrews (Britain’s authority on Russian bale seals) for translating and explaining the meaning of *Otborny* and for

3·СОРТЪ	3 rd Sort	The sort-quality or grade of the bale. Probably equivalent to the English flax and flax by-products grading term ‘6-head’.
ЕП	E.P.	The initials of the producer.
1846		The date of the quality control assessment and export. ⁴

The obverse of seal 1 (Fig. 3) records:

Cyrillic	Meaning	Description
ДЕСЯ [Т]	abbr. <i>desiatnik</i>	Meaning ‘inspector’ or ‘quality control officer’.
АНДРЕИ [П]РУСКОВ	<i>Andrei [P]ruskov</i>	The name of the inspector (<i>desiatnik</i>), <i>Andrei Pruskov</i> .

The evidence from the seal itself suggests that Russian flax, imported from Archangel, reached Mounton in bale form in 1840. Evidence for trade between the port of Chepstow and Russia is attested by Archdeacon Coxe (1801)⁵ and Manby (1802).⁶ Oliver Chapman (1777–1857) captained one of his own ships to the Baltic and John Chapman of Chepstow was master of the *Venture*, trading to St Petersburg in 1829.⁷

confirming that only three other Archangel seals have been found in Britain that name this grade of flax. Two come from Dorset and remain in private ownership. One from Fife, and now preserved in Kirkcaldy Museum (KIRMG: 2006.209), is very similar to the seal reported here. The Fife seal enabled the missing text to be inferred in the Mounton example. The Fife seal reads:

АРХ – Б	---	ДЕСЯТ
ОТБОРНЫ		АНДРЕИ
3 СОРТЪ		ПРУСКОВ
В.Д.		
1838		

⁴ Mr J. Sullivan reads 1846 rather than 1840. The final digit is more poorly rendered than the others.

⁵ Coxe, W., *An Historical Tour in Monmouthshire* (T. Cadell, Junior and W. Davies, London, 1801) Part the Second: Appendix 16, 360 and 428–31. Deals, hemp, iron, pitch, tar and tallow are cited as imports from the Baltic. Coxe cites a communication from the late Thomas Irving, esq., Inspector General of the Exports and Imports; Paper relative to the Trade of Chepstow (1791–97) but notes that these ‘... do not ascertain the whole extent of the trade as many of vessels which sail from the Wy are not registered at Chepstow’. ‘Mats, Russia’ are listed as a species of goods imported for 1793–4 along with ‘Linen Russia towelling and napkining’ for 1793. Rags are also listed for 1793–4, but without noting their origin. ‘Glazed paper’ was exported in 1794–5. Russian cargoes were carried to Chepstow only on British vessels between 1791 and 1795. Nine British vessels sailed to Chepstow from Russia in 1792. One British vessel exported to Russia in 1793.

⁶ Manby, G.W., *Historic and Picturesque Guide from Clifton* (Bristol, 1802).

⁷ Waters, I., *The Port of Chepstow* (Moss Rose Press, Chepstow, 1977) 45.

The growth of shipbuilding in Chepstow during the late-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century was reflected in the increase in imports of materials including hemp, flax, cables, cordage and sailcloth from Norway and Russia.⁸

Mounton was a centre for papermaking during the late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. The Mounton brook was harnessed to power a number of paper mills within the valley. The paper was made from rope, linen (rags) and flax waste. Waters (1987) cites correspondence between Castle and Co. of Mounton and Long and Charfield of Manchester, dated 4 November 1848, in which it was stated

*the peculiar paper that is used by clothiers is made from rope that comes from Russia and the supply is not only small but very uncertain.*⁹

The seals reported here provide possible archaeological evidence relating to this largely forgotten trade and industry between 1780 and 1846.

Seal 2

A second seal was later found not far from the location of the first. Weighing 10.76g and measuring 21.68mm by 20.52mm (Figs 4 and 5), this seal typifies the (smaller) dimensions of St Petersburg seals. Whilst St Petersburg seals also tend to conform to standardized, often much abbreviated, formulae, they tend to be less detailed with respect to the information on the contents of the bale or bundle that had been sealed than Archangel seals, at least in a form that we can discern.

Seal 2, reverse (Fig. 4)

Latin/Cyrillic	Meaning	Description
S P B	St Petersburg Brak	Latin marks for St Petersburg quality control (brack).
[-]SR[-]	possibly ISRH	Probably an indication of the contents of the bundle and their quality. The first two letters could possibly denote the producer.
1828		Date.

Seal 2, obverse (Fig. 5)

Cyrillic	Meaning	Description
ЛД.	L.D.	These initials precede the name of the Quality Control Officer on St Petersburg seals.

⁸ *Op. cit.* 56.

⁹ Waters, I., *The Mounton Valley Paper Mills Near Chepstow* (Moss Rose Press, Chepstow, 2nd edit., 1987) 30.

[-]: MAC [E]НИ[Н]	[-]. <i>Mas</i> <i>eni[n]</i>	quality control officer. Sullivan suggests the surname Maslenin which is known on a seal from Fife dated from the 1830s (Sullivan, J., <i>pers. com.</i>).
[-]14*		Location code or the code for the pair of tongs used to seal the bale of bundle.

Two further bales seals have subsequently been reported and recorded from Mounton:

Seal 3

Seal 3 measures 22.3mm by 17.5mm and is of uncertain origin. Its general layout and its dimensions suggest that it is possibly an early St Petersburg seal.

Seal 3, reverse (Fig. 6)

Latin/Cyrillic	Meaning	Description
N:P• D.H. 92 1780•		Latin script, initials. Date.

Seal 3, obverse (Fig. 7)

Cyrillic	Meaning	Description
ДД	possibly ЛД (i.e. L D, or meant for it. <i>See</i> seal 2, obverse, above).	
АН[Т]О [Н]ОВЬ 214	Antonov(?)	The name of the Quality Control Officer. The registered number of the sealing tongs used.

Seal 4

A St Petersburg seal measuring 21.2mm by 20.5mm.

Seal 4, reverse (Fig. 8)

Cyrillic	Meaning	Description
СПБ	S P B	St Petersburg Brak – i.e. St Petersburg Quality Control.
ИЕН[?]	Possibly МЕН?	Possibly indicates the nature and/or grade of the bundle or bale.
М•К		Initials of the producer of the goods.
1835		Date.

Seal 4, obverse (Fig. 9)

Cyrillic	Meaning	Description
◦Л:Д•	L.D.	These initials precede the name of the Quality Control Officer on St Petersburg seals.
Д:МАС ЛОБЬ◦ Н89•	D. Mas- lov	Initial and surname of quality control officer. The location of the quality control officer or the registered number of the sealing tongs he used.

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Fig 1. The Mounton bale or bundle seal number 1 showing the remains of its casting sprue at the top of this image and the 'double-lunate' edges (left and right hand sides in this view) resulting from the threads which passed through the seal (horizontally in this view).

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Figs 2, 3. The two inscribed faces of the Mounton bale or bundle seal number 1 showing its Cyrillic text and date. Reverse (left) and obverse (right).



Figs 4, 5. Mounton bale or bundle seal number 2. Reverse (left) and obverse (right).

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Figs 6, 7. Graphite rubbings of Mounton bale or bundle seal number 3. Reverse (left) and obverse (right).
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Figs 8, 9. Graphite rubbings of Mounton bale or bundle seal number 4. Reverse (left) and obverse (right).
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ROBERT FITZ MARTIN AND TREGRUG IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

By Peter Bursey

Introduction

Tregrug is located in the parish of Llangibby on the west side of the river Usk about half way between the towns of Usk to the north and Caerleon to the south. It is noted for the remains of a fourteenth-century castle located in the grounds of the modern 'Llangibby Castle'. The area remained under Welsh control probably until the mid 1090s after which it was given to Robert fitz Martin, a middle ranking West Country baron. This essay looks at three contemporary documents that discuss the circumstances in which Robert might have acquired it and in which he might have relinquished his hold on this estate.

Robert fitz Martin

Robert fitz Martin was a Norman baron who took part in the late eleventh-century conquest of South Wales. He is mainly known as the first Norman tenant-in-chief of Cemais in north Pembrokeshire but also as holding estates in Somerset, Devon and Dorset. Those in Somerset and Dorset he inherited from his mother, Geva the daughter of Serlo de Burci; those in Devon he inherited from his step-father, William of Falaise. Historians have usually dated his tenancy of Cemais from about 1110, the founding of St Dogmael's priory in Cemais to 1113–17, and the raising of its status to that of an abbey in 1120. He fought the Welsh in 1136, supported the Empress Matilda in the early 1140s, made several religious donations throughout his life, and died about 1158.¹

The earliest reference to Robert and Tregrug dates from 1100–07 and is a grant by him of the tithes of the church at 'Treigru' to the abbey of Lonlay in Lower Normandy. This is included within a grant by his mother Geva and step-father William of Falaise of Stogursey church in Somerset and other gifts to Lonlay.² For a long time local West Country historians did not know where this 'Treigru' could be. Most have followed the early nineteenth-century historian William Illingworth who thought it referred to Treguz in Glamorgan.³ Even the editors of the Stogursey charters stated that it was in Glamorgan. It was only in 1989, with the publication by the South Wales Record Society of the Acts of the bishops of Llandaff that this mystery was cleared up when, in a notification by Bishop Uthred (1155–83) to Robert ab Eli, the bishop stated that the church of Llangibby and other gifts (which included tithes from Tregrug), were granted to him by Bishop Urban and that these gifts had been granted to Urban by Robert fitz Martin, lord of that manor and the estate of Tregrug.⁴ This second contemporary document therefore places 'Treigru' in what became Monmouthshire and not Glamorgan and allows us to follow the story of Robert fitz Martin there more easily. Bishop Urban's period as bishop of Llandaff was from 1107 to 1134 so these two

¹ There are about forty contemporary references to Robert fitz Martin which provide an insight into his life. The principal notification of some of these is found in Maxwell-Lyte, Henry, 'Burci, Falaise and Martin', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 65 (1920) 1–27. See also Walker, R.F., 'The lordships of Pembrokeshire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', *Pembrokeshire County History Volume 2 Medieval Pembrokeshire* (Pembrokeshire Historical Society, Haverfordwest, 2002) 151–6.

² Tremlett, T.D. and Blakiston, Noel (eds), *Stogursey Charters*, Somerset Record Society, 61 (1949) 1.

³ Illingworth, William (ed.), *Placita de quo warranto temporibus Edw. I, II and III in curia receptae scaccarii Westm. asservata* (Eyre and Strahan, London, 1818) 172.

⁴ Crouch, David (ed.), *Llandaff episcopal acts 1140–1287* (South Wales Record Society, Cardiff, 1989) 25.

charters now provide a date span for Robert holding this estate. It also helps to explain the reference to Robert fitz Martin in the papal Bull dated 1128 from Honorius II to Bishop Urban in which Robert's name is included in a list of barons who are stated to have despoiled the mother church of Llandaff.⁵ The context of this Bull was fully explained by James Conway Davies in 1946 when discussing the diocesan boundaries between Llandaff and St Davids.⁶ John Reuben Davies in his 1998 article on the *Book of Llandaf* covers much of the same ground when discussing the reasoning behind Bishop Urban's commissioning of the book but he expands the context by including a discussion of the many Norman barons involved.⁷

The prolonged quarrel between the bishops of Llandaff and St Davids which lasted for many years related to the boundaries of their dioceses. To support his arguments Bishop Urban decided to have the *Liber Landavensis (Book of Llandaf)* written in which he claimed that the ancient boundaries of Morgannwg (Glamorgan) corresponded to the boundaries of his diocese. These boundaries contained seven cantrefs, one of which was Gwynllwg and Edeligion adjacent to Tregrug.⁸ Tregrug may have been a part of Edeligion at some point but whether it was in the early twelfth-century is not known: Melville Richards in his standard work on Welsh administrative units says that it was but does not provide any dates.⁹ Robert fitz Martin's name was not included in an earlier list of despoilers dating to October 1119 found in a Bull of Pope Calixtus II to Bishop Urban so perhaps the bishop found out something between then and 1128 that is now lost to us.¹⁰ Bishop Urban did make claims on twenty-four churches in Dyfed although they were outside the boundaries of the diocese of Llandaff but none were in Cemais which would confirm that his interest was in Tregrug and not with Robert's manors elsewhere.¹¹ The end result of Urban's campaigning, including getting the support of the pope by travelling to Rome to see him in person, was that in 1129 Honorius II found in his favour and against the churches of Hereford and St Davids.¹² Once Urban had gained the support of Robert of Gloucester in 1126 and the pope in 1129 it must have been only a question of time as to when the other barons followed suit. It may therefore have been between 1129 and the death of Bishop Urban in 1134 that the abbot of St Dogmaels with the consent of Robert fitz Martin transferred his interest in Tregrug to Llandaf as listed in Bishop Uthred's charter cited above. James Conway Davies thought that this prolonged dispute between the bishops was the most important single incident in the history of the church in Wales in the period between 1066 and 1272.

Apart from the Lonlay and Llandaf charters, there is a third contemporary reference to Robert's lordship of Tregrug. This is in a letter from the abbot of St Dogmael's to the abbot of Torre

⁵ Davies, James Conway (ed.), *Episcopal acts relating to Welsh dioceses 1066–1272 vol. 2* (Historical Society of the Church in Wales, nos 3 and 4, 1948) 624.

⁶ *Ibid. vol.1* (Historical Society of the Church in Wales, no. 1, 1946) 147.

⁷ Davies, John Reuben, 'The Book of Llandaf: a twelfth-century perspective', *Anglo-Norman Studies 21 Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1998* (Boydell Press, 1999) 31–46. On page 43, Davies erroneously says that Robert fitz Martin was lord of Cardigan rather than of Cemais.

⁸ *Ibid.* 35.

⁹ Richards, Melville, *Welsh administrative and territorial units* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1969) 211.

¹⁰ Davies, James Conway (ed.), *Episcopal acts relating to Welsh dioceses 1066–1272 vol. 2* (Historical Society of the Church in Wales, nos 3 and 4, 1948) 616.

¹¹ Evans, J. Gwenogvryn, *The text of the Book of Llan Dav reproduced from the Gwysaney manuscript* (Oxford, 1893) 124 and 254–5.

¹² Davies, James Conway (1948) 625.

abbey in Devon dated 1203.¹³ The abbot of Torre wished to unite the chapel at Cockington with the neighbouring parish of Torre but he could not do this as, almost a hundred years earlier, Robert fitz Martin had given this chapel to the church at Cemais (probably 1113–17 when Robert created a priory at St Dogmael's shortly before he raised its status to that of an abbey). Luckily, the Welsh abbot agreed with this proposed course of action of the Torre abbot but when the latter asked for the original grant made by Robert fitz Martin to be sent to him the abbot of St Dogmael's refused saying that because of the perils of sending it by both land and sea he could not do so. However he did send a copy cited above in which Robert fitz Martin says that he has given to the church of St Mary's of Cemais the church of Treygrut, the church of Rattery and the chapel at Cockington. As it happens the original has not survived but the letter at Torre has so perhaps the Welsh abbot should have taken that risk! The Devon historian Risdon translated Tregrut as Tregent in his Survey of Devon and the historian of St Dogmael's abbey, Emily Pritchard, copied Risdon.¹⁴ It took Henry Maxwell-Lyte to come along in 1919 and correct Risdon's translation.¹⁵ The Torre letter does prove that the original grant made by Robert fitz Martin was still extant in 1203. By the time Robert made this grant to St Dogmael's both his mother and step-father were dead and we can only assume that he discharged his responsibilities to Lonlay by other means.

Gaining possession of Tregrug

The two questions that need to be discussed are: when did Robert gain possession of Tregrug and in what circumstances did he relinquish it? One point to take into consideration is his age. He was probably born around 1080 or certainly not much before then as he lived until c.1158. He would have grown up in Devon as, after his father died, his mother remarried and she and her young son would have gone to live at Dartington, the *caput* of William of Falaise. The Domesday Book for Somerset tells us that Geva and William were married by 1084 so Robert's father 'Martin' must have died by the early 1080s. Fitz Martin would have been required to learn fighting, sporting and hunting skills from an early age and may have been sent to William fitz Baldwin, sheriff of Devon and the most senior Norman knight in the county, to receive his initial knight's training. William was the son of Baldwin fitz Gilbert and the nephew of Richard fitz Gilbert 'of Tunbridge' and 'of Clare', one of the wealthiest men in England.¹⁶ Richard's son Gilbert fitz Richard later became a neighbour of Robert fitz Martin after he was given Cardigan to hold by Henry I and Robert was given Cemais in Pembrokeshire both holding as tenants-in-chief.

After the early death of his father Robert became a baron in his own right and his West Country manors, including those of William of Falaise which he later inherited, were assessed at ten knight's fees in 1162 when the sheriffs of Devon and Somerset had to pay scutage on them.¹⁷ Robert fitz Martin may therefore only have been a teenager when Rhys ap Tewdwr was killed in 1093 which event became the trigger for several Norman incursions into South Wales.¹⁸ Nevertheless Robert may

¹³ Seymour, Deryck (ed.), *The exchequer cartulary of Torre abbey* (Friends of Torre abbey, Torquay, 2000) 438.

¹⁴ Pritchard, Emily, *The history of St Dogmael's abbey* (Blades, East and Blades, London, 1907) 40.

¹⁵ Maxwell-Lyte, Henry, 'Burci, Falaise and Martin' (1920) 9.

¹⁶ Mortimer, Richard, 'The beginnings of the Honour of Clare' in Brown, R. Allen (ed.), *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies III 1980* (Boydell Press, 1981) 119–41.

¹⁷ Sanders, I.J., *English baronies: a study of their origin and descent 1086–1327* (Oxford, 1960) 15, n.4; Maxwell-Lyte, Henry, 'Burci, Falaise and Martin' (1920) 12.

¹⁸ Lloyd, John Edward, *A history of Wales from the earliest times to the Edwardian conquest vol. II* (Longmans, London, 1948) 398.

have accompanied William fitz Baldwin on his campaign into Carmarthenshire where fitz Baldwin established his castle at Rhyd y Gors just south of Carmarthen. The actual extent of fitz Baldwin's control of eastern Dyfed at this point is unknown. It is unlikely that Robert fitz Martin took part in any campaign into Gwent so he may not have been given possession of Tregrug in or around 1093.

The Domesday Book, compiled in 1086, has no mention of Tregrug or Llangibby for either Herefordshire or Gloucestershire. The information there shows that Caerleon was the furthest west the Normans had penetrated into Gwent and there were apparently no estates northwards up the Usk valley.¹⁹ The Herefordshire Domesday says that Thurstin fitz Rolf held eight carucates of land of William Ecouis on the west side of the river Usk and the Gloucestershire Domesday says that Thurstin fitz Rolf held six further carucates beyond the Usk. Recent historians, Paul Courtney and Lynn H. Nelson, have suggested that the northern limit was probably defined by those highlands now known as Wentwood on the eastern side of the Usk.²⁰ Another writer, James G. Wood, claimed that the lordship of Caerleon did include Edeligion, adjacent to Tregrug, but not Tregrug itself but this argument seems to be based on a later list of parishes taken from an Elizabethan document.²¹ The possession of Caerleon by Winebald de Ballon in the mid 1090s is not discussed by Wood which indicates that he had either not seen Round's 1901 analysis of the Ballon family or he did not agree with him.²² Wood's only mention of Winebald is to mention his grant of land at Caerleon to Montacute priory c.1128 which may have been some land 'in the northern part of Caerleon' and in the hands of the lords of Abergavenny.²³ It is therefore to the later Norman expansion into Glamorgan that we need to look to understand how Tregrug came under Norman control.

It is possible that Norman expansion west of the river Usk increased once one of William II's favourites, Robert fitz Hamon, was given the honour of Gloucester. It was fitz Hamon who invaded Glamorgan although the specific date when this occurred is unknown. It could have been soon after he acquired the honour of Gloucester, possibly in the late 1080s, or it could have taken place as late as 1093 during the general Norman invasion of South Wales.²⁴ It is likely that Robert fitz Hamon invaded Glamorgan by crossing the Bristol Channel rather than overland and his forces initially occupied just the lowland regions as they spread westwards towards the Gower. In other words the Normans did not come through Gwent to get to Glamorgan.²⁵ Much of the upland region of Glamorgan away from the coastal fringe would have been distinctly uninviting to an invading force. Following the general Norman invasion of 1093 the Welsh retaliated including in our area of interest of Gwynllwg and Upper Gwent. The Welsh were so successful that a Norman army in Gwent was

¹⁹ Thorn, Frank and Caroline, *Domesday Book Herefordshire* (Phillimore, Chichester, 1983) 185c; Moore, John S., *Domesday Book Gloucestershire* (Phillimore, Chichester, 1982) 162a. This aspect of Norman penetration is discussed by Lynn H. Nelson in *The Normans in South Wales 1070–1171* (University of Texas Press, 1966) 76, and also by James G. Wood in *The lordship, castle and town of Chepstow, otherwise Striguil, with an appendix on the lordship of Caerleon* (Mullock and Sons, Newport, 1910) 69. Another historian, Paul Courtney, discusses this in detail and argues that Norman control was not as widespread in Gwent as previously thought. See Courtney, P., 'The Norman invasion of Gwent: a reassessment', *Journal of Medieval History*, 12 (1986) 297–313.

²⁰ Courtney (1986) 303 and Nelson (1966) 75, the latter referencing Taylor, C.S., 'The Norman Settlement of Gloucestershire', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* (1917) 82.

²¹ Wood, James G. (1910) 72, n. 12.

²² Round, J.H., 'The family of Ballon and the conquest of South Wales' in *Studies in peerage and family history* (London, 1901) 181–215.

²³ Wood, James G. (1910) 73, n. 15.

²⁴ Green, Judith A., 'Robert fitz Hamon', *Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

²⁵ Nelson (1966) 105.

defeated in 1094 at the unlocated Celli Carnant.²⁶ In 1096, William Rufus responded to this upsurge of Welsh resistance and led a major expedition into Wales.²⁷ This may have led to the final Norman takeover of Gwent and is almost certainly when Tregrug finally came under Norman control. It is likely that a contingent from Devon would have formed part of this force against the Welsh, in which case Robert fitz Martin could have participated in this expedition.

J. H. Round believed that the king's entry into Wales was the context for him to give two key fiefs in Gwent to two brothers from Ballon near Le Mans in Maine: Hamelin de Ballon was given Abergavenny and Winebald de Ballon was given Caerleon, the latter replacing the Domesday holder Thurstin fitz Rolf.²⁸ The most likely date for Robert fitz Martin to be given Tregrug is 1096 after the region had been secured by William Rufus. If it had been given to anybody else at this time then it would most likely never have come into the possession of Robert who held it as early as 1100. His fief seems to have separated the two larger Ballon holdings and maybe this was the political context in which the fee of Tregrug came into existence. Hamelin de Ballon granted the church of Abergavenny castle to the abbey of Le Mans at some point between 1100 and 1106 and this grant is therefore comparable to Robert's grant of the tithes from the church at Tregrug to Lonlay abbey made about the same time. This would indicate Norman confidence in being able to make these gifts from newly conquered territories. Part of Winebald de Ballon's extensive holdings lay in Somerset and he made a grant, amongst others, to the Cluniac priory of Montacute in Somerset.²⁹ Robert fitz Martin held around twenty Somerset manors and his wife Matilda Peverel also supported Montacute priory as she founded a cell to it at Carswell in Devon.³⁰

The date of Robert's marriage to Matilda Peverel is unknown but took place between c.1100 and 1118 when she first appears in a charter as his wife.³¹ Henry I may have given Matilda to him together with Cemais in Pembrokeshire which would place the marriage at around 1110. Matilda was the daughter of Ranulph Peverel, the Domesday holder of sixty-four manors located mainly in London and Essex.³² William Dugdale believed her mother may have been a Saxon woman called Ingelrica but modern research has brought to light a document showing Ranulph's wife to be Athelida.³³

Robert may have held Tregrug as a tenant-in-chief and as such would have come to the king's attention. This may have been because of his status as a baron or it may have been because of the service he gave fighting the Welsh. We know that Robert's career went from strength to strength under Henry I and it is likely that Robert displayed good fighting and leadership qualities at an early age.

²⁶ Courtney (1986) 310, referencing Jones, T. (ed.), *Brut y tywysogion: Red book of Hergest version* (Cardiff, 1955) 35.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, referencing Whitelock, D. et al. (eds), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London, 1961) 174.

²⁸ Round, J.H. (1901) 189.

²⁹ Maxwell-Lyte, Henry and Holmes, T.S. (eds), 'Two cartularies of the Augustinian priory of Bruton and the Cluniac priory of Montacute, Somerset', *Somerset Record Society*, 8 (1894) 127.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 171.

³¹ Round, J.H., *Calendar of documents preserved in France* (HMSO, London, 1899) 290, 299.

³² Phillips, T., 'List of charters in the cartulary of St Nicholas at Exeter', *Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica*, vol. 1 (J.B. Nichols, London, 1834) 60–5.

³³ Keats-Rohan, K.S.B., *Domesday People* (Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1999) 355; see also the author's forthcoming article on Matilda Peverel in *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, 2011.

Robert's father 'Martin'

Another factor to take into consideration is that it might not have been Robert fitz Martin who was the first of his family to hold an estate in Gwent: his father, Martin, could have held there before his death possibly even Tregrug itself. Nothing is known of Robert's father other than that he was dead by 1084 at which time Robert's mother, Geva de Burci, had already remarried. There are two reasons for suggesting that Robert was given Tregrug because of his father: the first is hereditary right. For example, the fiefs to the north and south of Tregrug i.e. Abergavenny and Caerleon, were later given to the Ballon brothers who could claim to have had an interest in the estates of Roger of Breteuil, the last earl of Hereford. Their interest followed the marriage of Emmeline de Ballon, daughter of Hamelin, to Reginald fitz Count, son of Roger, earl of Hereford.³⁴ It is possible that William II created Tregrug to act as a buffer zone in between the two large Ballon fiefs and installed Robert fitz Martin as the successor of Robert's father.

The second reason is the date of his father's death. Martin was alive in the late 1070s but dead by 1084 by which date his wife Geva had remarried. In 1081, a battle for the control of South Wales took place at Mynydd Carn between the Welsh ruler Caradog ap Gruffudd, assisted by a Norman force, and Rhys ap Tewdwr assisted by Gruffudd ap Cynan.³⁵ Rhys ap Tewdwr had become the dominant power in south-west Wales after the defeat of Rhys ab Owain by Caradog in 1078. In 1081, the situation was reversed when Caradog was defeated and slain during the battle of Mynydd Carn together with many of his supporters. It is possible that the cause of the death of Martin was that he too was slain in this decisive battle. It was this defeat of Caradog that was the probable cause of King William I travelling to Wales that year to agree a settlement with Rhys ap Tewdwr. William I had been content to see Caradog in control of Gwynllwg, the region on the western borders of Norman control, as a buffer zone between his forces and those of Rhys ab Owain.

Initial Norman expansion into South Wales had taken place between 1067–70 when William fitz Osbern, earl of Hereford built castles at both Monmouth and Striguil (Chepstow). It has recently been argued that fitz Osbern's control over Gwent at this time was more limited than had originally been suggested.³⁶ The first earl died in 1071 and his son Roger of Breteuil inherited the earldom. It was soon after this that Maredudd ab Owain, brother of Rhys, was killed fighting Caradog ap Gruffydd and the Normans. Roger of Breteuil, the second earl of Hereford rebelled against William I in 1075 and as a result of this all his estates reverted to the king. William I did not wish to expand further into South Wales beyond southern Gwent and preferred Caradog to hold the western region of Gwent as a buffer zone between Norman-held land and the Welsh princes of south-west Wales. This understanding remained in place until Caradog's defeat in 1081.

It is possible that Martin already had a stake in the Norman frontier in Gwent or even as a tenant of Caradog in Edeligion or Tregrug. This would have supported Robert fitz Martin's claim to an estate. Martin's early death before the Domesday enquiry took place means we have no way of knowing which estates he may have held but, as he married the daughter of a Norman baron holding twenty West Country manors, it would be reasonable to assume that he was not completely landless or without status.

³⁴ Round, J.H. (1901) 205.

³⁵ Williams, A.G., 'Norman lordship in south-east Wales during the reign of William I', *Welsh History Review*, 16 (1993) 445–66.

³⁶ Courtney, Paul (1986) 297.

The castle at Tregrug

At Llangibby there are today the remains of an early fourteenth-century stone castle which have been described in detail by King and Perks in their 1957 article.³⁷ Near this castle is a site known today as the Bowling Green earthwork and is typical of an early motte and bailey Norman castle (See Fig. 1). The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales have very little in their files on the history of this earthwork other than suggesting it was the forerunner of the stone castle built higher up the hill and visits by them to the site over the years have produced mainly descriptions of the physical layout and condition of the remains. If this was the site of Robert's original fortified home or castle then it would date to around 1096–1107. In appearance it would have resembled very closely the Norman castle at Totnes in Devon, still standing, that Robert fitz Martin was very familiar with while growing up as it was close to his Dartington home. His Tregrug castle would have been abandoned by its later owners after the new stone castle was built higher up the hill.

Trestevan in Tregrug

There is a farm today in Llangibby known as Trestevan farm. It is located a quarter of a mile north of the original Tregrug castle. What is remarkable about this farm is that it has kept the same name for over nine hundred years. It is mentioned in Bishop Nicholas' twelfth-century charter to Robert ab Eli as being part of Robert fitz Martin's estate.³⁸

This farm may have got its name from Robert fitz Martin's steward, Stephen, who witnesses Henry I's confirmation charter of Robert's grants to the abbey at Tiron in 1120.³⁹ He is also likely to be the Stephen of Chameis who witnesses a charter of Gilbert, earl of Hertford's grant of the church of Cardigan to Gloucester cathedral.⁴⁰ This Stephen may also be identified with Stephen the constable of Cardigan castle and the father of Robert fitz Stephen one of the conquerors of Ireland. A trusty man capable of holding his own in a frontier estate could go far in the fluid world of post-conquest Wales. It may have been Stephen who built the first Tregrug castle and also that at Nevern once it became the *caput* of Robert fitz Martin. He would have been the ideal candidate to take on Richard fitz Gilbert's new castle at Cardigan and become its constable. Gerald of Wales implied that Robert fitz Martin held the cantrefs of both Cardigan and Cemais and in the absence of his two lords maybe he did but with the help of this Stephen.⁴¹

Tregrug and St Dogmael's abbey

Once Robert fitz Martin was in possession of Cemais as tenant-in-chief from c. 1110, Tregrug may have claimed less of his time. We know that Robert included the tithes from the church at Tregrug in his gifts to St Dogmael's abbey as well as six acres from Trestevan farm but the entire extent of his gift and the exact date of it are unknown.⁴² The grant does seem to have been made before the priory

³⁷ King, D.J., Cathcart and Perks, J. Clifford, 'Llangibby castle', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 105 (1957) 96–132.

³⁸ Crouch, David (1989) 25.

³⁹ Pritchard, Emily (1907) 47.

⁴⁰ Pritchard, Emily, *Cardigan priory in the olden days* (William Heinemann, London, 1904) 133.

⁴¹ Flanagan, M.T., 'Robert fitz Stephen', *Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

⁴² In 1907, Emily Pritchard stated, quoting the Torre abbey letter, that the original grant took place no later than 1113, that being the date of Robert's visit to Bernard, abbot of Tiron; however, in 1919, Maxwell-Lyte stated in his article 'Burci Falaise and Martin' that Robert paid his visit to Normandy in or shortly before 1117 and he referenced Round, J.H., *Calendar of Documents preserved in France* (HMSO, London, 1899) 35.

was raised to the status of an abbey in 1120 as the church is referred to as the church of St Mary of Cemais rather than as St Dogmael's abbey. Robert made the grant 'for the souls of my parents' indicating that his parents were dead.⁴³ Robert is mentioned in the Bull of 1128 and in Bishop Urban's undated charter so it has to be assumed Robert was in possession of Tregrug throughout the 1120s and as it was the abbot of St Dogmael's and not the prior who granted Bishop Urban land in Tregrug, and as St Dogmael's only became an abbey after 1120, this would confirm the dates of Robert's possession. However it should be noted that Tregrug is not mentioned in Robert's foundation charter of 1120 of which only copies now exist.⁴⁴ This would suggest that Robert fitz Martin's grant of the tithes from the church at Tregrug to the priory had been amended perhaps by Robert's further grants of land in Cemais as described in the 1120 charter. After complying with the papal Bull and the bishop of Llandaff's wishes, St Dogmael's abbey would have been financially worse off but whether Robert compensated them or not with further gifts is not known.

The Clare family take control of Tregrug

Much of Gwent had been parcelled out by William II, and Henry I completed this around 1115 when he gave the lordship of Chepstow (or Striguil as it was then known) to Walter fitz Richard, younger brother of Gilbert 'of Clare' and lord of Cardigan from 1110.⁴⁵ Walter is sometimes called 'of Clare' after his father and older brother but he was not styled this in contemporary documents. It was this Walter who founded Tintern abbey in 1131 and after Henry I died he decided to give his support to King Stephen. In 1138 Walter died, but left no heir and his lands escheated back to the crown. It is not known whether the Clare family held Tregrug in 1115 when they first became the lords of Striguil. If it was part of their new honour and Robert fitz Martin held of them then there is no evidence of this. One indication that Robert probably held Tregrug as a tenant-in-chief directly from the king is that he had the power to decide who received the tithes from the church at Llangibby. In 1957, King and Perks suggested that the whole honour of Striguil covered the area from the Wye to the Usk 'with some territory beyond the river' but this is more or less what Domesday told us in 1086. As they were solely concerned with the fourteenth-century castle remains and not that of the earlier structure, they did not address the issue of twelfth-century ownership in any detail. According to them the first mention of a castle at Tregrug is in 1262–3.⁴⁶

We do know that on Walter fitz Richard's death in 1138, King Stephen gave Striguil to Walter's nephew Gilbert fitz Gilbert, second son of Gilbert of Cardigan, and usually known as Gilbert Strongbow. He also made him the earl of Pembroke.⁴⁷ On the other hand, once Robert fitz Martin had declared for the Empress Matilda (possibly in 1136 but more likely in 1139) it probably signalled the end of his tenure as a tenant-in-chief of the king at Tregrug and elsewhere. Things had not been going well for Robert fitz Martin ever since the death of Henry I in 1135. Robert had been part of the Norman force that was defeated in battle by the Welsh just outside Cardigan in 1136 and his former neighbour and contemporary, Richard fitz Gilbert, lord of Cardigan, had also died that year after being attacked by the Welsh on the road from Abergavenny to Talgarth. Soon after that incident Morgan ab Owain, the son of Owain ap Caradog ap Gruffudd, established control along

⁴³ Pritchard, Emily (1907) 40.

⁴⁴ Later confirmation charters are extant, e.g. Emily Pritchard published an English translation of a 1344–5 confirmation charter, *see* Pritchard (1907) 46. Dugdale has also published a later confirmation charter, *see* Dugdale, William, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 4 (London, 1846) 130.

⁴⁵ Wood, James G. (1910) 12.

⁴⁶ King, D.J.Cathcart and Perks, J. Clifford (1957) 101.

⁴⁷ Wood, James G. (1910) 12; Round, J.H., *Feudal England* (Swan Sonnenschein, London, 1909) 473.

the Usk valley after attacking and gaining control of both castles at Caerleon and Usk. They almost certainly took Tregrug as well.⁴⁸ It would take several years before the Normans would successfully re-establish themselves at Cemais, Cardigan and along the Usk valley.

Gilbert fitz Gilbert remained loyal to Stephen throughout the turbulent years of the civil war between Stephen and the Empress Matilda except for a short period in 1141 and again in 1147.⁴⁹ Being a West Country baron, where the strength of feeling against Stephen was stronger than elsewhere, it is unlikely that Robert was ever fully reconciled to the king. Although it is likely that it was a political decision that lost Robert Tregrug it may simply have been an arrangement between him and the earl of Pembroke to exchange land. The earl wanted to expand his influence over Cemais and after Henry II came to the throne, many claims were finally settled perhaps by negotiated settlement between barons. There is a charter dated 1155 of Henry II confirming Robert in possession of his Somerset manors and there may have been others not now extant which confirmed him in possession of his Welsh estates.⁵⁰ We know Robert had allies in the region as he was a witness to the charter of Empress Matilda dated September 1141 confirming the grant of Miles, earl of Hereford, of Hempstead in Gloucester to Llanthony abbey. Robert's name follows immediately after that of Robert, earl of Gloucester and Brian fitz Count.⁵¹ He also witnessed a second charter of Matilda to Miles in 1141 whereby she grants to him the castle and honour of Abergavenny as a tenant of Brian fitz Count for the service of three knights.⁵² Miles was the son of Walter, constable of Gloucester who had been given Camarthen castle to hold by Henry I around 1109 when the king decided to put new blood there rather than the fitz Baldwin family of Devon who had won it and lost it in the 1090s. By 1155, Robert was well into his seventies and had lived through the reigns of all four Norman kings. Robert's descendants remained as tenants-in-chief at Cemais for several generations but historical records are silent as regards their family and Tregrug. The records that do exist suggest that Robert fitz Martin's role in the history of Gwent only lasted for about forty years from around 1096 to perhaps 1140.

⁴⁸ Crouch, David, 'The Transformation of Medieval Gwent', in Griffiths, Ralph A. *et al.* (eds), *The Gwent County History Volume 2 The Age of the Marcher Lords, c. 1070–1536* (The University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2008) 10.

⁴⁹ Davis, R.H.C., *King Stephen* (Longman, London, 1977) 136.

⁵⁰ Maxwell-Lyte, Henry (1920) 11.

⁵¹ Walker, David, 'Charters of the earldom of Hereford 1095–1201', *Camden Miscellany*, 22 (Royal Historical Society, London, 1964) 13.

⁵² Round, J.H. (ed.), *Ancient charters royal and private prior to A.D. 1200* (Pipe Roll Society, London, 1888) 43.



Fig. 1. Aerial view of earthwork at Llangibby (Tregrug castle).
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STRANGERS AND BROTHERS: LODGERS IN THE WESTERN VALLEYS OF MONMOUTHSHIRE, 1851–91

By Colin Thomas

As the parish clerk, William Elias, made his way through Abercarn in April 1851, performing his duties as census enumerator for part of the hamlet of Mynyddmaen, he could not fail to be aware that many of those whose personal details he was recording for posterity were in every sense members of a transitory population. They were not householders or even relatives of families that had lived in the locality for several generations.¹ On the contrary, they were often merely passing through; by the often hazardous nature of their employment, tragically some were literally here today and gone tomorrow. However diverse their geographical origins, economic and social roles, and individual characters, such individuals found themselves identified in the census schedules as a distinct component of the emerging coalfield communities, namely either ‘lodgers’ or ‘boarders’. From an attempt to recreate a profile of the lodger / boarder, some sharper insights may be gained into the wider industrial society that came to characterize the western valleys of Monmouthshire in the second half of nineteenth century.

Context and documentary sources

Before embarking on that analysis, some clarification may be required concerning terminology, with ‘lodging’ tending to imply basic temporary accommodation, and ‘boarding’ usually denoting the additional provision of meals. In the household schedules, it is far from certain that enumerators, or the respondents themselves, adopted this distinction consistently, some considering the words as being interchangeable, others consciously recognising the practical, as well as semantic, difference.² The latter appears to be case in Mynyddmaen in 1891, where in the dwelling of William Daniel, his wife Emily and their one-year-old daughter, were also recorded two unmarried miners, Tom Knight, a boarder aged twenty-four, born in East Dean, Gloucestershire, and a lodger Joseph Knight (aged twenty-two, and possibly his brother), born in Ruardean.³ The situation is further complicated by the presence in several farming households of individuals sharing the same surname and the same, or nearby, birthplace as the head of the family, yet not specifically entered as a relative, but listed as a visitor, lodger or boarder. For some labourers or farm servants, living with their employers, the possession of a common surname might have been entirely coincidental: others, who clearly were first or second degree kin, had their status similarly described. A few agricultural hauliers or carters could have been permanent residents on larger farms; others may have lodged temporarily or periodically at the beginning or end of a journey, and happened to be registered there on census

¹ Among the problems presented by the census schedules, are the ambiguities arising from the presence of other family members in a household, particularly on farms, where sons or daughters were sometimes designated as lodgers or boarders. When analysing the data for the purposes of this article, care has been taken to identify and include only those who appear not to be related by kinship to the household head or his/her spouse.

² In Clawrplwyf hamlet (ED 1) in 1861, out of a total of forty-four, only seven were described as boarders in contrast to thirty-one lodgers, the remainder having no specific status. In adjacent ED 2, all eighteen were lodgers, whilst in ED 3, boarders numbered fourteen and lodgers twenty-five. In the more heavily industrialized Mynyddmaen hamlet (ED 7) forty out of seventy were boarders, whereas ten years later, their predominance had increased, rising to 111 out of 133.

³ 1891 census Mynyddislwyn ED 8/127. The head of household was also a miner and a Gloucestershire man, from Wallow Green, but his wife and daughter were born in Mynyddislwyn.

night quite by chance.⁴ For the purposes of the analysis underpinning this article, care was taken to exclude, where possible, individuals who were self-evidently or probably family members, for example siblings or elderly widowed parents, despite being officially designated as lodgers, boarders, or indeed visitors.

To establish the scale and significance of the lodger / boarder phenomenon in the general context of economic and social transformation in the vicinity, manuscript household returns were examined for eight enumeration districts which constituted Mynyddislwyn parish at each census from 1851 to 1891.⁵ During that period, the population of the parish, which covered nearly 13,800 acres between the Sirhowy and Ebbw valleys, had increased from 5,996 to 13,445, having been only 1,544 at the time of the first census in 1801.⁶ The second half of the century had also seen a two-fold growth in the number of inhabited houses, built in response to the extra demand for labour in the new and expanding coal mines.⁷ According to evidence contained in the 1851–81 schedules, on average about 17% of all households included at least one lodger or boarder, a figure that rose to 25% in 1891, which meant that for every two of such family units there were three or four non-family members paying for their accommodation. Consequently, whereas in 1851 those identified as lodgers and boarders numbered 329 (equivalent to 5.5 % of all inhabitants), by 1891 their total had reached 1,121, 8.3% of the enumerated population (*See Table 1*). If we accept at face value the designations used in the returns, it seems that during this period the balance between lodgers and boarders gradually but consistently moved towards the latter, and that both became concentrated in four of the eight enumeration districts (*See Table 2*).⁸ Lodgers and boarders personified both a peculiar form of social interaction and, as we shall see later, a special type of population mobility, promoted by five pre-conditions. First, as the British industrial economy flourished under the combined impetus of the discovery and exploitation of new resources, technological innovation, and imperial expansion, there appeared within a relatively short time greater opportunities for more

⁴ For example, in 1861 at Gelligroes. Aneurin Jones, a thirty-eight-year-old married man, with three young daughters, combined his eighty-acre farm with business as a miller and corn merchant. In those enterprises, he employed a female house servant and four co-resident men: a miller from Cardiff, a waggoner from Llanspyddyd (Breconshire), and two carters, one from Bronllys (Breconshire) the other from Brookharp (Gloucestershire). RG 9/4026. Mynyddislwyn, ED 1/187.

⁵ Public Record Office/The National Archives (hereafter PRO/TNA) 1851 HO 107/2453; PRO/TNA 1861 RG 9/4026–7; PRO/TNA 1871 RG 10/5352; PRO/TNA 1881 RG 11/5272–3; PRO/TNA 1891 RG 12/4381–2. The enumeration districts (EDs) were grouped into three hamlets, Clawrplwyf, Penmaen and Mynyddmaen. Schedules for the 1841 census [PRO/TNA HO 107/751] do not provide information on the relationships, if any, of other co-resident individuals to the head of household, with the result that it is rarely possible to distinguish with certainty between family and non-family members. Moreover, at that date, Mynyddislwyn parish was divided into twenty-one EDs which can be re-arranged into the subsequent eight districts for comparative purposes only with some difficulty. Microfilm or microfiche copies were consulted at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. In the following footnotes, the precise sources are referenced by census year, enumeration district number and schedule number. A systematic survey of the content of each census is presented in *Guides to Official Sources, No. 2: The Census of Great Britain 1801–1951* (London, 1951).

⁶ *Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain: 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831* (London, 1831) 169 and subsequent census summary tables.

⁷ Richards, J.H. and Lewis, J.P., 'House Building in the South Wales Coalfield, 1851–1913', *Journal of the Manchester School of Economic & Social Studies*, 24 (1956) 280–301. The study considered sample towns, several of which were in fact located on the coast (Cardiff, Swansea, Newport) rather than in the mining valleys, but the authors commented that 'the building of houses might very well have lagged behind population increase'.

⁸ Clawrplwyf 3 (Pentwynmawr), Penmain 3 (Newbridge and Cwmdows) and Mynyddmaen 1 and 2 (the Ebbw valley from Cwmcarn to Crumlin).

regular employment or higher wages, particularly in neighbourhoods that had hitherto sustained sparse and scattered populations, such as the coalfields. Second, there existed simultaneously a 'surplus population' in the countryside, which was now beginning to experience the double-edged impact of industrialism, through the mechanization of working practices in agriculture and handicrafts that had previously been accomplished by manual, often intermittent or seasonal, labour.⁹ Third, networks of communication, either formal or informal, developed which enabled information about such opportunities to be spread between the two socio-economic *milieux*, while improved transport systems made it increasingly feasible for people to travel further from their place of birth and upbringing as their own horizons of knowledge and ambition broadened. Fourth, at the point of demand for labour, the existing housing stock was as yet insufficient to accept a large-scale inward movement of complete families, but still possessed adequate marginal capacity to accommodate individuals as temporary, and potentially permanent, migrants. Fifth, to these material factors may be added the need of established households to make the most of their own resources, literally their spare room, and a willingness to open their homes to strangers for a financial consideration.

In support of that notion, this study, drawing on evidence from just over 8,000 households and extending over five decades, has discovered only five examples where the main source of income appeared to have been derived from the provision of accommodation for lodgers or boarders. In 1851 at nearby Risca, Maria Banfield, a forty-one-year-old widow with three daughters and a son, was described as a 'lodging house keeper' and kept three unmarried lodgers, all colliers and, like herself, all born in Somerset.¹⁰ In 1891, near the *Royal Oak*, another widow, Emma Preece from Madley, Herefordshire, gave her occupation as 'living by boarders', of whom she had four miners resident at that time, while two of her three teenaged daughters worked at the tinworks.¹¹ In Celynen Row, yet another widow in her forties, Llanidloes-born Jane Rees, had two sons (aged fifteen and twelve) who were both door boys at a colliery, but she was recorded as 'keeping boarders'. Her household displayed greater diversity, since her guests included four unmarried men of rather different backgrounds: one was a Dowlais engineer, the second a haulier from Blaenafon, the third a miner from Breconshire, and the fourth a twenty-one-year-old gardener whose birthplace was Waterford, Ireland.¹² It appears that the numerous hotels and inns in the area did not participate significantly in the accommodating of workers, nor was there any indication that barracks were built to house them, as was the custom elsewhere.¹³

With the exception of this remarkably small number of premises run by forerunners of 'professional landladies', hundreds of lodgers and boarders in Mynyddislwyn inhabited other people's homes, rather than lodging houses *per se*. In the absence of specific data relating to this immediate locality, precisely what contribution they made to individual domestic budgets cannot even be estimated. For Ebbw Vale, two generations earlier than the period discussed here, F. J.

⁹ Thomas, Colin, 'Agricultural Employment in Nineteenth-century Wales: a new approach', *The Welsh History Review*, 6(2) (1972) 143–60; *idem*, 'Seasonality in Agricultural Activity Patterns: Examples from Estates in the Vale of Clwyd, 1815–1871', *Journal of the Flintshire Historical Society*, 26 (1975) 96–113.

¹⁰ 1851/10a/142.

¹¹ 1891/3/131.

¹² 1891/3/334.

¹³ Lowe, J.B., *Welsh Industrial Workers Housing 1775–1875* (Cardiff, 1977) 21 [Halton High Barracks, Chirk]. A similar structure, now demolished, formerly existed to serve the needs of lead miners at Ystumtuen, a remote hamlet in north Cardiganshire. See Lewis, W.J., *Lead Mining in Wales* (Cardiff, 1967) 284–5 and for the slate quarrying district of Snowdonia at the end of the nineteenth century, see Jones, R. Merfyn, *The North Wales Quarrymen 1874–1922* (Cardiff, 1982) 27–30.

Ball has noted that the all-powerful ironmasters obliged their labourers to take lodgers in order to alleviate the housing shortage, and that in the 1790s the charge of between sixpence and one shilling, depending on the quality of the bedding, represented perhaps one-sixth of a labourer's weekly wage.¹⁴ What proportion of a household income that constituted would have depended on the existence of other sources, for instance from the wages of a husband or children, if any, but in the case of widows, such as those cited above, it could well have been critical to their standard of living. However, the attraction of gaining extra cash was offset by the expenditure and effort incurred in providing food and additional services like washing clothes, not to mention the inconvenience of sharing dwelling space that was already at a premium, and the reduction of family privacy.¹⁵

Who were the lodgers and boarders?

To return to the topic of the lodgers themselves, given the nature of employment on the coalfield, it is not surprising that across five successive censuses a consistently high proportion (between 84% in 1881 and 91% in 1871) were adult males, that is aged fifteen and above. In view of that extreme gender imbalance, it could equally have been predicted that the overwhelming majority of lodgers and boarders were unmarried (*See* Table 3). Throughout the period, fewer than one-tenth of the males had wives, who presumably lived at their permanent place of residence, though perhaps waiting to join their husbands and in the meantime saving what they could from remittances sent home, or being maintained by their own relatives. The figure rose by one or two percentage points in 1881 and 1891, possibly suggesting that a slightly more stable family structure was slowly becoming the norm for in-migrants as they achieved relatively greater prosperity and established deeper roots at their chosen destinations. A further 8% to 10% of the adult males were widowed, while children of either sex below the age of fifteen formed less than one in twenty of the decadal totals of lodgers / boarders. Household composition was in fact extremely varied and complex: although most lodgers and boarders may have arrived independently as un-attached males, quite often they congregated in groups of two, three or four in the same dwelling, drawn together by mutual interests in place of origin or type of employment. A very rare example saw two married couples and their infant children as boarders sharing the home of the spinster Mary Ann Davies in Trinant.¹⁶

Demographically, as might be expected, lodgers and boarders were overwhelmingly young and able-bodied. At every census in the second half of the nineteenth century in Mynyddislwyn, between 40% and 49% belonged to the 20–29 age-group, with an additional 12% to 16% being aged 15–19, a figure that steadily increased towards the end of the period (*See* Table 4). Such a trend,

¹⁴ Ball, F.J., 'Housing in an Industrial Colony: Ebbw Vale, 1778–1914' in Chapman, S.D. (ed.), *The History of Working-Class Housing: a Symposium* (Newton Abbot, 1971) 279–300 (283). Rents for good-quality miners' cottages in the Lower Rhondda valley in the 1840s were between two and three shillings per week. *See* Lewis, E.D., *The Rhondda Valleys: A Study in Industrial Development, 1800 to the Present Day* (2nd edit., London, 1963) 182–3.

¹⁵ Information on the number of rooms occupied by a household was not sought until the census of 1891. Generalized results on a registration county basis were published in Appendix E, Table 32, accompanying the *Report of the Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire* (1896). There it was revealed that in Monmouthshire, 27.2% of all tenements had only four rooms, the third highest figure in Wales after Glamorgan and Denbighshire, with a further 20.2% having three rooms or less. In Mynyddislwyn, the data contained in the 1891 household schedules indicate that 42% of tenements had less than five rooms. The average household consisted of 5.5 persons, and rose to six in the most industrialized districts.

¹⁶ 1891/4/141.

disrupted only by the anomalous level of 9% in the problematic 1861 census data,¹⁷ accords well with the belief that more young nuclear families with children were forming part of the later incoming lodger populations, and that their arrivals coincided with, and indeed were stimulated by, the creation of wider job opportunities for females, especially in the manufacturing (tinplate), retailing and personal service sectors of the local economy. Conversely, at the other end of the age spectrum, when a miner's or labourer's working career might be curtailed by accident or work-related ill health, the numbers of lodgers and boarders over the age of sixty seldom exceeded 7% of the total,¹⁸ and were partly made up of widows and widowers whose families had moved on.

Lodgers and boarders in the labour force

Thus far, lodgers and boarders have been considered, as was acknowledged by the census administration, as a distinct sub-category of the population, and we have demonstrated that in terms of their gender, marital status and age composition many did indeed possess several pronounced common characteristics that may have marked them out as being somewhat different from the generality of their neighbours. It remains to be shown whether or not they displayed similar badges of separate identity in the realms of occupations, kinship and social relations, and geographical origins.

Economically, precisely what shortages in the local labour supply did lodgers help to fill? In a parish where coal mining was already the largest single employer, on average between 1851 and 1871 colliers / miners formed 27% to 31% of all lodgers and boarders, a figure that increased to nearly 35% and then 47% by 1881–91 as the larger-scale deep pits in the Ebbw valley came into full production.¹⁹ When ancillary workers, such as sinkers, underground timber men, colliery labourers and hauliers, ostlers, overmen and firemen, door boys, engine drivers and stokers are taken into account, the industry employed up to 60% of lodgers towards the end of the century. No great leap of imagination is necessary to accept that exploitation of coal was the primary reason why hundreds of young men were attracted to the grimy terraced settlements of western Monmouthshire at this time, despite the fact that both working and living conditions may have been physically more harsh than they had previously known.

To emphasize the predominantly unskilled nature of available jobs, the second type of employment most frequently taken up by lodgers, though on a much smaller scale, was in agriculture, quarrying or general labouring (*See Table 5*).²⁰ In local farming, the pastoral orientation of residual pre-industrial farm holdings on the plateau tops offered few opportunities for permanent, or even casual, work that could not be met by the owner's or tenant's family and the help of relatives and neighbours. As for the Pennant sandstone quarries that pock-marked the valley slopes, with few

¹⁷ Microfilmed copies of the 1861 census produced by the former Public Record Office, London, occasionally suffer from omissions of whole pages of the original manuscripts, a problem that was encountered in Mynyddislwyn's ED 5 (part of Penmain) and more severely in EDs 7–8 (Mynyddmaen).

¹⁸ The exception, again, concerns the 1861 results, where the 11.8% figure may be the outcome of distortion attributable to incomplete data.

¹⁹ John Elliott maintains that deep mining did not begin until 1836–46 at Abercarn and Ebbw Vale, and culminated in the sinking of the North Celynen colliery shaft in Newbridge to a depth of 1,550 feet in 1921. *See The Industrial Development of the Ebbw Valleys 1780–1914* (Cardiff, 2004) 28–30 and 49.

²⁰ In the overwhelmingly agrarian context of four parishes in coastal Gwent, Robert Gant has noted that 78% of male lodgers were employed in agriculture in 1851, and that in 1861, the figure was still 62%. *See Gant, R.L., 'Socio-Economic Structures in South-East Monmouthshire 1851–1861', Presenting Monmouthshire*, 33 (1972) 14–29 (22).

exceptions their need for workmen tended to fluctuate with cycles of house construction, which in turn reflected the prosperity of mining and tinplate manufacturing, and was at best intermittent and at worst quite short-lived.²¹ Nevertheless, interesting examples occur which pinpoint the significance of occupational factors in linking lodgers and their hosts. In Abercarn in 1851, John Davies, a stone mason, originally from Bassaleg, plied his trade alongside his twenty-one-year-old son David, who had been born in Bedwellty. Together with the family, which included John's wife and their four younger children, the household included two other stone masons as lodgers, Henry Jones from Usk, and John Price, a married man from Crickhowell, whose wife was not with him.²² The case neatly illustrates both the diversity and spatial mobility that could arise when specialist skills combined with information flows about their demand to create a complex social unit under one roof. Not far away, the butcher Robert Jones, born in Halkin (Flintshire) and his wife, a native of Ystradyfodwg in the Rhondda valley, had two mineral sinkers as lodgers, one also from Flintshire, the other from Montgomery.²³ Living next door was Edward Jones of Llantrisant, yet another sinker, who maintained three lodgers with the same occupation, two from Flintshire and one from Denbighshire.²⁴ In the absence of further evidence, we can only speculate that the four men from north-east Wales had come at the behest of Robert Jones, or at least in the knowledge that jobs were available, and that he and his neighbour were willing to provide acceptable accommodation. Similar occupational and regional bonds may have brought together the three Irishmen and a Scot who in 1881 worked as coke burners for the contractor John Norris, for both he and his wife were Irish by birth.²⁵

As urban society matured and opportunities broadened from basic mineral extraction into higher levels of local service provision, apprentices and assistants could be found boarding in the homes of blacksmiths, carpenters, grocers, drapers, shoemakers, and other craftsmen and shopkeepers as they learned their trades. The two phases of socio-economic development co-existed in 1851 at the home of Thomas Wilkins in Chapel Row. Wilkins himself had migrated from Llangydeyrn, Carmarthenshire, became a coal miner and married a woman from Risca, where their first daughter had been born.²⁶ Probably in order to boost a meagre wage and support a growing family, they had offered room to three teenaged lodgers, all shoemakers, from Mynyddislwyn, Dyserth (Radnorshire) and Charlton (Wiltshire). The more archaic term 'cordwainer' was still adopted by the master craftsman, Isaac Morgan from Llanfrechfa, and two of his employees who lodged with him.²⁷ The making of durable footwear and clothing constituted a standard and ubiquitous need in all communities, but at mid-century the age of mass production had yet to reach many consumers in this part of South Wales. While woollen textile manufacture continued to supply the raw material in the locality,²⁸ for example from Pendarren and two small factories in Abercarn, demand for flannel

²¹ Caerllwyn quarry, situated on the eastern flank of the Sirhowy valley was active from the later 1830s and Cox's quarry, opposite Crosskeys, from the 1850s. See Burland, Len, *A Historical Tour around Mynyddislwyn Mountain* (Abertillery, 2002) 209–20.

²² 1851/2A/109.

²³ 1851/2A/141.

²⁴ 1851/2A/142.

²⁵ 1881/3/115–9.

²⁶ 1851/2A/26.

²⁷ 1851/2A/92.

²⁸ At Pendarren, Clawrplwyf, Thomas Lewis provided lodgings for three fellow wool weavers, two spinners and an unemployed spinner, variously drawn from his home village of Eglwysilan (Glam.), Llangybi (Mon.), Crickhowell (Brecks.), Aberystwyth (Cards.) and Frome (Somerset). See Burland, *op.cit.* 229–30.

shirts and outer garments still sustained numerous independent tailors, such as the three men who lived with the gardener James Davies, his wife and their dressmaker daughter.²⁹

In coal mining, traditionally associated with strong inter-personal bonds that were generated by teamwork in difficult conditions, and in handicrafts, where specialist tools, equipment, and knowledge could be shared, residential clustering of those who practised a common occupation or trade was not unusual among lodgers / boarders, as it was generally among migrants in larger cities throughout Europe. Commonality of background, too, was a source of cohesion, which could exhibit any one of several forms, or indeed combinations of them. In some cases, kinship might be paramount. Not infrequently, in all the censuses and in all enumeration districts, there appear examples of fathers and sons, or brothers, nephews and cousins, sharing accommodation as boarders or lodgers,³⁰ while daily engaged in the same work, particularly as miners. In Fleur de lis in 1871, the colliers Daniel Foster, a widower, and his son Richard, boarded with the smith John Morgan, quite probably because the older men had known each other in earlier days at their birthplace, Llantwit Fardre.³¹ In 1881, the three Greenaway brothers, miners from Glamorgan, boarded with Mary Adams at Highland Place, Abercarn, and one can only imagine the overcrowded conditions they shared with her six young children, and another boarder, who was a colliery haulier.³² Sibling solidarity became all the more important when migrants travelled greater distances in search of better livelihoods, as in the case of the bachelor brothers Albert (aged 21), Thomas (19) and Charles Dicks (18), who had moved from Wiltshire to take up work at the Abercarn tinworks and lodged together at 26 Station Street.³³ From a similar rural setting, the brothers William and Joseph Candy, labourers from Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, boarded in Abercarn with George Cross, a native of Frome, Somerset.³⁴ Even when born locally, it must have been reassuring for thirteen-year-old Daniel Harris to have the help and protection of his seventeen-year-old brother Thomas when they boarded as miners at Ton tyr bel, Trinant, in 1881.³⁵

After all the examples given above, a corrective note may be necessary to refine the impression that lodgers and boarders were exclusively involved in primary industrial activities.³⁶ Mention has already been made of the presence of small-scale flannel manufacturing, and of craftsmanship that served both the surviving agricultural community and a broader population. As the century drew to a close, embryonic groups of shops could be encountered along the main streets of several villages. Intermingled with Mill Cottage, Colliers' Row, Tinworks Terrace, Canal Row, Railway Terrace and Station Street, settlement nomenclature also began to embrace Truck Row, Shop Row and Commercial Street. Each implied that the employment potential of the district was gradually becoming more diverse and entering the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy. Simultaneously, although the professions were relatively slow to take root, the weak numerical

²⁹ 1851/2A/106. Two more tailors, from Cardiganshire, were among six lodgers housed by Richard Richards, an Aberystwyth-born miner, together with two fellow miners and two stone masons. *See* 1851/2A/193.

³⁰ In 1891, among 218 male lodgers and boarders in ED 7 alone, at least sixteen pairs of brothers have been identified.

³¹ 1871/1/79.

³² 1881/3/421.

³³ 1881/3/315.

³⁴ 1871/7/197. In the schedule, the county was incorrectly stated as Dorset. It is unlikely that the name was intended to refer to the Frome valley in that county.

³⁵ 1881/4/59. A similar fraternal bond must have existed between Bristol-born miners Richard and George Ralph, aged twenty-six and thirteen respectively. *See* 1891/7/303.

³⁶ Whereas in 1851, lodgers and boarders could be found in fifty-seven different occupations, in 1891, they were employed in 118.

significance of their practitioners was far outweighed by their long-term cultural impact, and in this sphere, too, the contribution of lodgers and boarders should not be overlooked. In an aggregate population of 6,000 in 1851, there were only a dozen ministers of religion, eight schoolmasters, two surveyors, one doctor, an accountant, a policeman and an attorney. By 1891, the spiritual needs of the 13,000 inhabitants of Mynyddislwyn were served by thirty clergymen of various denominations, while elementary education was provided by sixty-four schoolmasters and mistresses (including thirteen pupil teachers), and their medical requirements were met by five general practitioners and two surgeons.

Cultural elements

In view of the meagre public amenities available in these early industrial villages, the majority of people with such aptitudes and skills inevitably received their training elsewhere, with the result that many were in-migrants, or sometimes returnees, and by the very nature of their vocations and origins they brought new perspectives and values to communities that had previously been quite isolated from mainstream economic and social trends.³⁷ Outside the formal territorial structures of the Established Church, and working among dispersed congregations, many nonconformist ministers adopted an almost peripatetic way of life, in which irregular preaching commitments blended with more sedentary secular occupations.³⁸ Consequently, in 1841, one of the earliest clergymen to be recorded in the census schedules was a forty-year-old bachelor Moses Ellis, Independent minister at New Bethel chapel, who lodged with the widowed shopkeeper Margaret Harries at Tontirgarw, Pentwynmawr.³⁹ By 1851, still holding the same appointment and living at the same address, he had married, become head of a household and father of a nine-month-old daughter.⁴⁰ Ten years later, Revd Ellis was noted as being absent from home, with his place of birth being given as Treffynnon (Holywell), Flintshire, whereas in 1851, it had been stated as Denbighshire.⁴¹ Towards the end of the century, broader influences may be inferred from the fact that 70% of all the religious leaders were bilingual, 60% came from the other five South Wales counties (the largest numbers having been born in Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire) and all but three were Welsh-speaking.⁴²

With regard to school teachers, in 1841–51 fewer than half were females, but from 1861 onwards young women, many of them from humble origins and born locally in north-west Gwent,

³⁷ Before the opening of Bangor Normal College and Trinity College, Carmarthen, trainee teachers for British schools originally attended the college at Borough Road, London. See Jones, Idwal, 'The Voluntary System at Work. A Chapter in Welsh Education: Based on Unpublished Material', *Trans Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion*, (1931–2) 72–146. In 1851, the teachers at Sir Thomas Phillips' Cwrt y bela colliery school were Thomas Worsfold, originally from Gloucestershire, and his wife, Susan, a Londoner, who had both previously been employed in Lincolnshire and Kent. See 1851/6/72. For Cwrt y bela, see Evans, Leslie Wynne, *Education in Industrial Wales 1700–1900: A Study of the Works Schools System in Wales during the Industrial Revolution* (Cardiff, 1971) 173–8 and 192.

³⁸ For example, John Davies of Bassaleg gave his occupation as mason and Baptist preacher (see 1861/7/206); James E. Rees, a visitor from Newcastle Emlyn, combined his pastoral duties as a Calvinistic Methodist minister with work as a carpenter (see 1871/1/121); David Lewis, a lodger who was born in Llantrythid, Glamorgan, was employed as a gardener when not acting as a Baptist preacher (see 1881/8/82).

³⁹ 1841/10/43.

⁴⁰ 1851/3/79.

⁴¹ 1861/3/191. Since the name of Moses Ellis' wife was Margaret, and her age agrees, we may presume that she was his former landlady.

⁴² In total, only 22% of lodgers and boarders were Welsh-speakers in 1891.

became much more prominent.⁴³ Two such were Ann (24) and Eunice Edwards (22), two of the ten children of Daniel and Mary Edwards of nearby Rhyswg farm.⁴⁴ Similarly, further up the Ebbw valley in Crumlin, three of the stationmaster's daughters, Edith (21), Caroline (19) and Mabel Mann (15) were teachers.⁴⁵ Of the lodgers and boarders employed in education, most had migrated longer distances to take up positions in Mynyddislwyn schools, for example from Carmarthen, Llanbrynmair (Montgomeryshire), Gloucestershire, Weston super Mare, and Cheshire, though precisely how and why they chose their particular destinations is not known. In modern academic literature on population migration, the term 'career transients' has been coined to apply to those whose decisions to change their place of residence were likely to be, at least in part, outside their own control. Members of different professions directly related to industrial expansion occasionally had less choice in where they lived and worked, in the sense that their employers could require them to move to specific locations for the duration of a particular contract. The architect's apprentice William Beacham,⁴⁶ and civil engineer William Morgan,⁴⁷ would have been fully aware that their respective employers and organizations might exert considerable influence on their geographical mobility during their careers, as would the excise officer James Roberts,⁴⁸ assistant surgeon Thomas Moffat,⁴⁹ and doctor James Rogers,⁵⁰ until such times as their experience, successful reputation or good fortune allowed them to set up independent practices. Equally, individuals or small groups who brought lighter, more colourful moments to the drab routine of valley life made intermittent appearances, sometimes captured by the census. In mid-April 1891, the Cork-born actor Edmund O'Gardy [O'Grady?] and his actress wife Clara lodged with the engine driver Thomas Herbert at his four-roomed cottage in Colliery Row, Abercarn,⁵¹ probably sharing the stage with the actresses Ella Vane from Manchester and Lettie Hentworth from Islington, lodgers with another engine driver in Mount Pleasant.⁵² Their performances were almost certainly linked to those of W. Turner Sargent and his Australian wife Ada, themselves among six guests at the home of tinplate worker Thomas Colebrook,⁵³ and a pianist and an actor who boarded at the *Forge Hammer*.⁵⁴ The whole series of events, including appearances by two comedians, seem to have been co-ordinated by a visiting

⁴³ In 1891, 70% of local teachers were female. The complex relationships between religion, politics and the Welsh language in schools are considered in Southall, J.E., *Wales and her Language* (London, 1893) chap. 6. The specific case of Mynyddislwyn, where Welsh was introduced into schools after a very large majority of parents voted in favour of a referendum, is referred to in Smith, Robert, 'Elementary Education and the Welsh language 1870–1902' in Jenkins, Geraint H. (ed.), *The Welsh Language and its Social Domains 1801–1911* (Cardiff, 2000) 497.

⁴⁴ 1881/7/47 and 1891/7/41. Daniel Edwards had died some time before 1891, since Mary was recorded then as a widow and head of the household.

⁴⁵ 1891/6/177. Their father, George Mann, hailed from Ilminster, Somerset, but had previously worked in Maindee (where he met his wife), Pontypool and Abersychan.

⁴⁶ 1891/7/300.

⁴⁷ 1851/4/51.

⁴⁸ 1851/4/84. Roberts was born in Sutton, Nottinghamshire.

⁴⁹ 1891/7/50. Moffat, born in Glasgow, boarded with an engine fitter.

⁵⁰ 1891/7/423. Rogers, another Scot, was born in Forfar.

⁵¹ 1891/8/203.

⁵² 1891/8/292. Also in this four-roomed cottage lived a third lodger, a stone mason from Herefordshire, a married man unaccompanied by his wife.

⁵³ 1891/8/352. The others were a Somerset miner, his wife and infant daughter, and an unmarried boarder, a shoemaker from Ebbw Vale.

⁵⁴ 1891/7/22. Pianist Edwin Leslie was from Malmesbury (Wilts.) and actor Henry Burningham from Stratford, Essex. Both were married, but their wives were not with them.

theatrical manager, Harrold Entruck, from the unlikely setting of the ‘*gwesty dirwestol*’ (temperance hotel) on Market Square, run by John and Margaret Harris.⁵⁵

Geographical origins

Finally, is it possible to identify the regional origins of lodgers and boarders, and, if so, might that help to explain why they came to Mynyddislwyn and neighbouring parts of western Monmouthshire? The answers to both of those questions are made more difficult by the vagaries of the documentary sources. A fundamental handicap is the paucity of first-hand accounts of their lives, either oral or written, by the people themselves.⁵⁶ As for the nineteenth-century census household schedules, the key component clearly is the column headed ‘county and parish of birth’, from which collated data have usually been used as bases for reconstructing general patterns of lifetime migration.⁵⁷

From a spatial point of view, an analysis of lodgers’ and boarders’ places of birth yielded three main groupings (See Table 6). First, intra-parochial movement, which represented 17.6% of lodgers’ experience in 1851, implies that, for some workers, alternative job opportunities were situated too far from home to enable them to travel daily, usually on foot. To that figure may be added 8.6% of lodgers / boarders who were drawn from contiguous parishes.⁵⁸ Consequently they were obliged to become involved in a short-distance type and phase of mobility, intermediate between commuting to work and longer-distance permanent migration. In doing so, they had the advantage of better-paid employment in industry, while maintaining fairly close links with their familiar social environments and domestic ties by regular visits at weekends. Second, extending over greater distances (of about fifty or sixty miles), lodgers and boarders whose ultimate places of origin lay in other counties in Wales, predominantly Glamorgan and to a lesser extent south Breconshire, amounted to 35% of

⁵⁵ 1891/8/370. Harris, a cobbler, had been born in Llancynfelin, north Cardiganshire, and his wife in nearby Dolau, but both of their young children were born in Abercarn. In the cultural context of the census, this schedule is unusual in Mynyddislwyn in that the family’s details were completed in Welsh, although their guests on this occasion were English.

⁵⁶ For this locality, the notable exception is *Man of the Valleys: The Recollections of a South Wales Miner*, edited by Mary Paget (Gloucester, 1985). The classic account remains Coombes, B.L., *These Poor Hands: The Autobiography of a Miner Working in South Wales* (London, 1939/Cardiff, 2002).

⁵⁷ The premise is that the geographical discrepancy, if any, between a person’s place of birth and place of residence at the time of any subsequent census is a valid surrogate for the migration experience of that individual during the intervening period. However, birthplace alone – even if it is correctly given, and we have seen that successive statements may differ – may not necessarily reflect accurately the place of upbringing and adolescence, which in turn will have been conditioned by parental decisions. Moreover, the longer the person’s lifespan, the greater the probability of multiple moves which may not be recorded fully by the episodic nature of the censuses. Above all, lifetime migration is not a reliable measure of the distance travelled between sequential steps in the chain migration process. For the specific case of lodgers, smaller scale generalization concerning possible intermediate moves is further hampered by the fact that their comparative youth and unmarried status means that little or no evidence is available about places of birth of their children, which under other circumstances might indicate temporary staging posts on their journeys towards Mynyddislwyn. Another general flaw in the evidence is that some enumerators, although required to record the person’s parish of birth, often merely entered the county, and quite frequently that was incorrect.

⁵⁸ Aberystroth, Bedwas, Bedwellty, Henlllys, Llanhilleth, Machen and Risca. For the first-named, see Jones, Edmund, *A Geographical, Historical and Religious Account of the Parish of Aberystroth* (Trevecka, 1779; reprinted Cowbridge and Bridgend, 1988).

the total, with the result that approximately three-quarters came from the principality.⁵⁹ No doubt, many would have already acquired some familiarity with the routine and discipline, as well as the living conditions, that accompanied industrial employment, for example in the coalfield villages of Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire,⁶⁰ or the semi-rural lead-mining districts of Cardiganshire.⁶¹ Others, like the shoemakers, tailors and flannel weavers, despite coming from the same counties, may have been quite unprepared for their new surroundings and adapted to them only with difficulty. Under such circumstances, it was natural that, in searching to find work and accommodation, they should seek help from those who had gone before them. Third, a catchment area of similar dimensions took in the English border counties on both sides of the Severn estuary, from which commercial ties with South Wales had long been established through the city of Bristol. There, too, men from the Forest of Dean and the Somerset coalfield brought expertise from older mining traditions that were now in decline and had to be replaced by an understanding of the different techniques and an appreciation of greater dangers in deep-pit mining. For others, geographical mobility and employment shifts were inter-related options in escaping the uncertainties of life in agriculturally depressed regions in the 1870s and 1880s.⁶²

Beyond those three realms, lay a fourth outer sphere of contact, which encompassed not only the remainder of the British Isles but also a few overseas sources, including France, Germany, the United States of America, Puerto Rico and Australia (See Table 6). Its very existence and its increasing importance demonstrate how the coalfield valleys of Monmouthshire became articulated with a wider world, not only through their products but also through their people. By the 1890s, the overwhelming majority of lodgers and boarders could be regarded as ‘non-local’, in the sense that they had been born outside the county, and inevitably their diverse backgrounds and individual circumstances brought new elements of qualification and motivation, personal beliefs and cultural *mores*, conflicting attitudes towards their host communities, and contrasting levels of commitment to long-term residence.

In the process of relocation, it is well known that migrants adopt widely differing strategies in trying to obtain information about alternative opportunities, and that these may be broadly classified into formal and informal methods. Where literacy is widely developed, a supposedly rational, quasi-objective search for information may be conducted, for instance, by scanning newspaper advertisements for job vacancies in a specific trade and location, and matching the results with details of working conditions, wages, cost of living, and housing quality. Conversely, where means of mass communication are not accessible, greater emphasis may be placed on casually acquired news or speculation, transmitted by word of mouth between relatives or acquaintances whose knowledge or opinion may be valued, though not necessarily totally reliable. Separated from their

⁵⁹ With the exception of Cardiganshire, however, the counties of Mid and North Wales contributed comparatively few to the influx. The north/south divide is partly explicable by the principle of ‘distance decay’ (i.e. the greater the distance between places, the less interaction between them), and partly by the existence of alternative opportunities for the rural underemployed of those counties, e.g. in the Anglesey copper mines and smelters, Caernarvonshire and Merioneth slate industries, Montgomeryshire lead mines, the mines and quarries of Denbighshire and Flintshire, and the kaleidoscope of industries on Merseyside and the Lancashire coalfield. See Dodd, A.H., *The Industrial Revolution in North Wales* (Cardiff, 1951).

⁶⁰ Price, M.R. Connop, *Pembrokeshire: The Forgotten Coalfield* (Ashbourne, 2004).

⁶¹ Lewis, W.J., *op.cit.* especially 170–204.

⁶² Perry, P.J. (ed.), *British Agriculture 1875–1914* (London, 1973) especially 129–48; Howell, David W., *Land and People in Nineteenth-Century Wales* (London, 1977) 93–111; Thomas, D. Lleufer, *The Welsh Land Commission: A Digest of its Report* (London, 1896).

own families by considerable distances, workers from rural Hereford, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Wiltshire, Devon and Cornwall welcomed contacts with people from their home districts, and quite often could be found lodging with householders who shared their place of birth, and may well have been known to each other before they moved. In Trecelyn [Newbridge] an illustration of this 'friends and neighbours effect' may be inferred in the case of five unmarried Gloucestershire-born boarders living with a bachelor and his widowed mother from Cinderford.⁶³ Similarly, in the same locality, the miner Mark Rossiter and his wife Elizabeth, both from Wedmore, Somerset, had six children, yet still managed to find space in their house for a boarder and a visiting domestic servant from their home village.⁶⁴ Such connections, whether causal or coincidental, gave rise to so-called currents or streams of migration between particular places, identified in the universally acknowledged pioneer studies of population movement in the nineteenth-century by the statistician E. G. Ravenstein.⁶⁵

Conclusions

On criteria of gender, age and marital status, lodgers and boarders clearly stood apart from the generality of inhabitants of the Monmouthshire valleys, and probably other parts of the South Wales coalfield in the later-nineteenth century. Untrammelled by economic anchors of owning fixed property, or responsibilities to wives and children, they may have been regarded – and possibly saw themselves – as free agents in the labour market, thereby contributing substantially to a high turnover of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in basic industries. It is also conceivable that their presence added to elements of social instability and political turbulence which periodically surfaced in these emerging communities.⁶⁶ After all, they were separated by necessity or design from environments that had fundamentally influenced their early lives, not least from family and friends who might have exerted some restraint on their behaviour. At source, their departure, whether temporary or permanent, may have enfeebled or fragmented socio-economic structures and relationships, while at destination the whole process of resettlement must have provided multiple challenges that not all could overcome.

Although they were in several senses outsiders, strangers, indeed often foreigners, to the industrial villages in which they lived for varying periods, lodgers and boarders were, nevertheless, frequently bound to each other by place of birth, kinship, friendship, aspirations or necessity, all

⁶³ 1891/3/499. In addition to three miners, one of whom hailed from Cinderford and the other two from Blakeney, there was a carpenter from Cheltenham and a labourer from Cirencester. The household included the head's niece, a scholar aged twelve, and nephew aged eleven, described as an ironworker, born in Cinderford and Westbury on Severn, respectively.

⁶⁴ 1891/3/453. The children were all born in Newbridge, and since the eldest was nine years old, it would seem that the couple had moved there when their mother was only eighteen. No family with the surname Rossiter has been discovered in the 1881 census schedules for Mynyddislwyn.

⁶⁵ Ravenstein, E.G., 'The Laws of Migration', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 48 (2) (1885) 167–227 (198). Using the 1871 and 1881 published census data, Ravenstein's 'Laws' were primarily interpretations of inter-county movements, although he did appreciate that, beneath that formal administrative framework, considerable mobility occurred between adjacent settlements within the same county or across its borders, sometimes producing misleading aggregate results. He also noted that variations at this scale could occur as a consequence of contrasts between the size of counties and the configuration of their borders. The same caveat obviously applies at parish level.

⁶⁶ The Chartist march, in which residents of Mynyddislwyn played a prominent part, was firmly in the living memory of many inhabitants during the period discussed here. See Jones, David J.V., *The Last Rising: The Newport Insurrection of 1839* (Oxford, 1985) especially chap. 4. For a vivid contextual analysis of another outbreak of civil unrest that occurred only eight years earlier and little more than a dozen miles away, see Williams, Gwyn A., *The Merthyr Rising* (Cardiff, 1988) 34–71 ('Merthyr in 1831').

potentially sustained by information networks that may have been already exploited before or during their journeys. Simultaneously, newcomers were also becoming linked, by residence and employment, to other members of their host communities.⁶⁷ If some roots were being loosened, others were gaining strength. At a superficial level lodgers and boarders may be categorised as a separate group, but in reality they shared most aspects of their neighbours' economic and social activities, the toil and dangers, as well as the financial benefits of everyday life in the western valleys of Monmouthshire. At work, they adapted to new routines, acquired new skills, or brought their own expertise in environments that other migrants shunned or feared. In leisure, they patronized the same shops, frequented the same taverns, attended the same churches or chapels, joined in the same local events as those of their new colleagues. Far from completely relinquishing earlier links, they continued to visit their parental homes on holidays and special family occasions, for example to celebrate the births of their own children. For the future, despite the gradual improvement of communications, perhaps inevitably, longer distance ties and more tenuous relationships became less dominant. Many lodgers and boarders who first appeared in the census documents as temporary residents intermarried with indigenous or earlier migrant families, eventually created a new identity for themselves, and became fully integrated into their adopted communities.

⁶⁷ In contrast, a solitary piece of evidence hints that not all families keeping lodgers or boarders knew, or cared very much, about their backgrounds. Alfred and Jane Robinson, originally from Tredegar, housed five miners as boarders, and declared their respective ages, but when it came to responding on their behalf to the census question concerning place of birth, the answer in each case was 'don't know' (1891/3/361).

Year	Population	Inhabited Houses	Lodger Households	%	Total Lodgers	% Population	Average
1851	5996	1169	198	16.9	329	5.5	1.7
1861	6457	1302	215	16.5	310	4.8	1.4
1871	7126	1402	275	19.6	446	6.3	1.6
1881	8827	1730	293	16.9	418	4.7	1.4
1891	13445	2421	606	25.0	1121	8.3	1.8

Table 1. Mynyddislwyn: population, inhabited houses and lodgers, 1851–91.

Year\ED	CLAWRPLWYF			PENMAIN			MYNYDDMAEN			%
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	N	
Lodgers	42	35	22	25	13	21	166	5	329	100
Boarders	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1851	42	35	22	25	13	21	166	5	329	–
Lodgers	31	18	25	31	27	22	28	6	188	60.6
Boarders	7	–	14	18	7	18	40	–	104	33.5
Not stated	6	–	–	1	–	2	4	5	18	5.8
1861	44	18	39	50	34	42	72	11	310	–
Lodgers	7	16	61	29	12	69	22	–	216	48.4
Boarders	24	1	21	9	3	18	111	41	228	51.1
Not stated	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	–
1871	31	17	82	38	15	87	133	43	446	–
Lodgers	3	26	85	14	4	–	23	41	196	46.9
Boarders	26	36	35	7	8	54	17	39	222	53.1
1881	29	62	120	21	12	54	40	80	418	–
Lodgers	17	12	1	24	13	97	114	143	421	37.6
Boarders	18	13	297	38	24	105	123	82	700	62.4
1891	35	25	298	62	37	202	237	225	1121	–

Table 2. Mynyddislwyn: lodgers and boarders by enumeration district, 1851–91.

Year	Lodger Households	N	Adult Males	Marr.	Unmarr.	Wid.	Adult Females	Children	Miners
1851	198	329	281*	31	215	24	33	15	100
% of Total			85.4				10.0	4.6	
% of Male Lodgers				11.0	76.5	8.5			35.6
1861	215	310	276	28	208	40	17	17	82
% of Total			89.0				5.5	5.5	
% of Male Lodgers				10.1	75.4	14.5			29.7
1871	275	446	404	40	328	34	25	17	125
% of Total			90.6				5.6	3.8	
% of Male Lodgers				9.9	81.2	8.4			30.9
1881	293	418	352	43	271	38	49	17	146
% of Total			84.2				11.7	4.1	
% of Male Lodgers				12.2	77.0	10.8			41.5
1891	606	1121	1010	120	832	58	63	48	526
% of Total			90.0				5.6	4.3	
% of Male Lodgers				11.9	82.4	5.7			52.1

* including 11 males of unknown marital status.

Table 3. Mynyddislwyn, 1851–91: lodgers and boarders, gender and marital status.

	1851		1861		1871		1881		1891	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
>70	7	2.1	16	5.2	15	3.4	19	4.5	14	1.2
65-9	2	0.6	7	2.3	4	0.9	6	1.4	3	0.3
60-4	11	3.3	13	4.2	16	3.6	9	2.2	14	1.2
55-9	7	2.1	12	3.9	8	1.8	9	2.2	26	2.3
50-4	16	4.9	14	4.5	15	3.4	19	4.5	23	2.1
45-9	9	2.7	8	2.6	14	3.1	19	4.5	35	3.1
40-4	12	3.6	14	4.5	26	5.8	26	6.2	42	3.7
35-9	17	5.2	20	6.4	31	6.9	25	6.0	76	6.8
30-4	29	8.8	34	11.0	48	10.8	29	6.9	105	9.4
25-9	66	20.1	50	16.1	78	17.5	64	15.3	200	17.8
20-4	95	28.8	75	24.2	111	24.9	111	26.5	351	31.3
15-19	42	12.8	27	8.7	64	14.3	63	15.1	179	16.0
<15	16	4.9	20	6.4	16	3.6	19	4.5	53	4.7
	329		310		446		418		1121	

Table 4. Mynyddislwyn: age profiles of lodgers.

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
Agriculture	19	24	15	15	21
Quarrying	6	2	8	5	14
Coal Mining	118	103	160	178	663
General	26	30	102	26	63
Labouring					
Iron	17	12	41	14	45
Working					
Tin Working	18	12	26	54	24
Construction	23	11	14	20	59
Transport	18	26	10	17	27
Clothing/	30	26	15	20	21
Footwear					
Food	3	5	4	6	11
Retailing					
Personal	3	2	3	3	9
Service					
Professions	6	10	11	12	34

Table 5. Mynyddislwyn lodgers and boarders: main occupations, 1851-91.

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
Mynyddislwyn	57	65	54	65	105
Adjacent parishes	29	43	21	54	83
Other Mon. parishes	46	50	78	81	198
<i>Monmouthshire</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>153</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>386</i>
%	40.1	51.0	34.3	47.8	34.4
Glamorgan	49	29	45	41	70
Brecon	10	18	28	18	46
Carmarthen	17	13	10	9	11
Cardigan	16	3	10	7	17
Pembroke	4	4	8	5	14
Radnor	4	2	6	4	8
Montgomery	2	1	3	3	5
Flint	7	-	-	-	-
Denbigh	2	-	1	-	2
Merioneth	1	-	-	-	1
Caernarvon	-	-	-	-	4
Anglesey	1	1	-	1	7
<i>Rest of Wales</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>185</i>
%	34.3	22.9	24.9	21.0	16.5
Gloucester	15	20	37	34	163
Somerset	22	31	51	34	109
Wiltshire	6	1	22	15	50
Hereford	6	5	7	9	60
Worcester	-	-	8	6	12
Shropshire	2	1	4	-	10
Staffordshire	-	-	1	2	13
Warwickshire	1	-	3	1	10
Lancashire	1	-	2	-	9
Devon	2	3	8	5	26
Cornwall	3	-	4	2	7
Other Counties	23	12	20	7	46
<i>England</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>167</i>	<i>115</i>	<i>515</i>
%	18.5	23.5	37.4	27.5	45.9
Ireland	19	4	8	7	8
Elsewhere	4	5	7	8	27
%	7.0	2.9	3.4	3.6	3.1
	329	310	446	418	1121

Table 6. Mynyddislwyn: birthplaces of lodgers and boarders.

CHEPSTOW SHIPS OF WORLD WAR I

By Naylor Firth

Introduction

Rivers are Nature's motorways. Ships using them were a very efficient means of conveying heavy cargoes at a time when land transport depended on unpaved tracks and animal muscle. The combination was particularly advantageous for transporting agricultural produce and bulk minerals such as building stone, metalliferous ores and their smelted products.

Early shipbuilding on the river Wye

The river Wye provided an excellent example of the benefits of river transport; it passed through hilly country where land transport was particularly difficult; it had outcrops of excellent building stone, including millstone material, along its banks; it had deposits of iron ore and coal in the hinterland and its tributary valleys were rich in potential water power. A further major advantage was the proximity to the Severn Estuary (and the commercial centre of Bristol) and thence to the ocean.

The tidal nature of the lower reaches of the Wye was far from being a disadvantage. Flood tides reached as far as Whitebrook and the villages below this point became highly adept at utilizing local hardwoods from the surrounding forests to build ships. The interface between the brackish estuarial waters of the Lower Wye and the fresh shallower waters of the river above Whitebrook necessitated two types of vessels, those capable of open sea navigation and those capable of shallow water passage. Thus communities as far upstream as Hay, Hereford and Holm Lacy were involved in ship construction, typically the flat-bottomed 'trows'¹ which were used for transferring cargoes to and from larger sea-going vessels.

Between 1784 and 1906, 455 wooden ships were built between Hay and Chepstow (Farr, 1954). Brockweir in particular became a significant ship-building community in the earlier half of the nineteenth century with vessels over 600 tons launched from its yard. The *Eliza Stewart* (Fig. 1) a full rigged barque, was launched in 1845 and at 524 tons would have typified the navigational challenges of getting such a large vessel down to Chepstow on an ebb tide before the age of powered propulsion. However it was Chepstow that became the hub of maritime activity on the Wye with its own customs house, bonded warehouses, ropery, dry dock and ship-building yards on the Welsh bank extending from the castle to the Beaufort cliffs. It acted as a transfer port for cargoes on local trows to ocean-going vessels and *vice versa* and also provided the lowest crossing point on the Wye for road transport.

In 1845/46, Chepstow yards launched two fully rigged ships of 650 tons, the *John Dalton* and the *Rajah*. These would remain the largest wooden vessels launched from Chepstow and the report of the *John Dalton's* launch day makes fascinating reading.²

One of the most interesting events of this kind that has ever enlivened our placid and beautiful neighbourhood took place on Monday last. From the earliest period of the morning, persons were crowding to the scene of attraction from every part of the surrounding country, and even from distant parts of the county, whilst some fair and fashionable visitors to our picturesque and enchanting locality, who had left the smoky atmosphere of the metropolis, to breath the health-inspiring breezes of romantic and classic boga, came from their hotels to view the spectacle.... It

¹ 'Trow' is probably derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'trog' or 'trough'.

² *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 Aug. 1845.

is calculated that not fewer than four thousand were assembled. All the vessels in the port, and the heights, were decorated with flags, and the coup d'oeil, was particularly fine.

The early birth pangs of the Industrial Revolution had been felt in the Lower Wye Valley and its small tributary valleys for a number of centuries. Copper smelting at Redbrook and iron smelting in the Angidy and Whitebrook valleys made use of local water power and in particular local iron ore, charcoal and coal. However the genie was let out of the energy bottle at the end of the eighteenth century with the harnessing of steam power and its application to moving goods and people on land and sea. Iron and other metals became available in sizes and specifications previously unattainable and the Industrial Revolution took off. Little surprise therefore that a major feature of the Industrial Revolution, the coming of the railways, should see Chepstow in the sites of the financiers and engineers destined to change the face of a predominantly rural Britain.

Brunel and Edward Finch in Chepstow, 1848–1916

Railway building in the 1840s had brought a line from Gloucester to Tutshill which opened in September 1851 and a line from Swansea to Chepstow which opened in June 1850 but passengers wishing to complete a through journey had to be taken by coach over the Wye bridge. The task of designing a high-level bridge to carry the railway over the Wye and connect these two lines was given to Brunel who had been following the revolutionary designs of his friend Robert Stephenson in using iron box sections for his railway bridges over the Conwy and Menai Straits. Brunel devised a novel tubular truss system for his Chepstow bridge that was to become the precursor for his bridge at Saltash over the river Tamar.³ Brunel was an engineering designer not an engineering constructor and he therefore needed to identify and appoint an experienced company to build his, so far, untried structure over the Wye. There were no local companies capable of undertaking this huge project and he therefore recruited Edward Finch of the Liverpool company Finch & Willey to act as his construction engineer.

Edward Finch was born in Dudley, Worcestershire in 1812 and in the 1841 census was living in Chester Street, Toxteth, Liverpool as an 'Iron Merchant'. He became involved with his brother and partners with railway construction through his association with the Birkenhead and Holyhead Junction and Mold Extension Railway⁴ and initially specialized in bridge construction. Finch & Willey commenced work on the construction of the tubular bridge in 1849, partly at their Windsor works in Toxteth and, increasingly, from their newly acquired site adjacent to the portal of the bridge on the Welsh bank of the Wye. Construction of sections of the structure was well in hand at Toxteth by early 1850, including the large cylindrical pillars that can still be seen supporting the approaches to the bridge itself.⁵ The Chepstow site had been fitted with docking facilities but it is not clear whether the Toxteth-made parts were conveyed to Chepstow by rail or by sea. A combination of the two seems probable.

The period of construction of Brunel's bridge at Chepstow coincided with the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace and a scale model at a half an inch to the foot was made at the Toxteth foundry⁶ from whence it was sent off on 28 March 1851 to London. The model was over 26 feet long and:

³ Brindle, Stephen, *Brunel. 'The Man who Built the World'* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2005).

⁴ *Liverpool Mercury*, 4 July 1845.

⁵ *Liverpool Mercury*, 26 March 1850.

⁶ *Liverpool Mercury*, 28 March 1851.

...when fitted up in the Crystal Palace it is to be surrounded with rock from Chepstow, water, grass, &c., in imitation of the position of the intended bridge.

Alas no pictures of this model survive; it must have been a memorable display.

1852 heralded the completion of Brunel and Finch's task to span the Wye with the tubular bridge. The first tube had been tested and had passed the critical eye of Mr George Stephenson.⁷ Plans for the complex logistical task of raising the first tube over the downstream side of the bridge culminated in a successful installation⁸ and the first train with Brunel aboard crossed the bridge on 15 July 1852;⁹ the first passenger train carrying the public crossed on 19 July. With the completion of the one line, the second tube was raised in a similar manner (Fig. 2) on the upstream side and the entire bridge was operational by 18 April 1853.

Finch's involvement with Chepstow was to continue. He bought 7 Beaufort Square in the town (Fig. 3) and sold his home at 12 St James's Terrace in Liverpool in January 1852.¹⁰ He was now the owner of an engineering works on the banks of a tidal river with direct access to a railway network that he had helped to expand and he was an established business associate of Brunel. On completing the bridge, Finch set up a foundry where he traded for the next seventeen years as Finch & Heath.

The first steam driven ship to be built of iron was the 122 ton *Aaron Manby*, completed in 1822 at the Horsley Iron Works in Staffordshire. Brunel realized the potential of this combination for large vessels and convened the first meeting of the Great Western Steamship Company on 4 March 1836. By March 1838, the wooden paddle steamer *SS Great Western* made her first voyage under steam and embarked on her first trans-Atlantic voyage on 7 April to arrive sixteen days later in New York. Brunel, in characteristic fashion, had already thought through the combination of steam power together with iron as a substitute for wood. In addition he realized the limitations of paddle power and designed his next ship with a single stern propeller. The *SS Great Britain*, laid down in 1839, was to be launched in 1843 and the age of the iron steamship was fast approaching. Finch must have been aware of the potential for his Chepstow site to manufacture iron steamships and in 1855, he launched the first screw steamship to be built on the Wye, the 132 ton *Alma*. During this time he had been working on the design and manufacture of steel masts and took out a patent with Charles Lamport, a shipbuilder at Workington, 'for the invention of improvements in the masts and rigging of ships'. In 1858, Brunel called upon Finch to manufacture the three steel masts for his leviathan, the *SS Great Eastern*.

In the 1861 and 1871 censuses, Finch was still living at 7 Beaufort Square and employing around 100 men and boys at his Wyese works. During this period he did not build any more ships but concentrated on bridges and other railway infrastructure items. Business became difficult in the latter part of the 1860s and Finch filed for bankruptcy in 1869.¹¹ In February 1870, he declared a dividend of four shillings in the pound¹² and with the aid of local businessmen and the local landowner, the duke of Beaufort, he was once again put on a sound financial footing and began trading again as Edward Finch and Co. (Limited) in 1870.

⁷ *The Times*, 24 Feb. 1852.

⁸ *The Bristol Mercury*, 10 April 1852.

⁹ *The Morning Chronicle*, 15 July 1852.

¹⁰ *Liverpool Mercury*, 30 Jan. 1852.

¹¹ *Western Mail*, 19 June 1869.

¹² *Western Mail*, 3 Feb. 1870.

Edward Finch died at Chepstow on 5 May 1873 and was buried in the family vault in the Ancient Chapel, Toxteth Park. His obituary¹³ testified to the place Edward Finch had taken in Chepstow's industrial activities, much of it associated with the railways and shipping:

... [he] proved himself, in every sense of the word, a benefactor to the town and neighbourhood, not simply as a large employer of labour – between 200 and 300 hands being employed at the works – taking a lively interest in the social welfare of his work-people, but also a kindly master, an upright man of business, a man of charity and liberality, a good neighbour, and a worthy citizen.

Edward Finch and Co. (Limited) continued to trade for a further forty-three years after Edward Finch's death. Diversification became the order of the day and their advertisement in a July 1910 issue of *Engineering* (Fig. 4) shows them manufacturing steel bridges, roofs, piers, dock gates, caissons, colliery ironwork, pithead frames as well as steel ships and barges. Bridge building included the Breydon Viaduct at Great Yarmouth, the Landore Viaduct on the outskirts of Swansea, a number of bridges on the Cambrian Coast line and the road bridge across the Wye at Brockweir.

During this period the company saw a resurgence in their shipping business and forty-eight steel ships were built at their yard between 1879 and 1916. The largest of these was the 1,837 ton screw steamer *Arrow* (Fig. 5) launched on 15 January 1884.¹⁴ Over 260 feet long, she was the largest ship to have been launched into the tidal Wye and was built for the Cardiff and West of England Steamship Co. Ltd.

John Henry Silley

Henry Silley was born in Hinton St George, Somerset in 1842 and moved from Gloucester to Tidenham near Chepstow with his wife Jane in about 1871. He was a 'Bolt and Nut Smith' by trade and their family of five children included three girls and two boys. Their elder boy, John Henry, was born in 1873 and his younger brother, George Frederick, in 1878. Both boys joined Edward Finch and Co. (Limited) as apprentices, John Henry as an engine fitter and George Frederick as a fitters apprentice in the iron foundry. Both gained valuable experience in the range of trades utilized at the works and this, added to their natural aptitude for learning, stood them in good stead for their future careers.

John Henry involved himself with numerous local activities whilst living at Tidenham including playing cornet in the Tidenham band and acting as secretary of the Chepstow Bicycle Club from its formation in 1888 during which time he took part in numerous road races. However, his aspirations went far beyond local opportunities and he left for London in 1892 and joined the J.P. Cory & Co. Star Line to gain experience at sea. After only two years he was made second engineer and achieved first engineer rank a year after. By 1895, therefore, when only twenty-three years old, he had attained a high rank in his chosen engineering profession. In 1892, he became a member of the recently established Institute of Marine Engineers of which he was subsequently to become president in 1934 (Fig. 6).

He came ashore just before the turn of the century and set up an engineering business on the Thames on his own account named Silley Weir & Co. This prospered and his applied ideas for improving equipment performance resulted in the award of the Denny Gold Medal in 1901. In 1908, he was elected a liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights. His company merged in

¹³ *Liverpool Mercury*, 12 May 1873.

¹⁴ *Western Mail*, 16 Jan. 1884.

1910 with the oldest shipbuilders in the UK, R. & H. Green Ltd, to form R. & H. Green and Silley Weir Ltd and he became chairman and managing director. The company specialized in the repair of shipping but throughout the First World War, the firm constructed and repaired munitions ships, minesweepers, hospital ships and destroyers. For this work John Henry Silley was awarded the OBE in 1917.

Silley's innovative flair was attracted by developments in the USA where the benefits of mass production in the car industry were being copied by shipping manufacturers. 'Standardisation' was becoming the 'in' word and American shipbuilders were offering very short delivery times with higher quality.¹⁵ During this time German submarines were taking a tremendous toll of British shipping and Silley and his colleagues recognized an opportunity to accelerate the rate of replacement with new ships.

The Standard Shipbuilding and Engineering Co., 1916–17

In the earlier part of 1916, a consortium of leading shipping companies came together to raise £300,000 of private capital to build standard ships at Chepstow by acquiring the yard of Edward Finch and Co. (Limited).¹⁶ The main shareholders included P. & O. British India; New Zealand Shipping; Orient Steam Navigation; Federal Steam Navigation; Furness, Withy & Co.; Shire Line; A. Weir & Co.; Harris & Dixon; Trinder, Anderson & Co.; Bethell Gwyn & Co.; and Birt, Potter & Hughes Ltd. The Standard Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. was thus formed with James Caird as chairman and John Henry Silley as managing director.

The Standard Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. took over the operations (Bowen, 1950) and premises of Edward Finch & Co. as well as the forty-five acres of land making up the Meads meadows between Finch's original works and the Beaufort cliff (Fig. 7) which had recently been acquired by Caird and Silley. However the long established premises of Edward Finch & Co. were to form the basis of a new company, Edward Finch & Co. (1916) Ltd which would continue to build ships of ordinary design and smaller standard ships, leaving Standard Shipbuilding free to concentrate on building the larger standard and fabricated ships on the newly acquired land.

Recognising the need for attracting significant numbers of skilled labour, the company also secured an additional 140 acres of land to lay out a garden city. The rapidity of expansion was a problem and although 200 men were employed by mid-September, others had come and gone due to lack of accommodation; the company stated that if 1,000 men were to apply, they could employ them. Over this period, railway track had been extended into the Meads site, engineering shop foundations had been laid and new slipways were being constructed.¹⁷

The spectre of a large influx of people into the Chepstow area was raising concerns in Parliament with questions ranging from the impact on the salmon fishery to the public health and town planning implications.¹⁸ The pressure on Chepstow's infrastructure can be gauged by comparing the 1911 and 1921 censuses of population when Chepstow Urban District recorded a 68.7% increase in population, the highest in any district in the county of Monmouth over that period.

By early 1917, the labour market was more than ever being influenced by the need for yet more troops for the conflict in Flanders and the first forty women were being employed 'with satisfactory results'. Thirty houses had been completed on the Hardwick Garden City site and two 700 ton barges

¹⁵ *The Times*, 25 Feb. 1916.

¹⁶ *The Times*, 29 June 1916.

¹⁷ *The Times*, 19 Sept. 1916.

¹⁸ *Hansard*, 2 Aug. 1916, 85 and 16 Aug. 1916, 85.

and two 3,300 ton cargo steamers were being built (the *Petworth* and the *Tutshill*)¹⁹ on the original Finch's premises.

In 1917, the Lloyd George administration was becoming increasingly concerned at the losses being inflicted on the UK's merchant fleet by German U-Boats. During the 1914–18 war, Britain lost 9,000,000 tons of shipping, reaching a peak of 1,400,000 tons in the three months ending June 1917. Britain lacked any effective counter-measures to the U-Boat threat; underwater sonic detection had not been invented and aerial surveillance was limited to hydrogen-filled 'blimps' with under-slung wicker baskets based at Carew in Pembrokeshire from which bombs were dropped by hand. The only answer was to build new ships faster than existing ones were being destroyed.

At the end of 1916, the Government appointed a shipping controller with wide powers to 'provide and maintain an effective supply of shipping'. Orders for standardised designs of merchant ships were placed with UK yards as well as yards in Canada, Japan, Hong Kong, Shanghai and, indirectly, in the USA as the Americans were still neutral at that stage. All these ships were to be given names prefixed by 'War'.

The Chepstow yard of E. Finch & Co. (1916) Ltd was steadily getting on with building its first ships, laying down additional slipways, recruiting labour, building new housing for them and following the priorities expected from such a consortium of highly experienced shipbuilders and ship-owners. However in July 1917, they received a visit from an official in the Government Shipbuilding Department who the company had invited down to see the progress they had made. Lord Inchcape, whose company P. & O. British India had been one of the major stakeholders in the Standard Shipbuilding and Engineering Company, wrote to *The Times*²⁰ stating:

[The official] inspected the yard, expressed himself delighted, returned to London and a few weeks later we received notice that Government had acquired our yard, and that our order for standard ships was cancelled. I am afraid that unawares we entertained the reverse of an angel.

Having been taken over in August 1917, the Chepstow yard languished in the hands of inexperienced managers. In Lord Inchcape's subsequent letter to *The Times*²¹ seven months later, he included this telling paragraph:

In August 1917, however, the Government apparently recognising the advantages of Chepstow as a building centre, which we had discovered, took over the yard and we were unceremoniously evicted. So far not a single ship has been laid down and there is very little more, if any, plant and machinery on the place than there was when we were turned out.

The National Shipyards, 1917–19

Almost immediately after taking over the Chepstow yard as National Shipyard No. 1, the Government embarked on a major development on the Beachley peninsula to construct National Shipyard No. 2 on the Wye shore at Beachley. The entire population of cottagers were evicted in September 1917 with eleven days notice and the local squire, Percival Marling, noted on 30 July 1918 that 'they have not yet been paid any compensation'.²² A further yard was planned at Portbury at the mouth of the Avon, designated National Shipyard No. 3.

¹⁹ *The Times*, 25 Jan. 1917.

²⁰ *The Times*, 22 April 1918.

²¹ *The Times*, 25 March 1918.

²² *The Times*, 30 July 1918.

Parliament engaged in many debates and questions on the National Shipyards. Hansard reports, from mid-1917 until the end of hostilities, increasingly indicate concerns at costs of the projects and, as hostilities looked destined to come to an end, at the disposal of the yards. The impetus for major enlargement in the shipbuilding programme was difficult to control. The Beachley enterprise of National Shipyard No. 2 involved a large programme of railway construction along the peninsula from the main line connection at Tutshill, a separate electricity power station, four slipways, tower cranes, a 1,000 foot assembly hanger and extensive accommodation for soldiers, ship workers and prisoners of war. No ship was ever built or launched from the estimated £2,000,000 investment at National Shipyard No. 2.

In November 1917, the first lord of the admiralty, Dr Macnamara, stated²³ that the number of new slips planned for the new National Yards was between thirty and thirty-six but that:

... the construction of National Shipyards is essentially bound up in the urgent requirements for merchant shipping consequent on the present war, and until this emergency is over the Government is unable to give any definite assurance as to the policy in connection with these yards after the conclusion of hostilities.

The Government's aim was to have new slips available at Chepstow to lay down keels by March 1918 with the first vessels being launched by October 1918. On 18 December 1917, the first of the ships laid down by the Standard Shipbuilding and Engineering Company in January 1917 was launched. The *Petworth*, a 2,012 ton cargo vessel, had been built for the Power Steamship Co. of London and was the first screw steamer to be launched from the Chepstow yards during World War I.²⁴ Three more were to be launched during this period from the original Finch's slips but it would take until April 1920 to see any vessel launched from the large slipways built on the original Meads meadows land by the Government.

Following the Armistice in November 1918, the Government debated the future nature of their £6.4 million investment at the three National Shipyards. Maintaining them in a nationalized form did not find favour and increasingly they were seeking to encourage private investment in the sites. A middle course was explored in which the unions could engage in a lease arrangement with the option of a later purchase. Negotiations opened with the Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades on 12 May 1919,²⁵ their representatives visited the Chepstow and Beachley yards on 13 May²⁶ and turned down the offer on 14 May!²⁷

Monmouth Shipbuilding Co. Ltd, 1919–24

Eventually in December 1919, a syndicate expressed interest in acquiring the Chepstow yard and on 12 January 1920, it was reported that the National Shipyard No. 1 and Edward Finch (1916) Ltd had been purchased by a syndicate headed by Lord Glanely. Confirmation appeared on 5 February indicating that the group was composed of Lord Glanely, Messrs John Cory, T.E. Morel, T.H. Mordey, W. Leon, W.R. Smith, Sir W. Seager, the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd and the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Co. Ltd.²⁸

²³ *Hansard*, 15 Nov. 1917, 99.

²⁴ *The Times*, 18 Dec. 1917.

²⁵ *The Times*, 12 May 1919.

²⁶ *The Times*, 14 May 1919.

²⁷ *Australian & NZ Cable Association*, 14 May 1919 in *NZ Poverty Bay Herald*, 17 May 1919.

²⁸ *The Times*, 5 Feb. 1920.

The syndicate membership read like a 'Who's Who' of South Wales shipping owners. Sir William Tatem (1st Baron Glanely) formed the Tatem Steamship Company in 1910 which at the outbreak of World War I had nineteen ore carriers and freighters operating out of Cardiff. The name of Cory has long been associated with shipping interest in South Wales; Richard Cory established a ship broking and coal exporting business in Cardiff in 1842 and his two eldest sons, Richard and John, carried on the business owning twenty colliers and freighters in 1913. Thomas Morel and his brother Philip married two Gibbs sisters and both the Morel and Gibbs families were engaged in South Wales shipping. Morel Ltd, based in Cardiff, was one of the last privately owned family shipping businesses (closing in 1957) and owned fifteen ore carriers and freighters in 1914. T.H. Mordey was a director of Mordey, Carney & Co., long-established Graving dock and slipway owners based in Cardiff, Newport and Barry. William Reardon Smith set up a ship-owning company in Cardiff in 1905 specializing in coal cargoes and became the largest such operation based in Wales; between the war years he owned nearly forty vessels with an average tonnage of nearly 5,000 tons. Sir William Henry Seager was Liberal M.P. for Cardiff East at the end of World War I and set up his shipping business in Cardiff in 1892. Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd was formed at Govan on Clydeside in 1868 and became one of Britain's main shipbuilders. It became part of the Northumberland Shipbuilding Group in 1919. The Anglo-Saxon Petroleum company was the fleet arm of the 1907 merger of Royal Dutch Petroleum with the 'Shell' Transport & Trading Co.

The new company began trading as the Monmouth Shipbuilding Co. Ltd (Fig. 8). All the arrangements nearly came to nought as the company asked for a rescission of the contract on the grounds that it had been entered into on the strength of the statement that 'excess profits duty' would be taken off altogether. The Government was seen by the company to be reneging on this agreement.

The principle of 'excess profits duty' was an entirely new concept for British taxation and was based on the Government's desire to obtain revenue from any organization benefiting financially from the demands arising from war work. The authoritative tome (Spicer & Pegler, 1920) described the duty as:

...based on the contention that those trades and businesses liable to the Duty, which have increased profits in any Accounting Period ending subsequent to the commencement of the War, are in a special position to contribute to the revenue a considerable proportion of such Excess Profits.

However, agreement was eventually reached by August 1920, only for the Northumberland Shipbuilding Co. Ltd to consolidate its ownership of the company by buying out the interests of Lord Glanely, T.E. Morel and T.H. Mordey in December 1920. The Monmouth Shipbuilding Co. Ltd was to continue trading for another four years during which time twelve ships were launched including the six 6,500 ton N class merchant ships planned for National Shipyard No. 1. They launched their last vessel in September 1923.

The company had acquired the Chepstow yard for £600,000; it had cost the taxpayer an estimated £2,500,000.²⁹

Monmouth Shipbuilding Co. Ltd was sold to the Fairfield Shipbuilding Co. in August 1924.³⁰ The Govan-based company set about installing new equipment for wagon building and constructional steelwork with the intention of retaining Finch's yard and the remaining areas as a shipbuilding

²⁹ *The Times*, 21 Dec. 1920.

³⁰ *The Times*, 8 Aug. 1924.

yard. It was their intention to ‘carry on the construction of tugs, barges, caissons, dock gates etc., but also to undertake contracts for vessels up to 5,000 tons’. In the event, the only other ships to be constructed at Chepstow were during the Second World War, when the Fairfield yard produced fifty-nine LCT 4 and three LCT 8 tank landing craft and five floating cranes (Fig. 9).

Chepstow would never see ships produced again.

The Slipways

In 1899, James E.G. Lawrence of Chepstow issued a map on the scale of just over 100 feet to the inch of Chepstow detailing fifty-two lots to be auctioned from the duke of Beaufort’s estates in the town by Messrs Driver, Jonas & Co. The section showing the Western landfall of Brunel’s railway bridge (Fig. 10) contains details of the Iron Founding and Engineering buildings of Finch’s Bridge Works with a slipway north of the bridge and wharfage south of the bridge. Note the position of the cattle market.

With the formation of E. Finch & Co. (1916) Ltd in 1916 by the Standard Shipbuilding and Engineering Co., the forty-five acres of the Meads meadows was purchased and the company set about developing the northern end of this newly acquired land. The Mill House, a significant feature on the Mead’s landscape was a scheduled ancient monument, and there was a delay in persuading the Ministry of Works that it needed to be demolished. Eventually it was demolished and new slipways built fed by spurs off the existing railway line into the Bridge Works. The 1921 Ordnance Survey map of the same area (Fig. 11) shows five new slipways to the N.E. of the cattle market from where the sixteen ships of less than 3,400 tons would be launched. Chepstow Cattle Market was established in 1893 on land on the north-west corner of the Meads meadows close to the embankment of the main railway line. It was to remain uncomfortably close to the noisy shipbuilding activity until it eventually relocated to an orchard site to the south of St Mary’s Church in 1922.

Plans for further slipways on the Meads site were put into operation after the Government’s take-over in August 1917, and six slipways were completed by men of the Royal Engineers and German prisoners of war on which to build the six larger ships (Fig. 12). This expansion involved the demolition of the section of the Norman town wall between the railway and the Wye river bank.

THE SHIPS

The comprehensive list of ships built at the Chepstow yard between 1917, when The Standard Shipbuilding & Engineering Company took over the yard of E. Finch and Co. Ltd, and 1924, when the Monmouth Shipbuilding Co. Ltd sold up, is taken from Farr, 1954 and used as the basis for this section. Additional information has been sourced from Fenton and Clarkson, 2008; Heaton, 1985; Mitchell and Sawyer, 1968; Richards, 2007; and the Mariners’ web site of World War I Standard Built Ships. Details of U-Boat sinkings of Chepstow ships are sourced from the U-Boat UK sinkings WWII website. Tonnages quoted are gross.

Cholet & Bressuire

The new yard cut its teeth with the construction of two barges. These iron three-masted vessels were still in operation according to the Lloyd’s registers in 1945, the 712 ton *Bressuire* in French ownership based in Le Havre and the 759 ton *Cholet* in British ownership based in Kingston, Jamaica having been retrofitted with six-cylinder oil engines linked to twin screws.

Petworth/Garlinge

The 2,012 ton *Petworth* (Fig. 13) was launched on 17 December 1917, the keel having been laid down in April 1917.³¹ Owned by the Power Steamship Co. Ltd of London, the *Petworth* was the first of the 'standardised' vessels to be produced at Chepstow and was engaged as a collier for most of her working life. The National Archives contain details of twenty-nine voyages from 1920 until 1927, indicating that the main destinations for delivering her coal cargoes were in north-west Africa including Morocco and Tenerife. In 1930, the *Petworth* was purchased by Constants (South Wales) Ltd and renamed the *Garlinge*, nearly all their fleet being named after villages in Kent. The company had regular contracts to transport return cargoes of iron ore from ports on the Spanish Atlantic coast to South Wales together with pit props, cork, phosphates and esparto grass.

During World War II, the *Garlinge* was regularly involved in convoys, mainly along the east coast of the UK but also to Gibraltar.³² In November 1942, under the command of Captain William Charles Barnes of Aberdare, she was part of a small convoy that left Gibraltar for Algiers as part of Operation Torch, *en route* from the Clyde with a cargo of 2,700 tons of coal.³³ In a strong head wind just after midnight on the night of 10 November, she fell behind the other convoy members and caught the attention of the commander of *U-81*, Oberleutenant Friedrich Guggenberger who a year previously had sunk *HMS Ark Royal* in the Western Mediterranean. Four torpedoes were fired with one hitting the *Garlinge* midships and sinking her within four minutes off Cap Ivi on the Algerian coast. Fifteen crew members were saved including Captain Barnes, but twenty-five were lost.

Tutshill/Carcavellos/Fintra

The 2,089 ton *Tutshill* (Fig. 14) was launched on 16 March 1918 from a slip alongside her sister ship *Petworth*. She was bought by Christian Salvesen & Co. of Edinburgh in 1919, renamed *Carcavellos* and again renamed *Fintra* in 1927. Like her sister ship, she was involved in carrying coal and other cargoes and formed part of many convoys during World War II along the east coast of the UK, to Gibraltar, and across the Atlantic to ports such as Halifax, Nova Scotia, and St John, New Brunswick.³⁴

On 23 February 1943, an unescorted *Fintra*, commanded by Captain Richard John Roll, was carrying a cargo of 340 tons of ammunition and stores to Malta and was attacked just after mid-day by *U-371* commanded by Oberleutenant Waldemar Mehl.³⁵ A successful strike saw *Fintra* sunk with the loss of twelve crew members, but twenty-three were saved. The attack had taken place barely fifty miles from where her sister ship, *Garlinge*, had been sent to the bottom by *U-81* just over three months before.

Dainty/Cherbourgeois No. 1/Cherbourgeois No. 5/M4223

The *Dainty* was definitely not part of the 'standardisation' plans for The Standard Shipbuilding & Engineering Company! This 468 ton tug with twin screws and twin funnels was launched in September 1918 and delivered to the UK Admiralty. Reduction in demand associated with the onset of peacetime conditions led to her disposal and she became one of the first vessels owned by the newly-created Irish Free State in 1922. In (Fig. 15) she can be seen with the Irish tricolour flying

³¹ *The Times*, 18 Dec. 1917.

³² *Arnold Hague Convoy Database*, www.convoyweb.org.uk.

³³ Edwards, Bernard, *They Sank the Red Dragon* (GPC Books, 1987).

³⁴ *Arnold Hague Convoy Database*, www.convoyweb.org.uk.

³⁵ *Ships hit by U-boats*, www.uboat.net.

from the stern. In 1931, she was sold to the Société Cherbourgoise de Remorquage et de Sauvetage and renamed *Cherbourgois No 1*. A further sale in 1932 to another port operation in Le Havre and re-namings saw her emerge in 1934 as *Cherbourgois No 5* and she continued operating along the Normandy coast until requisitioned by the German Kriegsmarine in 1940 when she was converted into an assistant mine-sweeper and renamed *M4223*.

On 15 June 1942, the renamed *M4223* was sunk by a British motor torpedo boat off Cap Grisnez but was salvaged in 1943 by the Germans only to be sunk on 20 October 1943, twenty miles off the mouth of the river Ardour whilst under tow to Bayonne.

Dandy/Lagos Vulcan

The *Dandy* was a sister ship to the *Dainty* in every way and launched in December 1918. She was completed in March 1919, and eventually sold to the Nigerian Marine Department in 1926 where she undertook tug duties in Lagos Harbour and its surroundings. Renamed the *Lagos Vulcan*, she was eventually hulked in the Calabar river in 1952³⁶ but not before she had taken part in one of the most audacious and successful commando missions in World War II.

Operation Postmaster³⁷ took place in January 1942, when fifteen commandos embarked on the two tugs *Lagos Vulcan* and *Nuneaton*, crewed by seventeen local seamen, leaving Lagos for the Spanish island of Fernando Po in the Gulf of Guinea. This neutral Spanish territory was harbouring three enemy vessels, the Italian 8,550 ton *Duchess d'Aosta*, the German tug *Likomba* and a diesel-powered barge the *Bibundi*, all of which were suspected of assisting U-Boats in the Southern Atlantic with supplies and radio information. Within thirty minutes of the commandos entering the harbour, the three vessels had their anchor chains blown and all successfully taken out to sea without any loss of life. The *Lagos Vulcan*, towing the *Duchess d'Aosta*, was then 'captured' out at sea by *HMS Violet*. The Italian ship went on to become the British troop ship *Empire Yukon* before being sold back to an Italian company after the war.

War Forest/Albergallus/Thermidor/Andreas Gerakis/Louis Mercier/Grado

The 3,103 ton *War Forest* was the first 'C' pattern standard ship to be built at Chepstow and was launched on 23 September 1918 'in the presence of about 2,000 persons'.³⁸ She was placed in the hands of the shipping controller who sought a buyer for the vessel (as was the situation with most of the Chepstow vessels) and she was eventually sold in 1920 to a Bordeaux company and renamed *Albergallus*. In 1925, under new Bordeaux owners she was renamed *Thermidor* before being sold in 1926 to N. Gerakis, Cephalonia, Greece as the *Andreas Gerakis*. Her roundabout of owners continued, in 1927 emerging as the *Louis Mercier* with owners in Rouen and Bordeaux until sold to Hans F. Grann in Oslo in 1937 and renamed *Grado*.

A number of the Chepstow ships traded across the Bay of Biscay and were caught inadvertently in the peripheral activities of the Spanish Civil War. In June 1938, she was captured by a Spanish vessel and taken to Ceuta where she was impounded for three weeks. On being released she sailed to Marseilles on 8 July where a Lloyds surveyor went aboard to survey her coal cargo.³⁹

Whilst in Norwegian ownership the *Grado* traded with South Africa as shown by her picture in Cape Town harbour (Fig. 16) and at the outbreak of war she was regularly crossing the North Sea.

³⁶ *Miramar Ship Index*, www.miramarshipindex.org.nz.

³⁷ Binney, Marcus, *Secret War Heroes* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2006).

³⁸ *The Times*, 24 Sept. 1918.

³⁹ *The Times*, 9 July 1938.

When Norway was invaded on 9 April 1940, she was in the docks at Hartlepool. Throughout the war she undertook many independent and convoy voyages, the latter including trans-Atlantic voyages to Canada and the USA. A comprehensive list of these is contained in www.warsailors.com⁴⁰ based on Arnold Hague's convoy database. On 11 May 1943, she was *en route* from Halifax Nova Scotia to Ipswich under the master, Captain Theodor Jensen, in Convoy SC129 with a cargo of steel and lumber when she was attacked by *U-402* commanded by Siegfried von Forstner and sunk by torpedo in mid-Atlantic. All thirty-six crew members were saved.

War Apple/Bellas/Neath Abbey/Selenga

The 2,492 ton *War Apple* was launched on 31 May 1919, an 'H' pattern standard ship smaller than her 'C' type counterparts.⁴¹ She was not completed until 24 October 1919, when the shipping controller transferred her to 'A Maritima', S. A. de Responsabilidade, Lisbon, as the *Bellas* but in 1927, she was bought by the Abbey Line Ltd in Cardiff, trading as the *Neath Abbey*. In 1934, she was bought by the Russian organisation Sovtorgflot and renamed *Selenga* (Fig. 17).

In 1930, the Government was becoming concerned at Russia dumping wheat in large quantities in the UK and that summer no fewer than twenty-four Cardiff steamers had been hired for the Black Sea grain trade including the *Neath Abbey*.⁴² Later that year, the *Neath Abbey* was one of the first ships to use the newly opened Lavender Dock in London with a cargo of softwoods from Kara Sea ports in Siberia.⁴³ Her increasing familiarity with Russian trade heralded her acquisition by Sovtorgflot, being renamed *Selenga*, and for the next thirty-one years she was to carry an array of cargoes for Russia. Following the outbreak of World War II, Russia initially stayed out of the conflict with Germany and even supplied them with essential raw materials. The UK and France were concerned at Russia obtaining additional supplies of these from outside her borders for onward transportation to Germany and the *Selenga* became involved in several incidents. In January 1940, a British cruiser operating out of Hong Kong intercepted the *Selenga en route* from Manila to Vladivostok with a cargo of coffee and antimony⁴⁴ and in March, again off Hong Kong, the French auxiliary cruiser *X-1* intercepted her carrying a cargo of copper and tungsten ore. The Cabinet Office minutes for 14 March 1940,⁴⁵ indicate how the Government tried to tread a middle path between allowing China trading freedom whilst denying Russia from potentially supplying Germany with essential war materials. In the end they agreed to release the *Selenga*.

With hostilities over, the *Selenga* visited Bristol on 27 February 1948 to take on board 1,500 tons of rails.⁴⁶ A week later a party of twenty from the British Soviet Society attempted to leave some flowers for the captain who refused outright to let them on board!⁴⁷ A day later they received an apology 'due to a misunderstanding' and the *Selenga* duly departed for Russia.⁴⁸

Selenga was the longest lasting of all the ships built at Chepstow during this period and was eventually broken up in Bremen in April 1965 after forty-six years service.

⁴⁰ *Norwegian Merchant Fleet 1939–1945*, www.warsailors.com.

⁴¹ *The Times*, 31 May 1919.

⁴² *The Times*, 23 Sept. 1930.

⁴³ *The Times*, 3 Oct. 1930.

⁴⁴ *The Times*, 28 March 1940.

⁴⁵ *Cabinet Office Minutes*, 14 March 1940 (The National Archives, Cat. No. 65/6/13).

⁴⁶ *The Times*, 26 Feb. 1948.

⁴⁷ *The Times*, 3 March 1948.

⁴⁸ *The Times*, 4 March 1948.

War Trench/Mar Caspio

On 11 November 1919, exactly a year after the Armistice had been signed, the *War Trench* slipped into the water at the Chepstow yards.⁴⁹ At 3,080 tons she, like her sister ship the *War Forest*, was built to the 'C' type standard ship design and was fitted out as the *Mar Caspio* for Cia Maritima del Nervion in Bilbao with whom she stayed until her demise in 1937.

The *Mar Caspio* regularly carried coal from Britain to the Altos Hornos de Vizcaya iron and steel smelters that had commenced operations in 1902 making use of the copious iron mineral deposits around Bilbao. The picture of the *Mar Caspio* (Fig. 18) alongside the works gives a good impression of the lines and compactness of the ship. Conditions at sea were to prove hazardous for the Chepstow ships as much as any others; on the first weekend in January 1922, severe gales in the English Channel saw the Goodwin Sands Lightship torn from her moorings and the *Mar Caspio* in distress off the Wandelaar Lightship. She had lost her boats and one was picked up six miles off Ostend with a lone seaman on board who subsequently died; four other seamen went missing.⁵⁰

Like her sister ship the *War Forest*, the *Mar Caspio* was regularly trading across the Bay of Biscay and fell foul of the peripheral activities associated with the Spanish Civil War. She was owned by a company sympathetic to the Spanish Government and left Newcastle near the end of March 1937 *en route* for le Bouceau with 2,000 tons of coal. Whilst still in French territorial waters, she was shelled by two armed insurgent trawlers, holed below the waterline and run aground near Bayonne where she became a wreck on 29 March 1937.⁵¹

War Grape/Guebwiller/Henri Mori

The 2,572 ton 'H' pattern standard ship *War Grape* was launched⁵² from Finch's yard on 24 March 1920 (Fig. 19) and moored alongside their jetty for fitting out. She was delivered into the ownership of S.A. de Navigation, Rouen on 15 June 1920 and named *Guebwiller*. She was originally designed to carry coal cargoes but was engaged for most of her life in heavy transport from the Baltic to the Black Sea ports.

In 1928, she was bought by Société Minière et Maritime, also of Rouen, and renamed *Henri Mori*. On 6 October 1931, she ran aground off the Portuguese coast at Cabo Carvoeiro *en route* from Dunkirk to Casa Blanca with a cargo of patent fuel⁵³ and in spite of the attentions of the tug *Valkyrien* could not be towed off. With the holds flooding, cargo leaking and broached broadside on to the swell, the captain and crew left and there was no hope of salvage.⁵⁴

The *Henri Mori* lies in shallow water in a 'Shipwreck Cemetery' and even though considerably dismantled it is a frequent wreck diving site with portions of the boilers and holds still intact.

War Glory/Monte Pasubio

Wednesday 21 April 1920 was a big day for Chepstow. After all the problems and uncertainty surrounding the National Shipyards initiative, at last the first of the six 'N' type standard ships was to be launched. With a half gale blowing the previous day, there was doubt about the launch but on the following morning a stiff breeze saw the sun emerge and Lady Maclay, wife of the shipping

⁴⁹ *The Times*, 12 Nov. 1919.

⁵⁰ *The Times*, 2 Jan. 1922.

⁵¹ *The Times*, 30 March 1937.

⁵² *The Times*, 25 March 1920.

⁵³ *The Times*, 8 April 1931.

⁵⁴ *The Times*, 9 April 1931.

controller, Sir Joseph Maclay, broke the bottle of champagne across the bows at 10.05 (Fig. 20) and the 6,543 ton *War Glory* duly slid into the water under full steam (Fig. 21). Extensive coverage of the event in the local press⁵⁵ emphasized the hopes and aspirations associated with the successful launch and there were many forecasts of an expanding shipbuilding industry for Chepstow and the Wye. Chepstow celebrated on the day of the launch and nowhere was this more apparent than at the luncheon at the *Beaufort Hotel*. Lady Maclay was presented with an inscribed silver salver to mark the occasion. [Contact with the current Lord Maclay, alas indicated that the salver had been auctioned some ten years ago, but it would provide a wonderful record for Chepstow if it could be traced].

The *War Glory* was, at that time, the ‘largest ship ever launched in Great Britain with full steam up, completely equipped, ready for sea trials’.⁵⁶ Having very briefly passed into the ownership of the shipping controller, *War Glory* was renamed *Monte Pasubio* after sale to Armatori Riuniti Soc. Di. Nav. of Genoa and started carrying cargoes on the South America – Italy route.

On 2 April 1924, *Monte Pasubio* under the command of Captain Gaetano Maresca encountered severe weather off the Argentinian coast whilst *en route* from Genoa which she left on 26 February for Bahia Blanca and was reported to be in distress. On 9 April, the owners announced that the ship had been driven ashore at Quequen on the Argentinian coast having experienced serious damage.⁵⁷ By the following day Italian surveyors had declared her a total loss.⁵⁸ The *Mare Caspio* was to disappear in the same year that shipbuilding ceased at Chepstow.

War Iliad/Sile/Passat/Jantje Fritzen

The 6,551 ton ‘N’ type standard *War Iliad* had the doubtful accolade, on being launched in July 1920, of having her name spelt incorrectly on the bow and stern!

The *War Illiad (sic)* (Fig. 22) was, like her predecessor, launched with steam up and rapidly passed from the hands of the shipping controller to the Italian operation Navigazione Generale Italiana based in Genoa, being renamed *Sile*. A further irony associated with the names of this ship is that the very issue of the *Weekly Argus and Chepstow Advertiser* carrying notification of the change of name to *Sile* also immediately beneath mentioned the opening of Chepstow’s Public Hall by Mr John Henry Silley, who had donated the land to the town and been instrumental in the 1916 expansions in the shipyard. The same column in the paper also reported his visit to the Gate House adjacent to Chepstow Arch which he had also donated to the town.⁵⁹

In 1926, the vessel was sold to Kauffahrtei. A.G. of Bremen in Germany under the name *Passat* and ten years later, she was owned by Lexzau, Scharbau & Co. of Emden under the name *Jantje Fritzen*. She operated along the Baltic shores during World War II and at the end of the war was requisitioned and taken to Kiel harbour in Germany with over thirty more vessels where they were loaded with ammunition and chemical weapons left over from Germany’s arsenal.⁶⁰ Between twenty-five and fifty ships were scuttled in the Skagerrak between Norway, Sweden and Denmark and the paper contains an eye-witness account from Harald Francke who obtained a job as stoker in the *Jantje Fritzen* in September 1945. One day ‘yellow smoke started pouring from one of the holds

⁵⁵ *Weekly Argus and Chepstow Weekly Advertiser*, 24 April 1920.

⁵⁶ *The Times*, 22 April 1920.

⁵⁷ *The Times*, 10 April 1924.

⁵⁸ *The Times*, 11 April 1924.

⁵⁹ *Weekly Argus and Chepstow Weekly Advertiser*, 21 Aug. 1920.

⁶⁰ Laurin, Frederik, ‘Scandinavia’s Underwater Time Bomb’, *Bulletin Atomic Scientists* (March 1991) 11–15.

and some of the crew died.... The convoy left Kiel without Jantje Fritzen which was scuttled on a later occasion in Skagerrak'. The sinking took place on 17 November 1945.

Nash Light/Gothic/Velites/Balilla

The 2,469 ton *Nash Light* and the *War Grape* were built on adjacent slipways in Finch's yard and were both 'H' pattern standard vessels. *Nash Light* was launched on 19 June 1920 (Fig. 23) and completed after fitting out at Chepstow on 20 July 1920. In 1922, she was bought by W. H. Cockerline & Co. of Hull and operated as the *Gothic*.

In 1938, she, like other Chepstow ships, fell foul of the Civil War in Spain. In spite of pleas from the masters of British vessels trading with Spanish ports for neutral zones to be allotted to them, no action was taken. On 5 October 1938, fourteen Savoia bombers raided the Barcelona waterfront and hit the moored *Gothic*, a bomb piercing her deck and exploding in the engine-room, wrecking the machinery completely.⁶¹ An incendiary exploded in the deck-house, destroying the captain's cabin and the bridge. Captain O'Neill had already been blown along the quay by a previous explosion. The trapped *Gothic* was hit again on 2 November 1938 and further damaged by Nationalist warplanes. She was declared a constructive total loss after the bombings, only to be salvaged and sold to Orazio Rossini of Genoa where she briefly took on the name *Velites*.

In 1939, she changed ownership to G. Scorza, again of Genoa, and was renamed *Balilla*. Flying the Italian flag in the Mediterranean she became a target for Allied submarines and on 2 November 1941, she was sunk off the north-west coast of Sicily by two submarines working in conjunction, the British *HMS Utmost* commanded by Lt J.D. Martin RN and the Polish *ORP Sokol* commanded by Lt-Cdr B. Karnicki.

War Fig/Silverway/Charterhague/Jaameri

The 2,568 ton 'H' pattern *War Fig* was launched on 17 August 1920 by the general manager of the Monmouth Shipbuilding Co. Ltd, Mr James Gray, and was the first ship to enter the water under their ownership of the yard.⁶² There was 'no ceremony' and the ship was berthed alongside the Finch's wharf for fitting out (Fig. 24). It is worth highlighting that 'Electric light is installed throughout... and wireless telegraphy by the Marconi Company will be fitted'.

Handed to the shipping controller for disposal, she was sold in 1921 to W.J. Williams of London and in 1922, to The St Mary Steamship Co. of Cardiff under the name *Silverway*. The Ellis Island, New York, web site⁶³ is a fascinating source of information on crew manifests of ships calling there in the 1920s. For example, *Silverway* departed from Antilla, Cuba and arrived in New York on 28 September 1924 with a crew of twenty-six including the first mate, John Evans Thomas, a thirty-seven-year-old Welshman with twenty-two years length of service at sea. He was 5'3" high and weighed ten stone!

In 1925, the Charter Shipping Co, also of Cardiff, acquired her under the name *Charterhague*. Their five ships all had 'Charter' as the prefix to their names and traded mainly between South America and the Baltic and British ports on the North Sea coast. In 1930, she was sold to Angfartgs A/B of Mariehamn, Finland and then in 1939, to Finska Fiskeri A/B of Hango, Finland taking the name *Jaameri*. She eventually met her fate on 26 April 1944, when she was mined just off the Danish coast in the Baltic.

⁶¹ *The Times*, 11 April 1924.

⁶² *Weekly Argus and Chepstow Weekly Advertiser*, 21 Aug. 1920.

⁶³ *Ellis Island Ship Database*, www.ellisland.org.

War Odyssey/Monte san Michele

The ill-fated *War Odyssey* was to have the shortest working life of all the ships built at Chepstow during this period. Launched on 30 September 1920 under full steam, the 6,500 ton 'N' pattern standard ship was the third of this type to be built in the Meads slipways (Fig. 25) and was immediately transferred from the shipping controller to Armatori Riuniti Soc. Di. Nav., Genoa and renamed *Monte san Michele*. (Mitchell & Sawyer, 1968, indicate that *War Odyssey* was built and launched from National Shipyard No. 2 at Beachley. No ships were launched from this yard and the pictures of National Shipyard No. 1 in Figs. 31 and 32 show her on the stocks and ready for launch in Fig. 33 on 30 September 1920).

On 2 February 1921, she left New York bound for Genoa with a cargo of grain⁶⁴ and encountered hurricane-force winds. Grave fears were expressed for her and a number of other vessels in the same area from which nothing had been heard and on 5 March,⁶⁵ it was reported that seven vessels were abandoned or lost, of which the *Monte san Michele* was the largest. The situation was bad enough for the then US secretary of commerce, Herbert Hoover, to order an investigation which ultimately showed that nine ships of different nationalities had disappeared in the area; the last communication received from any of these was on 6 February.

War Genius/Fiume/Taifun/Carl Fritzen

On Saturday 30 October 1920, the fourth 'N' pattern ship was launched fully equipped and with steam up from the Meads slipways (Fig. 26). The 6,573 ton *War Genius* was destined to have a significant place in maritime history.

In common with all six 'N' type ships built at Chepstow, she was sold to Italian owners by the shipping controller. Navigazione Generale Italiana of Genoa renamed her *Fiume* and records from the Ellis Island database⁶⁶ indicate that she operated on routes from Venice and Gibraltar to South America. In 1926, she was acquired by Kauffehrtei A. G. of Bremen in a deal which also included the *War Iliad* and the *War Epic* and was renamed *Taifun*. She remained in German ownership but in 1938, was bought by Lexzau, Scharbau & Co. of Emden with a new name, *Carl Fritzen*.

Like her previous owners, the *Carl Fritzen* traded with South America under a German flag. On 1 September 1939, Hitler invaded Poland and at 11.15am on 3 September, the prime minister, Neville Chamberlain announced that Britain was at war with Germany. On that same day, the *Carl Fritzen* was approaching Buenos Aires after nearly completing her voyage from Schiedam in Holland and close by was the German freighter *Olinda* making her way in the opposite direction from Buenos Aires to Hamburg. *HMS Ajax* had joined the South American Division a few days earlier and intercepted the *Olinda* almost as soon as the signal had been received that Britain was at war with Germany. She sank the *Olinda* and early the following day approached the *Carl Fritzen* who had learned of the fate of the *Olinda*. The crew of the *Carl Fritzen* chose to scuttle her on 4 September rather than be captured⁶⁷ and it is likely that she was thus the second German ship to be sunk by the British Navy in World War II. *HMS Ajax* went on to be closely involved in actions leading to the eventual scuttling of the *Graf Spee* off Montevideo on 17 December.

The wreck of the *War Genius* lies only about 600 miles from that of the *War Glory*.

⁶⁴ *The New York Times*, 14 April 1921.

⁶⁵ *The Times*, 5 March 1921.

⁶⁶ www.ellisland.org.

⁶⁷ *The Times*, 6 Sept. 1939.

War Epic/Adige/Monsun

The penultimate 'N' pattern standard ship, *War Epic* (Fig. 27) was launched on 14 December 1920.⁶⁸ The 6,543 ton vessel, like her sister ships the *War Genius* and *War Iliad*, was initially sold to Navigazione Generale Italiana of Genoa almost as soon as she had been launched with the name *Adige* and then sold on to Kauffehrtel A. G. of Bremen in 1926 as the *Monsun*. Between 1921 and 1924, she was a frequent visitor to Ellis Island, New York⁶⁹, always with Italian crew members.

Coal carrying vessels were always prone to fires and in 1925, the *War Epic* was moored in Norfolk, Virginia when fire broke out in one of her holds;⁷⁰ this was extinguished the following day.

During World War II the ship was operating in the Eastern North Sea along the Norwegian coast and ran aground in a gale on the skerries at Rorvik north of Trondheim on 18 December 1942 to become a total loss.

War Idyll/Concordia/Valtellina

The 6,565 ton *War Idyll* was the last of the 'N' pattern standard ships to be built at Chepstow and was launched on 7 August 1921.⁷¹ As with others in her class, she was sold to the Genoese Navigazione Company and renamed *Concordia* (Fig. 28). There were a number of other ships with the same name operating at this time and tracing her details has unearthed very little information. She passed into the hands of Unione Italica of Rome in 1926 and was renamed *Valtellina* in 1931, before being scrapped at Monfalcone in 1932.

The Fincantieri shipyard at Monfalcone near Trieste built the new Cunarder Queen Elizabeth, launched in 2010, and it would be nice to think that a little of the scrap from Chepstow's last big ship might have found its way into the fabric of Britain's latest liner!

Port of London Hoppers Nos 24, 25 & 26

Farr, 1936, mentions three of these 565 ton vessels being launched by Monmouth Shipbuilding Co. Ltd during 1922. The self-propelled vessels were used extensively for dredging operations in the Thames estuary. H.W. Black was master of Hopper No. 25 from April 1927 until July 1934⁷² and his website contains this picture of the ship he commanded for over seven years (Fig. 29).

Cynthiana/Schwarzes-Meer

The 3,371 ton *Cynthiana* was the last ship to be built at Chepstow, apart from the tank landing craft during World War II. Unlike any of her predecessors, she was a tanker, reflecting the inevitable change-over from coal to oil as a source of energy for ships and commerce in general. She was built for the British Ministry of Transport and launched in September 1923 (Fig. 30). She was transferred to Furnace Withy shortly afterwards and then sold to Harris & Dixon, London in 1925. During this period she regularly traded between Marseilles, the UK and New York.

An interesting reference in the Ellis island records⁷³ for the *Cynthiana* gives the twenty-eight crew names for a voyage in December 1923 from Newport to New York. Sixteen of the crew were recorded as residing in Newport and two in rural Monmouthshire; John Dixon Davies was 3rd

⁶⁸ *The Times*, 15 Dec. 1920.

⁶⁹ www.ellisland.org.

⁷⁰ *The Times*, 18 May 1925.

⁷¹ *The Times*, 8 Aug. 1921.

⁷² *H.W. Black's Ships*, www.hwblack.bundle.co.uk.

⁷³ www.ellisland.org.

engineer, was born in Redbrook in 1866, and was living at 'Highfield', Brockweir; William John Henry Mort was assistant steward and was born in Cardiff in 1910, and was living at Manor House, Magor.

In 1926, *Cynthiana* was sold to J. T. Essenberger in Germany and renamed *Schwarzes-Meer*. From the beginning of World War II, she was involved in carrying fuel oil around the coast of Holland, Belgium and north-west France. She was commanded by Kapitanleutnant Wetzel throughout her war activities. On 16 August 1942, a German R-Boat had been sunk off the South Foreland and its crew interrogated. The subsequent intelligence report⁷⁴ mentioned the activities of the *Schwarzes-Meer* which was being used for 'regular 2-monthly cargos of fuel oil from Cherbourg to Brest' to supply the U-Boat fleet for its Atlantic activities.

She was eventually scuttled at Bordeaux on 25 August 1944.

Postscript

The cliff above the Beaufort quarry at the south end of the shipyard offered a good vantage point from which to take pictures of activity on the six larger 'N' pattern ships and several of these survive. (Figs 31, 32, 33 and 34). They give an idea of the pace of shipbuilding during the sixteen months between the *War Glory* being launched in April 1920 and the *War Idyll* being launched in August 1921.

The Government attracted an enormous amount of criticism during and after World War I on the way the three National Shipyards were created, operated and disposed of. The sequence of events during times of war would test the highest quality crystal ball and the lead times involved in creating such large structures as 6,500 ton ships on a green-field site to satisfy an immediate need can make the original decisions seem foolhardy. Whatever the political and economic fallout, this frantic, short period in Chepstow's history was to permanently change the size and character of the town; a town catering for the needs of a predominantly agricultural economy was now becoming a town looking to local industry and a larger urban population for its future.

However, Chepstow has turned its back on a centuries-old close association with its river. Ships rarely dock here, fish are no longer landed here, passengers no longer call or leave by river and ships are no longer built here. The engineering presence established by Edward Finch in 1849 will migrate away from the river bank with Mabey Bridge leaving the site in 2011. Housing is destined to take the place of water-side industry and a valuable interface between the land and one of Nature's motorways will have been lost.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In preparing this paper I have been exceptionally fortunate in meeting individuals and organizations who have gone out of their way to provide visual and written information. In particular I would like to thank Claire Field of Chepstow for making available the extensive resource she and her late husband, Jim Field, have collected. Other local individuals who have helped in providing information include Mike Aitken, Charlie Lewis, George Matthews, Jean Price, Keith Underwood and Roland Whaite.

Various organizations, but none local, have made their collections available to me. I would like to thank the Brunel Archive (and in particular Eleni Papavasileiou); Newport Library; Dr David

⁷⁴ *Naval Intelligence Division Report CB 4051* (48), German R-Boat 184 Interrogation of Survivors, Sept. 1942.

Jenkins at the National Waterfront Museum, Swansea; Leicester University; the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology; and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Aberystwyth (and in particular Medwyn Parry), for their willingness in letting me see and use relevant archives held in their collections. Staff of Chepstow Library were also very helpful. Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the Gale Database of the Times Digital Archive which has proved invaluable in tracing some of the more esoteric events during this period in Chepstow's history.

An archive, especially a public archive, is only of use if interested parties are allowed to access it and use it!

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Fig. 1. *Eliza Stewart*, 524 tons, launched at Brockweir, 1845, painted by the artist, William Clark of Greenock (1803-83).
 Reproduced by kind permission of *Richard Green Gallery, London*.



Fig. 2. Raising the second tube, Brunel's tubular bridge, Chepstow, 1853.
 Reproduced by kind permission of the *Brunel Institute, collaboration of the Great Britain Trust and the University of Bristol*.

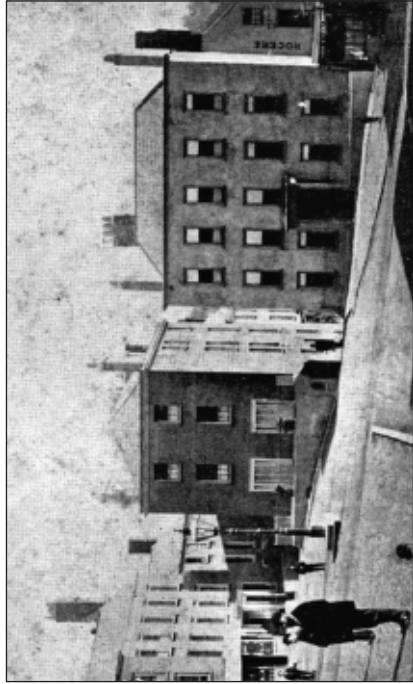


Fig. 3. 7 Beaufort Square, Chepstow, c. 1885 (on right hand side of photograph).
 Reproduced by kind permission of *Mrs Pam Johnson*.



Fig. 4. Advertisement for Edward Finch and Co., Ltd, Cheptow, 1910.
 (Claire Field Collection).
 Reproduced by kind permission of *Mrs Claire Field*.



Fig. 6. John Henry Silley, 1872-1941.
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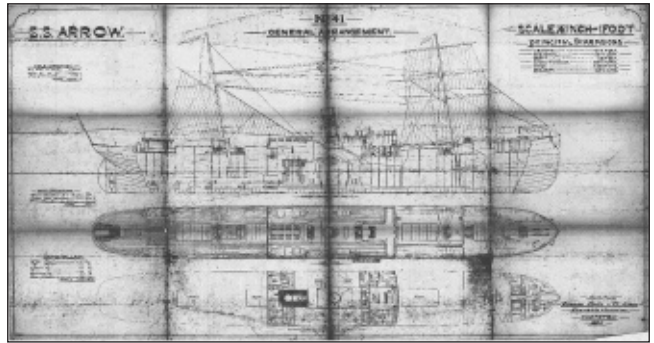


Fig. 5. SS Arrow, general arrangement, 1884.
 (Claire Field Collection).
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Fig. 7. The Meads meadow, with the Brunel bridge in the
 background, c. 1890.
 (Claire Field Collection).
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Fig. 8. Advertisement for Monmouth
 Shipbuilding Company Ltd, Chepstow.
 (Claire Field Collection).
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Fig. 9. Chepstow shipyard with tank landing craft and floating
 cranes on the slipways, 1942.
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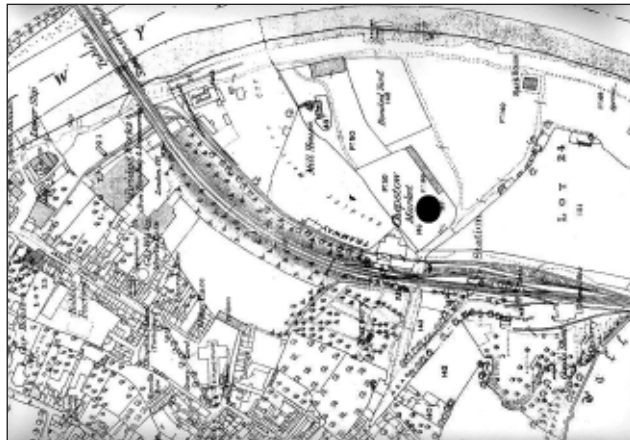


Fig. 10. Location of Finch's bridge works, 1899.
 Reproduced by kind permission of Mr Keith Underwood, from his copy of a sales catalogue of the duke of Beaufort's estates.

Please note: ● indicates the location of Chepstow cattle market.

Fig. 11. Location of Finch's slipways, 1921.
 Reproduced by kind permission of the University of Leicester, from an Ordnance Survey map in the University's collections.

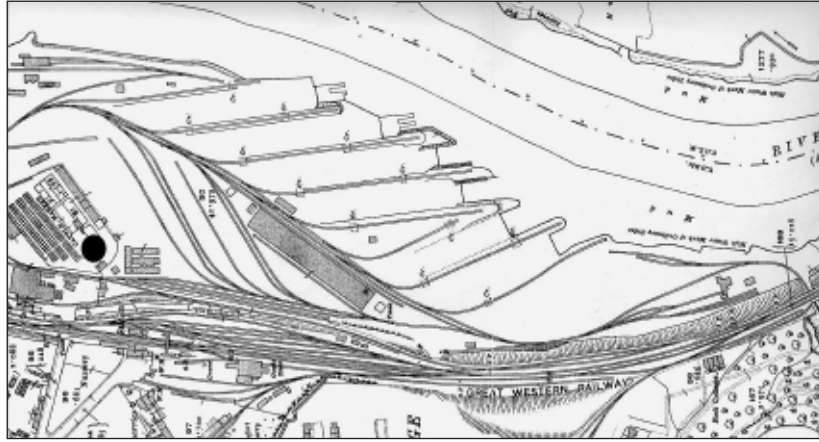
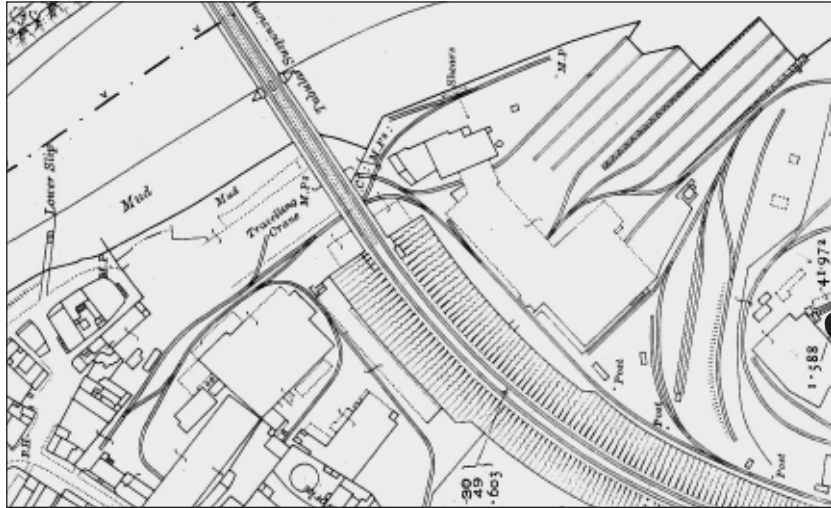


Fig. 12. National Shipways No. 1. Location of slipways, 1921.
 Reproduced by kind permission of the University of Leicester, from an Ordnance Survey map in the University's collections.



Fig. 13. *SS Petworth*, launched 17 Dec. 1917, torpedoed off Algeria, 10 Nov. 1942.
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Source: unknown.



Fig. 14. *SS Tutshill (Fintra)* launched 16 March 1918, torpedoed off Algeria, 23 Feb. 1943.
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Source: unknown.

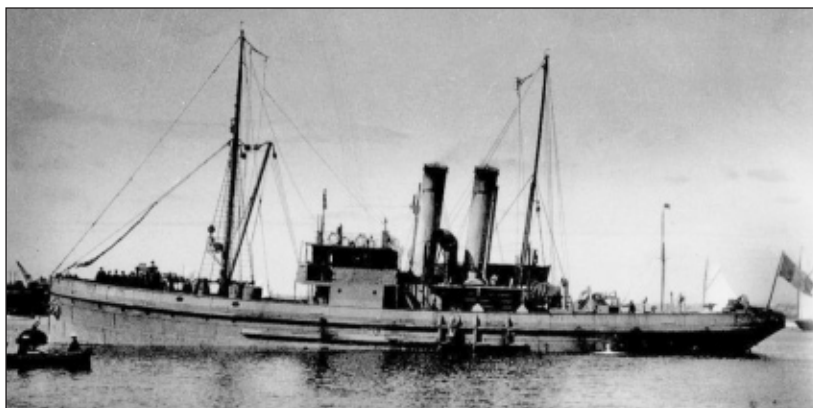


Fig. 15. *SS Dainty*,
launched Sept. 1918,
sunk near Bayonne,
20 Oct. 1943.
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eircom.net](http://www.homepage.eircom.net).
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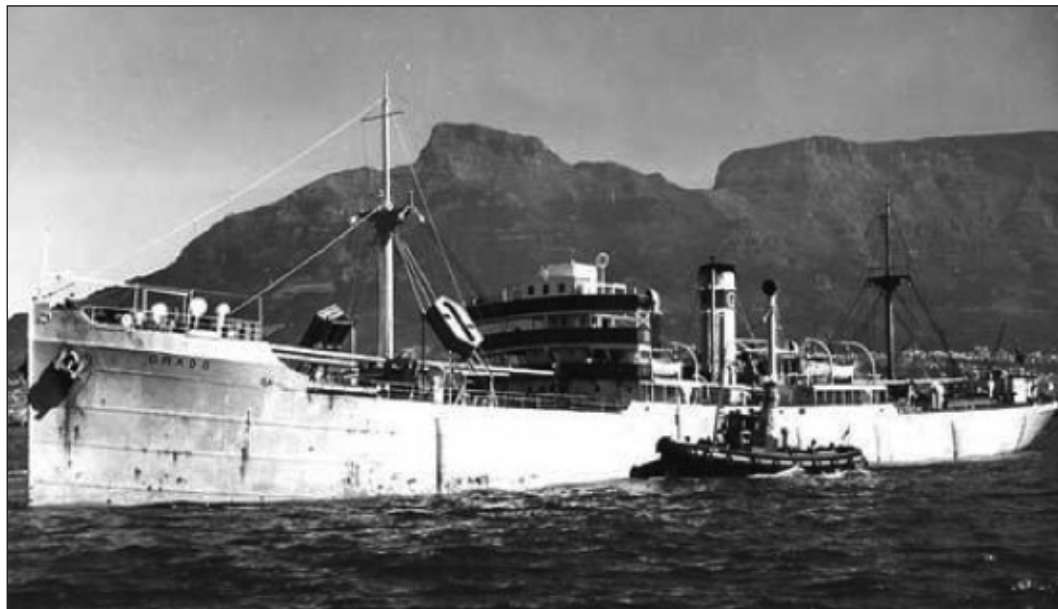


Fig. 16. *SS War Forest (Grado)* launched 23 Sept. 1918, torpedoed mid-Atlantic, 11 May 1943.
Reproduced by kind permission of Siri Lawson, Norwegian fleet, Svetrre Johansen collection,
www.warsailors.com.



Fig. 17. *SS War Apple (Selenga)* launched 31 May 1919, scrapped at Bremen, April 1965.
Reproduced from Stuart Smith Collection,
www.shipsnostalgia.com.

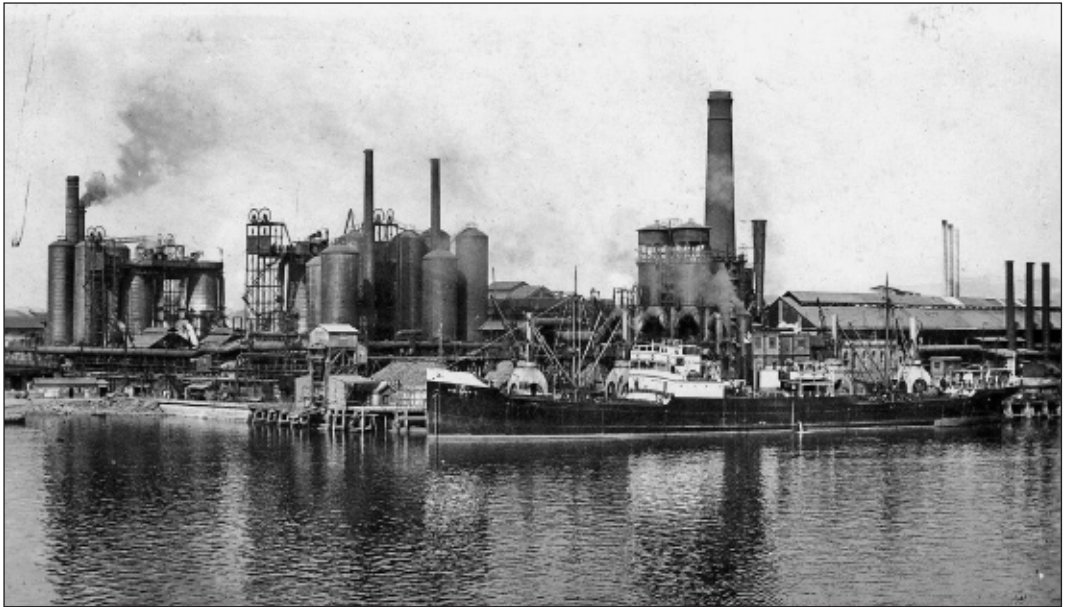


Fig. 18. *SS War Trench (Mar Caspio)* launched 11 Nov. 1919, sunk by shellfire at Bayonne during Spanish Civil War, 29 March 1937.

*Postcard published by L. Reisin, Barcelona.
www.shipsnostalgia.com.*

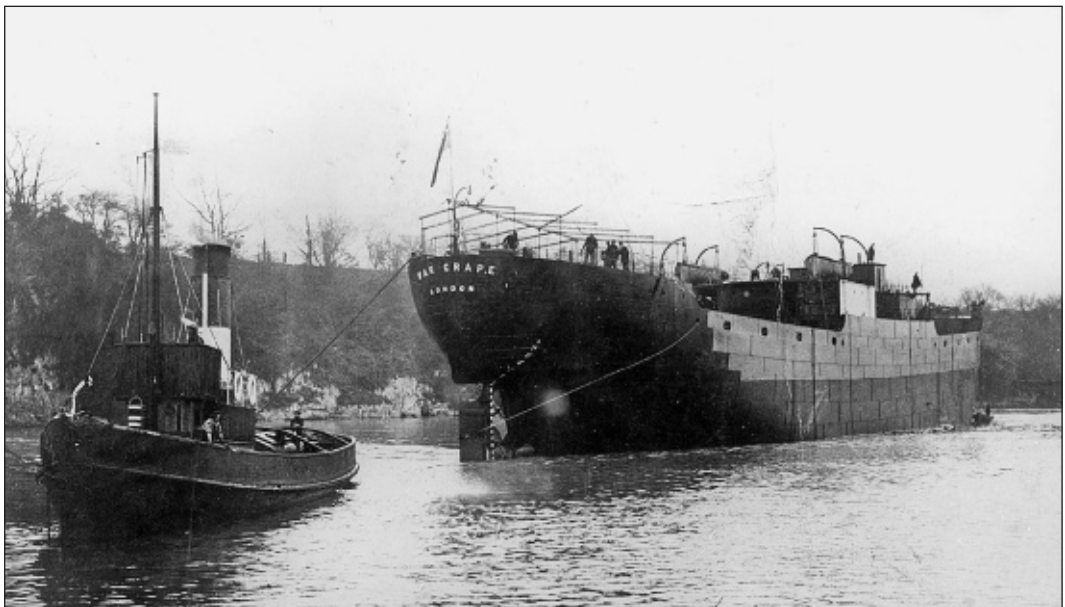


Fig. 19. *SS War Grape* launched 24 March 1920, wrecked off Portuguese coast, 6 Oct. 1931.
(Claire Field Collection).

Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Claire Field.



Fig. 20. Lady Maclay launches SS *War Glory*, 21 April 1920.
Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Jean Price.
Source: Weekly Argus & Chepstow Weekly Advertiser.



Fig. 21. SS *War Glory*, launched 21 April 1920, wrecked off the Argentine coast, 9 April 1924.
(Claire Field Collection).
Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Claire Field.

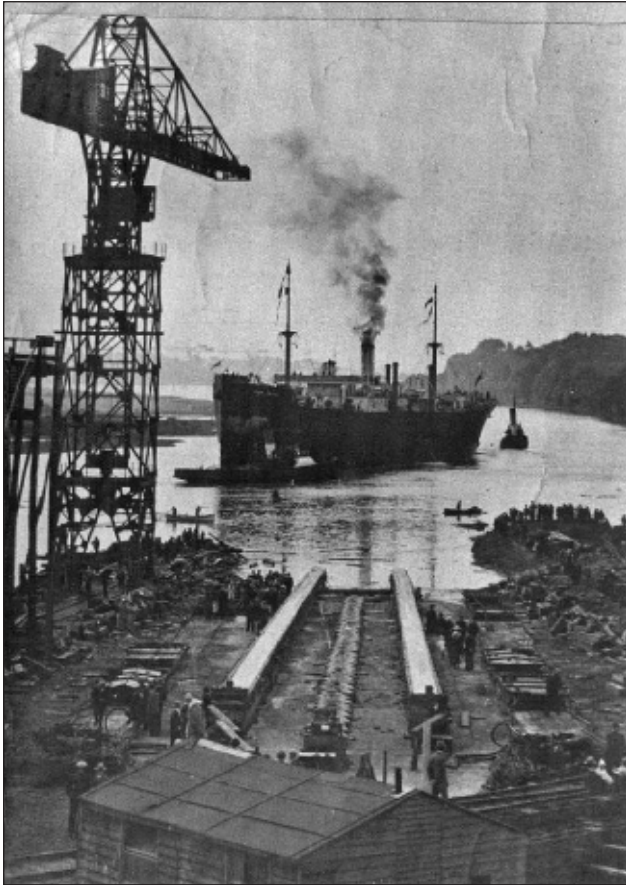


Fig. 22 (a). *SS War Iliad*, launched July 1920, scuttled in Skagerrack, 17 Nov. 1945.

(Note cranes at Beachley National Shipyard No. 2 seen over her bow).

(Claire Field Collection).

Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Claire Field.



Fig. 22 (b). *SS War Iliad*.

(Claire Field Collection).

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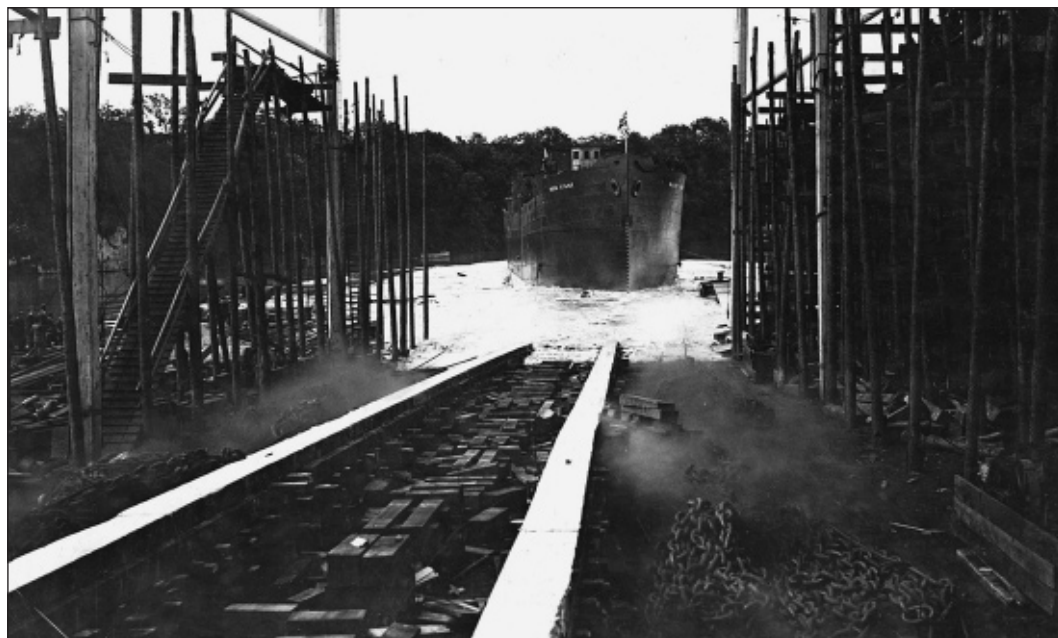


Fig. 23. *SS Nash Light*, launched 19 June 1920, torpedoed by Allied submarines off the north-west coast of Sicily, 2 Nov. 1941.
(Claire Field Collection).

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Fig. 24. *SS War Fig*, launched 17 Aug. 1920, mined off Danish coast, 26 April 1944.
(Claire Field Collection).

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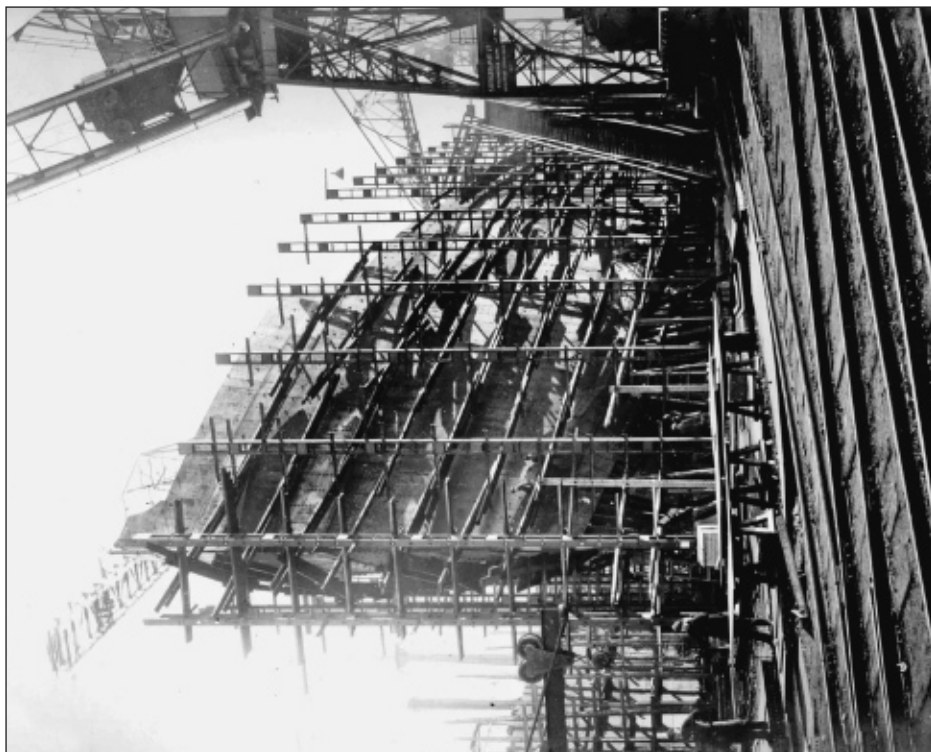


Fig. 25. *SS War Odyssey*, launched 30 Sept. 1920,
lost in hurricane in the western Atlantic, 5 March 1921.
(Claire Field Collection).

Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Claire Field.

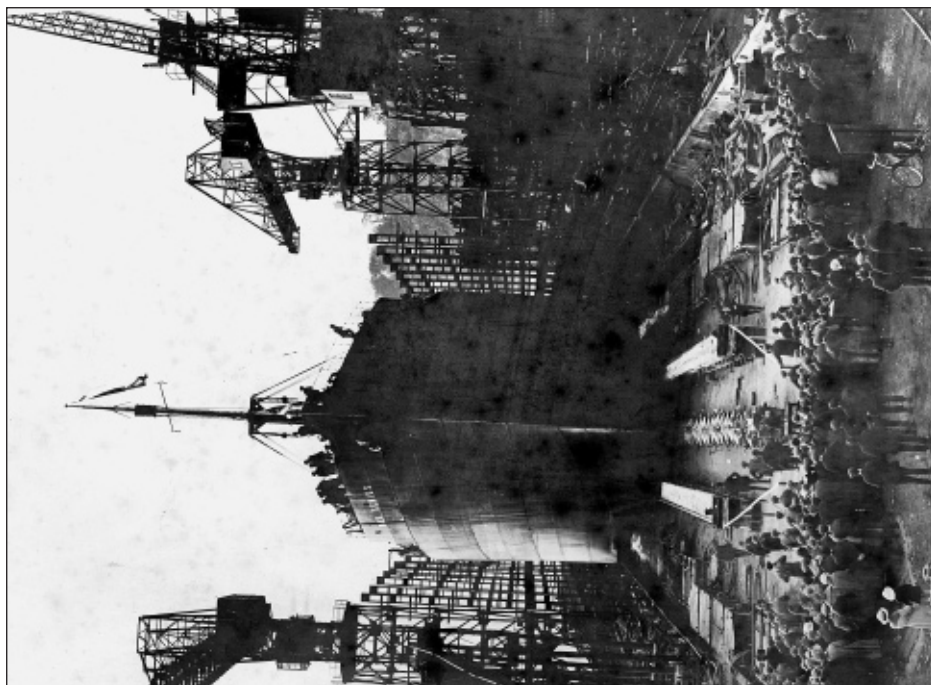


Fig. 26. *SS War Genius*, launched 30 Oct. 1920,
scuttled off mouth of river Plate, 4 Sept. 1939.
(Claire Field Collection).

Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Claire Field.



Fig. 27. *SS War Epic*, launched 14 Dec. 1920, ran aground off Rorvik, 18 Dec. 1942.
(Claire Field Collection).

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Fig. 28. *SS War Idyll (Concordia)*, launched 7 Aug. 1921, scrapped at Trieste, 1932.

Reproduced from www.photoship.co.uk.

Source: unknown.



Fig. 29. Port of London Hopper No. 25, launched 1922.

Source: www.hwblack.bundle.co.uk.



Fig. 30. *SS Cynthiana* on the stocks at Finch's slips, 1921; she was scuttled off Bordeaux, 25 Aug. 1944.
(Claire Field Collection).

Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Claire Field.



Fig. 31. Nov. 1919. Slipways Nos. 1 & 2 contain the *War Glory* and the *War Iliad* in the early stages of build, whilst scaffolding is being erected on slipway No. 3.
(Claire Field Collection).
Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Claire Field.



Fig. 32. May 1920. The *War Glory* had been launched from No. 1 slipway and the other five 'N' pattern ships were in various stages of completion with the *War Idyll* in slipway No. 6, just above keel height.
(Claire Field Collection).
Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Claire Field.



Fig. 33. 30 Sept. 1920. The day of the launch of *War Odyssey* from slipway No. 3, showing the *War Genius*, *War Epic* and *War Idyll* in increasing stages of completion. Note the stamp of the Monmouth Shipbuilding Company Ltd in the bottom right-hand corner.
(Claire Field Collection).

Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Claire Field.



Fig. 34. Aug. 1921. The *War Idyll* ready for launching with the tanker *Cynthia* on the stocks in Finch's yard, near the bridge. Scaffolding has been taken down on slipways 5 & 4.
(Claire Field Collection).

Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Claire Field.

GWENT SEALS XII

By Mark Lodwick and David H. Williams

1. The Seal of Meurig ab Adam



(Reverse Image)

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Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.*

This lead matrix, of perhaps the mid-thirteenth century, was found by Mr Mike Connors at Kemeys Commander at NGR: SO 3498 0478, and reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Wales. The matrix is circular (with a diameter of 29.3mm and a weight of 15.2gm) and has lost the handling loop on the rear (with a surviving depth of 5.9mm). The rear is flat with lugs at the apex and the base, the larger lug at the apex will have been perforated in order to secure the seal. The seal die has a simple eight-point star or octfoil as its device. Some of the letters of the legend, given in fairly early Lombardic capitals, are difficult to read, but can be interpreted perhaps as:

+ S' MEV[RV]CI : AP ADAM

Despite the fact that it does not bear his father's arms (on a bend, three pheons), it is quite possible that this was the seal used by Meurig, a son of Adam Gwent [Adam ab Iorwerth], steward to Morgan ap Hywel, lord of Caerleon (*ob.* 1248), who granted Adam lands in Caerleon, Edlogan (the region west of the Usk and north of Caerleon), and Llebenydd (the western part of the Caldicot Levels).¹ Meurig is likely to have been born in the opening decades of the thirteenth century, and was still alive in 1278.² He may for convenience have purchased a ready-made matrix on which his name was engraved, or else did not employ his father's arms as he may have been an illegitimate son: Adam fathered several children, some illegitimate. The finding of this seal somewhat distant from Adam Gwent's home territory may suggest that Meurig (if it is his seal, as seems likely) was on a hunting expedition, or for some other reason had occasion to travel.

¹ *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, vol. 1, 294.

² Bradney, Sir J.A., *A History of Monmouthshire Volume 3 Part 2 The Hundred of Usk (Part 2)* (Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, London, 1923, reprinted by Merton Priory Press, 1993) 218. Bradney based his facts upon the papers of Thomas Wakeman, held now by the Society of Antiquaries of London.

2. *The Seal of Tudor ab Ithel*



*Reproduced by kind permission of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.
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This lead matrix, of perhaps mid-thirteenth to early-fourteenth century date, was found by Mr Steve Woods, and reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Wales by Mr Dave Arnold, from the community of Llanhennock (Llanhenwg) at NGR: ST 367952. It is in a good state of preservation, as indeed are most matrices engraved in lead, and depicts a fine stylized fleur-de-lis – a popular seal device of the time. The seal die is pointed oval in shape, measuring 30.8 by 22.1mm. The sides of the die are bevelled, widening to the matrix face and giving it a trapezoidal section. The die misses the loop at the apex (with a surviving length of 36.1mm and a weight of 21.7gm). The broken loop was unusually positioned protruding above the top of the matrix with a surviving depth of 6.5mm, while a low, V-shaped rib continues from the loop to the base of the die (giving the seal an overall thickness of 5.7mm). The legend reads, in Lombardic Capitals:

+ S' TVDER AB ITHAEL

The personal name of Tudor appears from surviving documentation to have been uncommon in thirteenth/fourteenth century Gwent. This fact, taken together with the location of the seal find – close to what must have been an ancient ridgeway leading from Llangybi to Llanhennock, suggests that Tudor may not have been a native of Monmouthshire, but was on a journey when he mislaid his seal or even had it stolen.

REVIEWS

Suggett, Richard and Stevenson, Greg, *Cyflwyno cartrefi cefn gwlad cymru, introducing houses of the welsh countryside* (Y Lolfa in association with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Talybont, 2010); ISBN 978 1 84771 2769; 200mm x 210mm; 204 pp; colour illus. and maps; £14-95.

This well-illustrated compact book is a welcome addition to the growing *corpus* relating to Welsh architectural history. Richard Suggett of the Royal Commission introduces key concepts and themes very well and ‘appreciations’ of particular examples of house types are provided by freelance architectural historian, Greg Stevenson.

It is useful to understand the context of the book which builds on Peter Smith’s *Houses of the Welsh Countryside* first published in 1975. It was written as a companion to the S4C series *Cartrefi Cefn Gwlad Cymru* which introduced key themes relating to traditional architecture to a wider audience. That series sparked additional S4C productions such as the interesting and entertaining series *Y Tŷ Cymreig*, the Welsh house. The cooperative venture with television production companies has contributed to the success of the current volume where the excellent traditional plans and drawings of the Royal Commission are supplemented with computer generated images produced by the Commission for the original S4C series. The aerial view and hall interior of Bryndraenog, Radnorshire provide a case in point.

The first house type examined is the Hall house including ‘peasant halls’, characteristically timber constructions. Interestingly, the Welsh text simply describes this category as *Y Tŷ Neuadd*, the hall house, while the English version presents the section as *The Medieval Hall*. The Welsh text does go on to explain the medieval origins of the design, explaining that ‘Tŷ o goed, fel rheol, oedd y tŷ neuadd canoloesol’. One of the featured examples is Hendre’ rywydd-uchaf, originally constructed in Llangynhafal, Denbighshire, but now re-erected at St Fagans.

A second category is the earliest ‘storeyed houses’ in Wales, the Snowdonia house. These structures are interesting but of limited application for readers of *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*.

Much more directly relevant, on the other hand, is the longhouse. This is a widely spread and well-known form of traditional house with people and animals under the same roof. This simple utilitarian design has sparked considerable ‘technical’ debate among specialists, and serious students will find the discussion of ‘pure, derived and vestigial’ forms useful. More general readers may be content with the basic question of whether we are looking at one build or two to achieve the longhouse pattern.

It is interesting that we are now finding good confirmatory evidence that the basic design demonstrates continuity from medieval house forms. There is also an interesting suggestion that in border areas cattle theft may have been a factor in their widespread adoption. The examples are good and the cutaway plans are very helpful. As someone who lives in a longhouse, admittedly an extended and modernised one, the reviewer is well aware that there are good examples in south-east Wales. It is a shame that none are included, with Powys and the Vale of Glamorgan being the closest examples featured.

Similarly, ‘*Tai’r Ffin*, Houses of the Welsh Border’ is a chapter concentrating on Powys, especially Montgomeryshire. The interesting section ‘Towards the Modern House’ does include a photograph of the staircase at Treowen, Wonastow, but the fairly lengthy subsection on gatehouses doesn’t include excellent examples like Moyne’s Court. Engine Row from the ironworks at Blaenafon is included in the section on cottages, although the extent to which these industrial rows qualify as ‘cottages of the countryside’ might be debated.

A final section addresses the need for ‘Saving Houses’ with an extract from a memoir by Peter Smith. It is well worth reading and digesting.

In summary, this is an interesting, informative, and very well-presented book which can be highly recommended. It would be even better if it went further in filling the ‘Gwent shaped hole’ which sometimes bedevils Welsh historical accounts. The examples from the region are limited to a now lost window from Alltybela, Llangwm, Engine Row and two images of the staircase at Treowen. It’s a good staircase but there is much more which could have been included.

The Welsh language text is nicely ‘user friendly’. Mae cyfieithiad Cymraeg yn dda ond, eto, bydd yn well gyda mwya am ardal Went!

Ray Howell

Kennedy, Dina, *MAGOR ~ Fragments of History* (History Into Print, Studley, 2010); ISBN: 978-1-85858-339-6; paperback, 150mm x 210mm; 64 pp; £5-95.

The sure foundation for this book is firmly laid by the first sentence of its foreword: ‘Having collected a large amount of material on the history of Magor I realised that I ought to do something with it, rather than just let it pile up on the shelf and this little book is the result’. I am sure that many reading this text will have very similar ‘piles’, some of which will have long outgrown their ‘shelves’, often to be found steadily expanding across any available floor-space! As a format, this approach is a great strength of the book. The phenomenon has been recognised for a long time: the eighth/ninth-century historian Nennius also claimed to have ‘made a heap of all he found’.¹

Seemingly basic facts such as the dates of the opening of the two Severn bridges, the steelworks at Llanwern, and the brewery show the major, often rapid, changes that have affected Magor and its demographics through time. The study of driving licences issued to Magor addresses is an inspired and informative approach illustrating the varied nature and speed of change. This style makes chapter one an engaging hook for the general (or less historically trained) reader having a geographical link with Magor, as well as those with a more specific historical research interest or expertise.

Whilst full referencing could have nearly doubled the size of the book, and probably would have prohibited its publication in this excellent format, this, partly anthological, work would have been greatly enhanced by it. This would have allowed those newly acquainted with the subject matter to find expanded routes to further, specific, research. Nevertheless, the ‘Note on sources’ for each chapter largely facilitates this.

This book draws together data for Magor from many and diverse sources and provides it with context which makes it very readable. The cluster of *Inquisitions post Mortem* noted between 1352 and 1363 recall the near-apocalyptic effect of the Black Death at nearby Caldicot.² The mysterious ‘port’ of Abergwaitha and its ‘way leading ...towards Wentwood’ cries out for future detailed investigation and study. Potentially unfamiliar terminology such as ‘demesne land’, ‘coquette’ and

¹ Morris, J., *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals*, Arthurian Period Sources Vol. 8 (Phillimore & Co. Ltd, Chichester, 1980) 6.

² Kissock, J., ‘Settlement and Society’ in Griffiths, R.A., Hopkins, T. and Howell, R. (eds), *The Gwent County History Volume 2* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2008) 83; and Davies, R. R., ‘Plague and Revolt’ also in Griffiths, R.A., Hopkins, T. and Howell, R. (eds), *The Gwent County History Volume 2* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2008) 223–6.

'gout' are helpfully explained within the narrative making this book a good introduction to the variety of historical sources and terms encountered in any study of this type. The concluding section is a fine demonstration of the delightful properties of internet search engine enquiries.

MAGOR ~ Fragments of History is a very good introduction to the subject in a high-quality format for a very reasonable price. It is highly commended to the people of Magor and others with an interest in learning more about, or researching further, the history of this place and its peoples.

Mark Lewis

Williams, Chris and Williams, Sian Rhiannon (eds), Griffiths, Ralph A. (general ed.), *The Gwent County History. Volume 4. Industrial Monmouthshire, 1780–1914* (University of Wales Press on behalf of the Gwent County History Association, Cardiff, 2011); ISBN 978-0-7083-2365-6; e-ISBN 978-0-7083-2366-3; hardback, 190mm x 245mm; xxii + 373 pp. with 39 figs, 5 colour plates, 17 tables, 10 maps; £65.

This is, perhaps, the most eagerly awaited book in the highly successful Gwent county history series. It covers a protean age when the Industrial Revolution transformed Monmouthshire, which became drawn into the political and social world of Great, even 'Greater', Britain. The monuments, the industrial housing, chapels and the institutes in the Valleys, the schools and Newport's docks are with us still.

The first of eighteen chapters, 'Population and Populations Movements' is a thorough piece of work, with no fewer than three appendices, five maps and seven tables. Full use is made of the census returns; population increases in the Valleys are well-documented. The chapter sets the scene, but there are weaknesses. Should very local population movements e.g. from Tidenham to Chepstow be counted? Table 1.4 has a population fall of – 49.6 per cent for Caerleon, in 1891–1911, which must be an error, as the returns for 1861–91 and the aggregate for 1801–1911 show increases of 110 and 148.8 per cent respectively. Finally, there is no attempt to quantify immigration from the West Country. W.T.R. Pryce, however, maps Monmouthshire's population explosion from 47,037 in 1801 to 396,100 in 1911 well. His style is elegiac in part, some of the narrative calling to mind Ernest Hemingway's novel, *Men Without Women* and the film *How Green Was My Valley*.

'The Rural Economy' is written by Ian Pincombe in an entertaining style. He wears his scholarship lightly, covering a range of topics varying from animal husbandry to rural industry easily, but considering also whether an agrarian revolution took place in Monmouthshire. Extensive use is made of estate archives from Gwent Record Office and the National Library of Wales.

'Communications and commerce' (by Trevor Boyns) are described in a lucid manner starting with parameters such as distances and river transport. There are clear accounts of the development of a network of turnpike trusts and also of the construction of canals and tramways in the west of the county to link collieries and ironworks with the port of Newport. The railway network was constructed between the 1820s and 1886 when the Severn Tunnel was completed, a highlight being Thomas Kennard's completion of the Crumlin Viaduct, in 1857. No account of transport and communications would be complete without the accounts, included here, of the construction of the Newport docks and provision of finance.

Although occupying two chapters ('The Iron and Steel Industry' by John Elliott and 'The Coal Industry' by Bill Jones), iron, steel and coal can be considered as a single issue. Iron was a 'sunrise' industry from 1780 to 1830. During the period from 1830 to 1885, there was a shift from wrought

iron to steel, and market expansions, but a loss of competitive advantage. During the period leading to 1914, most new steel production was on the coast and was concentrated on such new concerns as Newport's Orb works and Nettlefold's Rogerstone works, so facilitating access to raw materials.

By the late nineteenth century, Monmouthshire had become an extractive rather than a manufacturing economy, as coal mining had replaced metal manufacture as the main industry. There had been mining of coal from surface 'patches' for the smelting of metals for the domestic market for some time before 1780. The transition gradually took place in the years before 1840. In the period 1840–1914, new mining villages, such as Aberbargoed, Cwm and Ynysddu were built and deep collieries sunk, although such traditional features as small collieries and the winning of coal by tadge or pick continued. The key aspects of this later period are the development of big markets for the sale of coal; steam locomotives; bunkering of ships; and export. Bill Jones completes this sound study with descriptions of the concentration of collieries, technical improvements and safety, including mines rescue stations at Crumlin and New Tredegar.

The theme of social history is started by C. Roy Lewis's chapter on 'Urban Society'. He considers the six Anglo-Norman towns of eastern Monmouthshire: Monmouth, Abergavenny, Chepstow, Usk, Caerleon and the special case, Newport, the slower rate of growth of the first five being linked to market activities, infilling and the development of small suburbs. There is a large section on the new industrial settlements in the west of Monmouthshire such as Abertillery, Tredegar and Bedwellty. These include descriptions of supporting metallurgical and coal industries. Newport, with its phenomenal growth from 1,135 people in 1801 to 83,691 people in 1911, has a section of its own which includes the building of new streets and suburbs and the construction of the Newport docks.

There are sections on improvements in sanitation and house construction and on John Hodder Moggridge's model villages such as Blackwood and Fleur de Lis, the new mining villages, Markham and Oakdale, and the construction of public institutions: schools, places of worship and workmen's clubs. Villa communities for the new middle classes in the industrial towns and the more traditional patterns in the market towns are also described.

Ian Pincombe writes to his usual high standard on 'Rural Society', covering such issues as class relations, housing and crime, finishing with a discussion of alternatives. In taking an opportunity to downgrade Lady Llanover, he does not shrink from controversy.

The part on culture starts with the 'Languages of Monmouthshire', an account by Sian Rhiannon Williams, which is precise and closely reasoned. The Welsh and English speaking areas in the early-nineteenth century are defined, there are also descriptions of the decline in Welsh from church records and of the stronghold of Welsh speaking, the Rhymney Valley. A section on languages such as Scots Gaelic, Yiddish and Italian deals with small minorities, but Irish, the third language of Monmouthshire naturally dates from the 1840s.

Other issues relate to the immigration of Welsh speakers of Mid and West Wales to the upper Rhymney Valley and of the English, especially from the West Country and Midlands. There is an account of institutions which nurtured Welsh: nonconformist churches, benefit and friendly societies and the eisteddfodau where poets, preachers and writers, using their bardic names took a lead. There is an account of Lady Llanover and the decline of Welsh speaking to 9.4 per cent in 1911, which was further accelerated by the Great War. This account is both fluent and fair.

A great debt is owed to Sam Adams, who stepped in at the last minute to write on 'Literature in Welsh and English'. He rightly interprets his brief widely to include: poetry, journalism, topographical works, guides, religious publishing and novels in both English and Welsh. Under these circumstances it is remarkable that there was one omission only, of the *South Wales Argus*, founded in 1892.

Sian Rhiannon Williams has produced an information-packed work on her own specialism 'Education and Literacy'. She covers the years from 1780 to 1833, describing grammar schools, British schools and schools founded by the Church of England National Society. The period 1833 to 1914 starts with the award of government grants and Tremenhoe's report in response to Chartism. Forster's *Education Act*, 1870 was followed by provision of compulsory and free education through Sandon and Mundella's *Acts*. The teaching of Welsh, and proper discussion of teacher training, follow the period ending with the *Education Act*, 1902 when the School Boards, introduced in 1870, were replaced by Monmouthshire County Council and Newport County Borough Council as local education authorities, whilst Abertillery and Ebbw Vale UDCs formed exempted education authorities. Library provision under the *Public Libraries Act*, 1850 is also described.

Secondary Education is approached through the foundation of intermediate schools under the (*Wales only*) *Intermediate and Technical Education Act*, 1889. The findings of the Schools Inquiry (Taunton) Commission, 1864–68 led to the reform of the grammar schools and their supporting charities. This account ends with a study on adult and further education, with illiteracy falling to 1.85 per cent by 1910.

The chapter on 'Churches and Chapels' can be likened to the curate's egg, good in parts. The theme is cleverly underpinned by the religious censuses of 1851 and 1906. There is a thorough account of Nonconformity linked to the various revivals, sometimes inspired by fear of death from cholera (*timor mors conturbat me*) and there are descriptions of religious groups, such as the Roman Catholics, Salvation Army and Mormons, but the account of the Church of England only goes as far as the mid-nineteenth century, which is unfortunate, as the Established Church was the largest denomination in 1851 and second largest denomination in 1906.

Professor Gareth Williams's account of 'Popular Culture, Leisure and Recreation' is information-packed, covering subjects as diverse as the impact of the Welsh language, lodges, friendly societies, libraries, workmen's institutes, eisteddfodau, choirs and fairs.

The brief account of 'Visual Culture' by Peter Lord and John Morgan-Guy is a gem, subject matter ranging through early commissioned work, etchings and drawings, sculpture and the paintings by Monmouthshire's first major artist James Flewitt Mullock.

Government is covered by two of the best chapters in the book. 'Parliamentary Representation' by Margaret Escott is a work of polished scholarship, making extensive use of archives. It covers the three Reform Acts of 1832, 1867 and 1884 and the introduction of the secret ballot in 1872. The overall theme is democratization, the last two measures ending the domination of local parliamentary position by the two great landowners, the Morgans of Tredegar and the duke of Beaufort.

Andy Croll's short account of 'Local Government' is concise and logical. He covers all the main issues arising from statute, the doctrine of *ultra vires*, the 'ad hoc' authorities and Monmouthshire county government's make-over, under the *Local Government Act*, 1888, which separated local government from Monmouthshire's role as a court of quarter sessions.

The discussion of 'grass roots movements' falls into two chapters. Chris Williams writes well on 'Popular Movements, 1780–1850': 'Captain Swing', the Rebecca Riots, coalfield strikes, the Scotch Cattlers and the Newport Rising of 1839 and its aftermath.

'Trade Unionism and the Labour Movement, 1850–1914' is a fine tribute to the late John Williams, who died, after finishing his task, when this book was still in preparation. His is a magisterial work, analysing employment, describing the rise of trade unionism, especially in the coal industry, which led to the creation of the South Wales Miners Federation. He ends by describing the setting up of Monmouthshire's trades and labour councils and the way in which leading unionists became councillors and members of parliament.

Finally, Chris Williams entertains with ‘The Question of Monmouthshire’, by testing the issue of whether Monmouthshire was in England or Wales, through the concepts of legal status, politics and change throughout the period from 1780 to 1914.

The Gwent County History. Volume 4. Industrial Monmouthshire, 1780–1914, is very good indeed. There are two clear errors. The wrong McCarthy is identified in the photograph on page 126. This is of a Daniel McCarthy, born in Blackwood, but the caption identifies him as Charles McCarthy of Tralee in Ireland. There is secondly a reference on page 169 to the acquittal of the Chartist, John Partridge, who actually served six months for riot and conspiracy. [I am grateful to my former colleague, Mr Colin Gibson, archivist at Gwent Archives, for supplying this information].

Not enough use is made of archives, which are copious for the period 1780–1914. Only Ian Pincombe, Margaret Escott and Andy Croll make good use of archives; others could have done so. There is a slight tendency to overemphasize Monmouthshire as traditional Wales whilst underplaying Monmouthshire as unbound Prometheus.

However, the virtues outweigh the defects. The book is beautifully presented with fine illustrations, including the ultimate iconic photograph of Thomas Kennard and colleagues, standing wearing ‘Stovepipe’ hats, on the roadway of the Crumlin Viaduct in 1857, before the track was laid. Good use is made of J.F. Mullock’s paintings. All contributions are beautifully written, accessible and information-packed. *Volume 4* will attract the specialist scholar, sixth-former and all who love history as a hobby. It is a tribute to the hard work and commitment of editors and contributors alike.

David Rimmer

THE TRUE ANTI-PAMELA: SCANDAL AND SCULLDUGGERY IN 1730s ROSS AND MONMOUTHSHIRE

An addendum by Charlotte Mitchell and Julian Mitchell to the article they published in *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, Vol. XXVII (2011)

We are most grateful to Roz Lowe, the Herefordshire historian, for identifying the ‘Dr Doomsday’ of Balliol, whom James Parry regarded as a dangerous rival for the affections of Mary Powell. ‘Dr Doomsday’ was John Roberts, fourth son of Walter Roberts of Ross (a legal family), and his second wife, Eleanor White, whom he married in 1700. John was born in 1709, three years before Parry. He matriculated at Balliol on 17 Oct. 1727, took his BA in 1731, his MA in 1734, and his B Med in 1737. He must have spent the term-times in Oxford, so was not a daily threat to Parry’s ambitions. His mother was the daughter of George White, the ironmaster of New Weir. When he rode there with Parry, boasting of the new suit trimmed with frosted buttons and lined with white shagreen that he was ordering for his intended marriage to Mary, he was probably going to see his grandparents, who lived at Goodrich House. His reasons for not pursuing Mary after Parry’s dismissal remain unknown. He died in 1777, leaving everything to his wife Jane.

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FIELD EXCURSIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES, 2011

A visit to Kentchurch Court: Wednesday 4 May 2011

The weather was cold but sunny as we assembled in the car park of Kentchurch Court. Our hostess, Jan Lucas Scudamore, divided us into two groups for the tour. Her historical knowledge and her anecdotes proved fascinating and highly amusing. It is thought that Owain Glyndwr ended his days at Kentchurch which has been in the Scudamore family for over a thousand years. Originally it was a fourteenth-century castle, then largely rebuilt by John Nash c.1800. The very fine paintings were of great interest, also the grand hall and imposing staircase. Our members' attention was specially drawn to the fifteenth-century panel which is said to portray Glyndwr. After a delicious lunch in the dining room, we visited the gardens and bought unusual plants.

Annual General Meeting: Saturday 7 May 2011

The Annual General Meeting took place at Caerleon Endowed Junior School beginning at 2 pm. Following the business section of the AGM, Dr Mark Lewis, the curator of the National Roman Legion Museum gave a talk entitled 'The Beyond in our Midst. The Archaeology of Eternity at Roman *Isca*'. Dr Lewis's lecture looked at archaeological evidence for belief in the after-life in Roman *Isca*. This was assessed through excavations and finds, many of which are in the National Roman Legion Museum. Mark also provided cutting-edge information about the new discoveries made by Dr Peter Guest (*see below*) concerning the buildings found outside the walls of the fortress of the Second Augustan Legion at Caerleon. Afterwards, Mark answered numerous questions. We extend our grateful thanks to Mark for his informative lecture.

A visit to High Glanau Manor: Saturday 11 June 2011

High Glanau is an example of an Arts and Crafts house, designed by Avray Tipping, which retains its original features. High Glanau is fortunate to have found such owners as Helena and Hilary Gerrish and the Association's visit was a delight. We settled down in the lounge for our hostess's talk on the life and work of Avray Tipping. (Her book, *Edwardian Country Life, the Story of Avray Tipping*, was published in 2011). The sun came out for our stroll in the garden which Helena Gerrish has restored to its original glory. We had tea on the terrace looking out to the distant view of the Sugar Loaf and the Skirrid.

A visit to Chepstow in the company of Rick Turner, a Cadw Inspector of Ancient Monuments: Friday 24 June 2011

Our members met Rick Turner in Beaufort Square, Chepstow, where he showed us the three bay vaulted-roofed undercroft of a rich merchant's house which would have faced onto Chepstow's market square. The stairs to the original upper storey were still *in situ* and an archway, which would have let in light, indicated that the building was not attached to another on its east side. There were bosses on the roof which were thought possibly to represent Bacchus and which fitted in with Rick Turner's theory that it was a wine merchant's cellar. We were indebted to the builder, who had opened up the building on behalf of its owner, Mike Lewis.

We moved on to the castle where Rick showed us the range of rooms built in the bailey by Roger Bigod in 1270 and took us to the cellar. The similarity of the Gothic ribbed roof with three bays re-enforced the idea that the construction we had seen in the town had been used to store the wine of a rich merchant and that the wealth came from trade with Bristol in the thirteenth century.

Rick explained the castle's stages of construction and the importance of status as shown by the lord's toilet and a thirteenth-century balcony created for him to enjoy the view. We were all grateful to Rick for giving up his time to enlighten us.

A visit to Crane Street Baptist chapel, Pontypool, in the company of Canon Arthur J. Edwards: Wednesday 13 July 2011

Canon Edwards, author of *Thomas Thomas of Pontypool, Radical Puritan* (2009), had agreed to talk to us about Dr Thomas at Crane Street English Baptist chapel, a classical-style building which was opened in 1847. Dr Thomas Thomas was the principal of the Baptist college at Pontypool, but was also pastor of Crane Street English Baptist chapel.

Canon Arthur Edwards's talk brought the first pastor of Crane Street chapel to life with humour and a wealth of knowledge. We were indebted to our hostess, Carol Wilkinson, who provided information about past and present membership of the chapel, together with tea and biscuits.

The chapel has a neo-classical exterior with columns like the façade of the Association's Museum at Caerleon which was completed in 1850, three years after Crane Street chapel was constructed. The interior of Crane Street is unusual because of the vibrantly coloured stained glass and the large roof light which creates an amazing effect. As Canon Edwards commented, the interior contrasted with the radical Puritanism of the pastor. The chapel was enlarged by the addition of galleries c.1860. It was of particular interest to members with a Baptist upbringing who compared the austerity and gloom of the buildings they remembered with the light and colour of Crane Street chapel. Some members who spoke Welsh were surprised to learn that Pontypool was becoming increasingly anglicised at that time. Dr Thomas chose to embrace the English Baptist cause, creating centres of worship for the English migrating to the South Wales coalfields.

A visit to the Three Castles of Monmouthshire, White Castle, Grosmont and Skenfrith in the company of our chairman, Jeremy Knight: Saturday 20 August 2011

The Three Castles started out as timber castles. White Castle acquired a twelfth-century stone curtain wall and tower, whereas Skenfrith and Grosmont were developed as high status residences in the early thirteenth century by Hubert de Burgh, earl of Kent. White Castle had a more utilitarian role; military supplies were stored there. Whereas Llantilio Crossenny, in which parish White Castle stands, was the ancient mother church of the district, Skenfrith and Grosmont churches were built outside the gates of their respective castles. At Grosmont (where the original early thirteenth-century timber roof survives over the nave of the church) a medieval borough also sprang up outside its gates and in the fourteenth century, the castle was remodelled as a favourite residence and hunting lodge of the dukes of Lancaster.

After some difficulty finding our way, we arrived at White Castle where Jeremy led our study of the castle. We then moved on to Grosmont church, where one of our members gave us the benefit of her local knowledge. We enjoyed a superb buffet lunch at the *Angel Inn* for which we thanked the staff and where we celebrated Jeremy's birthday. In the sunshine in Grosmont castle, Jeremy described the differences between that castle and White Castle. At Skenfrith castle, Anne Dunton produced two Tudor maps which showed the development of settlement and landscape. Jeremy gave us an overview of the history of Skenfrith church and in the village hall we had tea provided by Sarah Probert and Christabel Hutchings.

An evening in the company of Steve Clarke of Monmouth Archaeology: Thursday 1 September 2011

Steve Clarke had agreed to update us on the recent finds discovered by Monmouth Archaeology in Monmouth. Over twenty members attended this evening visit, and became part of a large group made up of three societies. Steve Clarke led us on a fascinating tour, referring to what had come to light in the town – a bell foundry, pottery and tile kilns, a Mesolithic campsite, a cinder mine and much more. Sue Miles provided past photographs of the riverside with its dense housing and warehouses on the quayside before it was levelled for the bypass. Our president, Ian Burge, gave a vote of thanks.

A visit to Gwent Archives, Ebbw Vale: Saturday 20 October 2011

We assembled at the newly-opened Gwent Archives which have utilised part of the original offices of the Ebbw Vale steelworks. The building is beautiful, but would have been demolished if Gwent Archives and other organisations had not taken up space in the refurbished building. The archives also have a newly-constructed section erected close to the original structure. The complex is architecturally interesting, spacious and functional.

We were met by Gary Tuson, the county archivist, and Tony Hopkins, deputy county archivist. We began with a film and talk by Gary Tuson who was rightly proud of the building which is larger and more functional than the former archives at County Hall. Tony showed us the older part of the building and the new large research room (as it is newly-named), which is such a contrast to the old search room at County Hall. We were then shown the eventual public entrance to the archives and the new structure inscribed with poetic words by the Welsh poet, Gillian Clarke.

Next, we moved on to the conservation areas and storage facilities where some members experienced claustrophobia in the air lock and the narrow corridor surrounding the storage areas. We met again in the public room for more questions and also thanked the archivists for a most interesting visit.

Buffet social evening: Friday 9 December 2011

The social evening took place at our treasurer's and secretary's home, attended by forty-three members who enjoyed a convivial evening. It made a profit of £142 will be used for the memorial fund set up in memory of our former honorary secretary, the late Gwennllian Jones.

Christabel Hutchings and Keith Underwood

The Association's Biannual Public Lecture, Friday 11 November 2011. Dr Peter Guest, 'Excavating Caerleon's Lost City: Recent Work on Caerleon's Monumental Suburb'

On 11 November, Dr Peter Guest, senior lecturer in Roman Archaeology at the School of History, Archaeology and Religion, Cardiff University, gave the Association's biannual lecture before a large audience at Caerleon Endowed School. He dedicated his lecture to the memory of our late honorary secretary, Gwenllian Jones, and that of a well-known Caerleon resident, our member, Dr Russell Rees.

Since its inception, our Association has been closely associated with the archaeology of Roman Caerleon and with the Roman Legion Museum. Dr Guest's lecture described a new and wholly unexpected dimension of the legionary fortress, as revealed in his exploratory excavations. Over many decades, work at Caerleon concentrated on the gradual recovery of the plan of the fortress, often under difficult conditions on small-scale sites within the present town, by Victor Nash Williams and George Boon of the National Museum of Wales, to whose work Peter Guest paid tribute. Though the existence of an extra-mural settlement was known in general terms, even before Nash Williams's excavations at Bearhouse field, geophysical survey has now revealed ranges of buildings on a monumental scale in a large area between the Roman amphitheatre and the river Usk. These include a courtyard complex, which is one of the largest buildings known from Roman Britain. The objective of this season's work was to identify the purpose and date of these buildings.

The work produced a number of surprises. Unlike most of Roman Caerleon, much of the site had escaped later stone-robbing and well-preserved structures lay close below the turf, including buildings with hypocausts and wall plaster. A riverside revetment wall was of re-used pottery roof tiles, a novel constructional technique for Caerleon. The large courtyard complex turned out to be a brick and tile construction, perhaps half-timbered, rather than a high status masonry structure. This does not diminish its importance as a store complex for the supply of the legionary fortress by river. An impressive computer reconstruction showed the fortress in the setting of the new discoveries.

The audience was much impressed both by the professional skills of the excavation team and by the efforts made to welcome the large number of visitors, both Caerleon people and from much further afield, to explain the site to them. In the last week alone, over 5,000 people came to visit the excavations. Channel 4's *Time Team* programme spent three days on site and the results will be shown on television in the New Year.

After the lecture, the audience adjourned for a glass of wine to the Roman Legion Museum, whose staff had given generously of their time and efforts to make the evening the success that it was.

Jeremy K. Knight

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

John Allen is an Emeritus Professor and a Visiting Professor in archaeology in the University of Reading. He pursued a career in sedimentary geology and sedimentology from the 1950s before turning to geoarchaeology in the 1980s, with particular reference to Romano-British and medieval landscapes. In the last decade, his research has emphasized Romano-British and medieval stone and building practices, the use of building stone in Norfolk, the geology and construction of nineteenth-century churches in historic Berkshire and Hampshire. His article on 'Roman and Medieval–Early Modern Building Stones in South East Wales ...' was published in vol. XXI of this journal in 2005.

Peter Burse worked for many years in the computer industry before becoming a government librarian and civil servant at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in Whitehall in July 1993. In December 2006, he took early retirement and returned to his primary interest of researching medieval family history. This paper is the third in a series on Robert fitz Martin: the first, on Robert's Somerset estates, being published in *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset* (March 2011) and the second, on Robert's wife, Matilda Peverel, in *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association* (vol. 143, 2011). Peter Burse lives in Shaftesbury, Dorset.

Naylor Firth was born within sound of Fairfield's Chepstow shipyard and was educated at Monmouth School before taking a degree in geology and chemistry at Cardiff University. Following eight years in the organo-silicon industry at Barry, he obtained a PhD at Bristol University on the mineralogy of the South Wales Coalfield and was a co-investigator of the NASA lunar samples programme. He was appointed scientific adviser and latterly industrial liaison director at the Welsh Office before running his own technical consultancy specializing in environmental sciences and technology transfer. Dr Firth's interests include male voice choir singing, colour photography and local history.

Helen Forshaw is an art history graduate, born and educated in Lancashire. She moved to south-east Wales nearly seventeen years ago from Staffordshire. For the past six years, she has been a custodian for Cadw at the Fortress Baths in Caerleon, a post which fuelled her interest in Roman history. She is currently studying for a Masters degree in regional history at the University of Wales Newport. The subject of her final dissertation reflects a long-held interest in textiles. This has led to research into early modern Monmouthshire, focussing on mercers and their role in urban consumption.

Ray Howell is University of Wales Professor of Welsh Antiquity and Director of the South Wales Centre for historical and interdisciplinary research at University of Wales Newport. He is author of several books including *Searching for the Silures, an Iron Age tribe in south-east Wales* (History Press, 2009). He is general editor of the South Wales Record Society; art and archaeology editor of the international journal *Studia Celtica*; and was a co-editor of the first two volumes of the five-volume *Gwent County History*. He is also chairman of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust and the Glamorgan-Gwent Historic Environment Record Charitable Trust.

Mark Lewis was born and raised in Monmouthshire. His interest in archaeology was nurtured during excavations at Trostrey and Caerwent. He read archaeological conservation and conservation at Cardiff University where he was awarded a PhD for his research on iron corrosion which informed the preservation strategy for Brunel's *Great Britain*. Since 2000, Mark Lewis has been a curatorial officer at the National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon, and since 2006, has also been an archaeological conservator at the National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff. He is currently a trustee of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust.

David Rimmer read history at Manchester University and trained as an archivist at Liverpool University. He was City Archivist of Coventry from 1974 to 1993 and County Archivist of Gwent from 1993 until his retirement in 2008. Whilst at Coventry he published a researched history of Warwick Road Congregational, later United Reformed, church. He was made Honorary Research Fellow by the Coventry Lanchester Polytechnic, now Coventry University, in 1983 and is a member of the Gwent County History Association committee.

Colin Thomas retired as reader in Geography at the University of Ulster, Coleraine in 2004, having previously lectured at Leicester University and UCW Aberystwyth. Born in Newbridge, he graduated in Geography and Anthropology at Aberystwyth, held the E.A. Lewis Research Scholarship in Welsh Economic History, and completed a doctorate on rural settlement and land tenure in Merioneth. His main academic interests lie in historical geography and population studies, both in the UK and abroad, and his publications include contributions to the *National Atlas of Wales*, *The Merioneth County History* (vol. 2) and *The Gwent County History* (vol. 4).

David H. Williams was born in Newport and educated at Bassaleg School and Trinity College, Cambridge. He has two main research interests, the study of seals and Cistercian studies. He is acknowledged as one of the foremost scholars in the latter field. David Williams accomplished this whilst serving as an Anglican priest in Wales (including in the diocese of Monmouth), Libya and Poland, from which he returned in 1997 to settle near Aberystwyth. He was honorary editor of *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* from 1990 to 2000, since when he has been honorary assistant editor and as acting editor, he has taken both vols XXV–XXVI (2009–10) and vol. XXVII (2011) through the press.