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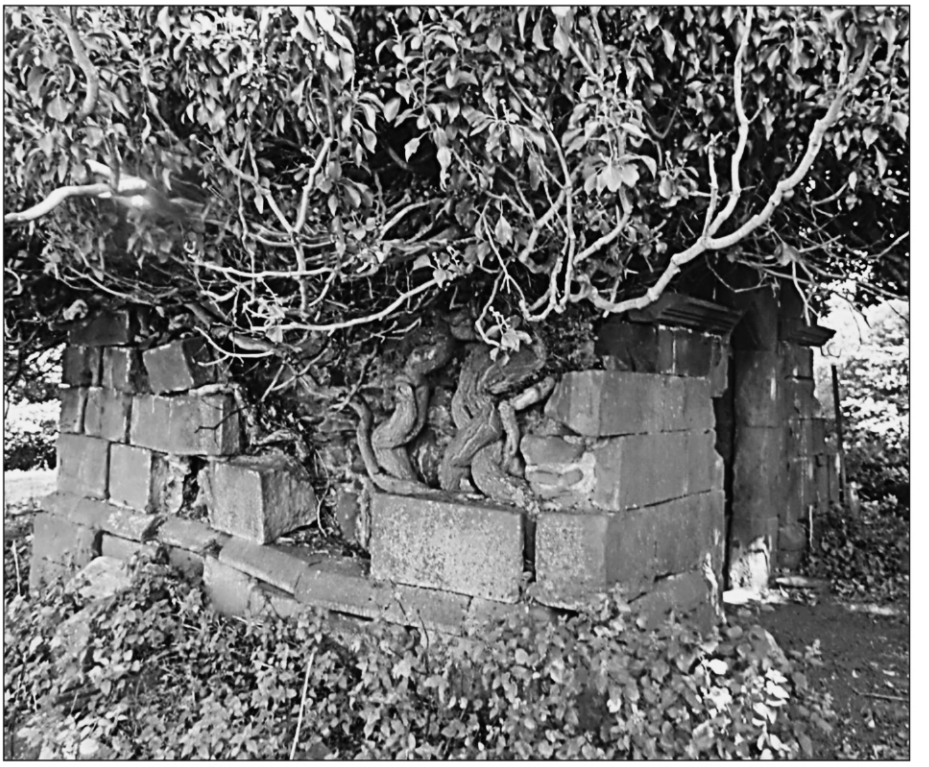

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Front cover: A Troy conduit house seen from the west. *See* 'The Evidence for an Extant Conduit House on the Troy Estate, Monmouth', Fig. 2.

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ABERGAVENNY PRIORY: A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS ITS EARLY HISTORY

By Bruce Coplestone Crowe

The broad outline of the founding of this priory in the reign of William Rufus by Hamelin de Ballon, a Frenchman of the county of Maine, as a cell of the Benedictine abbey of St Vincent-de-Prés at Le Mans, is well-known.[1] However, the recent discovery by Mr Richard Morgan of Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff, of a *Memorandum*,[2] drawn up by the priory in the thirteenth century and copied into the Court Book of Llanellen in the seventeenth century, which calendars all the charters then its possession (many of which were previously unknown), both amplifies and adds to what we know of that process. The purpose of this paper is to review the history of its foundation in the light of this document (the text of which is given in English in an Appendix) and of charters from the cartularies of St Vincent's.

Hamelin was the son of a certain Drogo (Dru, Drew) who held the fief of Courtoin (between Ballon and Dangeul) from the lord of Ballon. With his younger brother Winebald he played a prominent role supporting King William Rufus in the failed baronial rebellion of 1088 that aimed to replace the king with his elder brother, Duke Robert of Normandy. When the castle of Ballon, which belonged to family of Bellême-Montgomery, lords of Bellême and earls of Shrewsbury, fell into the hands of Duke Robert after a siege lasting several weeks, they joined Rufus in England where they were rewarded for their loyalty with lands. Hamelin received four manors currently in royal hands in the counties of Herefordshire (Much Marcle, valued at £30 annually at *Domesday* (1086) and Wiltshire (Castle Eaton, £1 10s 0d; Great Sutton, £5; and Great Cheverell, *c*£100)[3] (see Fig. 1), while Winebald received the barony that Thurstan fitzRolf had had in England (valued at about £170 per annum in 1086) and which he had forfeited for taking part in the rebellion.[4] In that same year Winebald was witness to a charter of Robert de Bellême, earl of Shrewsbury 1098–1102, granting the church of St Leonard of Bellême to the abbey of Marmoutier at Tours.[5] Robert was much involved in the fighting around Ballon in 1098 and 1099 referred to below. The building of the first castle at Ballon, the one that Hamelin and his brother knew, is attributed to a previous Robert who died in about 1032. Much Marcle seems to have been given to Hamelin so as to foster an interest in the south Welsh border in general – and Gwent in particular – while the other English

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Abbreviations

Premier Cartulaire = Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Saint -Vincent du Mans: premier cartulaire 572–1188 (ed. l'abbé R.Charles & vicomte M.d'Elbenne, Mamers et Le Mans, 1886–1913).

Liber Controversarium = Liber Controversarium Sancti Vincentii Cenomannensis ou Second Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Saint-Vincent du Mans (ed. Chédeville, A., Paris, 1968).

1 Dugdale, Sir William, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (6 vols. in 8, London, 1816–30), iv, 613–7; Round, J.H., *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France A.D. 918–1206* (London, 1899), nos. 1045–8, and 'The Family of Ballon and the Conquest of South Wales', *Studies in Peerage and Family History* (Westminster, 1901), 181–215; Graham, R., 'Four Alien Priories in Monmouthshire', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, new series, **35** (1929), 102–21; Cowley, F.G., *The Monastic Order in South Wales 1066–1349* (Cardiff, 1977); Olding, F., *Discovering Abergavenny: Archaeology and History* (Abergavenny, 2012).

2 Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff, DKT/UNL/18.

3 *Domesday Book, Vol. 1* (Record Commission, 1783), ff.64b, 73, 73–73b, 179b.

4 Round, 'The Family of Ballon and the Conquest of South Wales', 181–210.

5 Abbé Barret (ed.), *Cartulaire de Marmoutier pour le Perche* (Mortagne, 1894), no. 13.

manors he received were perhaps designed to ease his route to and from Maine via the ports at Wareham and Barfleur, quite apart from the monetary value to him of course.

Hamelin and his brother were probably brought to the border of Gwent by the king in 1093. In March and April he lay sick at Gloucester and it seems likely the general Norman advance into Wales that began in that year was planned by Rufus and his leading magnates at this time. This advance saw the building by Hamelin of a castle at Abergavenny on the lower Usk at the behest of the king and in support of Norman forces then advancing into Brecknock (Brycheiniog) on the upper reaches of the river.[6] At the same time Winebald was set up in the castle at Caerleon that Thurstan fitzRolf, his predecessor in his English lands, had held at *Domesday* and which he had also forfeited. It was not, however, until Rufus had conducted his own campaign in south Wales in 1097 and was returning to England via Gwent that the king gave the castle to him to keep, not in fee but probably for an annual render.

Once established in his castle at Abergavenny Hamelin founded a town in its outer bailey and then set about establishing the third vital element of the Norman conquest and settlement in Wales – a religious house where his and his family's souls could be prayed for constantly. His choice of the Benedictine abbey of St Vincent at Le Mans for the source of its monks was a natural one in that he had already endowed it with the tithe of his demesne lands at Courtoin and that he was now accounted its 'protector' (Appendix, no. i). On 11 August in an unknown year before the death of Rufus in 1100 he was in the chapter house of St Vincent's to issue this charter, which marked the founding of Abergavenny Priory –

> Hamelin, born at Ballon, a noble and most prudent man, endowed with most ample gifts and honours for his industry by William king of the English, son of the most wealthy King William, came to the abbey of St Vincent and St Lawrence and sought [admission to] the benefits of the place, begging that for love of him the monks would receive Hubert, a knight of his, into the monastery. At whose earnest entreaty they received that knight into their order, for love of him, and also consented to make himself with his wife and his sons, and Odo de Tiron, a knight of his who was with him, partakers in all the benefits [of their order].
>
> And Hamelin gave them the chapel of his castle which the above glorious king had given him which in the British tongue they call *Bergevensis*, and [the tithe] of all the appurtenances, present and future, of its church and in the castle; and land for making a principal church in which they should serve God, and land for their own dwellings, and gardens and orchards and vineyards, and all things necessary; and [land for making] a *bourg* also and an oven of their own, with water for a mill, and fishing in his waters wherever their men would fish. He also gave elsewhere one church with all its appurtenances and land for ten ploughs and the tithes of the ploughs he had or might have in demesne.
>
> All this he gave as freely as he held it of the king and placed his gift on the altar. He promised also that he would make the king agree to this and confirm the charter, and would help them [to induce] his knights similarly to grant their tithes. Enacted in the chapter house of St Vincent on the Feast of St Tiburtius 11 August and of which these were the witnesses: Odo de T[iron]…..Godfrey fitzWaldric, Hugh the monk (*famulo*), Walter fitzHamon and Andrew his brother.[7]

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[6] Crouch, D., 'The Slow Death of Kingship in Glamorgan, 1067–1158', *Morgannwg*, **29** (1985), 29, and 'The Transformation of Medieval Gwent' in *The Gwent County History, Vol. 2 The Age of the Marcher Lords, c1070–1536* (ed. Griffiths, R.A., Hopkins, T. & Howell, R., Cardiff, 2008), 17; Courtney, P., 'The Marcher Lordships', *ibid*., 53.

[7] *Premier Cartulaire*, no. 832; Round, J.H. (ed. & trans.), *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France 918–1206* (London, 1899), no. 1045.

Hubert the knight is probably the Hubert de Saint-Martin who had witnessed Hamelin's part of an agreement reached after Hugh de Courtoin disputed possession of the tithes of Courtoin with the abbey.[8] Regarding the witnesses, Odo de Tiron came from Tiron in Courcement within the fief of Ballon.[9] He associated himself with both Hamelin and Winebald de Ballon in a grant they made to Bermondsey Priory in London in 1092.[10] Walter fitzHamon was a Manceaux, owing St Vincent's the rent of certain lands near Le Mans. He and his brother Andrew witnessed two of the surviving charters of the abbey. Hugh, monk of St Vincent, occurs frequently in its cartulary.[11]

What had brought Hamelin to Le Mans with his wounded knight sometime in the years 1097–1100? Almost certainly it was one of two campaigns in Maine that Rufus conducted in 1098 and 1099. He and his brother were almost certainly involved on Rufus's behalf, especially as in both years there was heavy fighting in and around their honourial castle of Ballon, a castle the Normans regarded as the 'Gateway to Maine'.[12] The mortal wound received by Hubert de Saint-Martin was probably a result of this fighting. The details of the campaigns (which are extremely complicated) need not detain us here, the important point being that in both years King William was eventually able to make triumphal entries into Le Mans, at the beginning of August (in 1098) or end of July (in 1099).[13] The timing of his first entry strongly suggests that the former of these years was the one that saw Hamelin at St Vincent's to issue his charter.

We learn from this charter that there was both a chapel and a church within his castle. The chapel was doubtless for his private use but the church must have been for the people in the town. This town lay within the outer bailey of the castle: market day 'within the gate of [the] castle' is mentioned in the charter of William de Braose quoted below. As the defences of the town and bailey consisted largely of the refurbished bank and ditch of the Roman auxiliary fort underlying it,[14] this church is not St John's. It may perhaps be the church of St James mentioned in two sixteenth century wills or a church or chapel of the Holy Rood mentioned in the eighteenth century *Parochiale Wallicanum*.[15] This latter, however, may have been a chapel over one of the gates into the town, as at Old Sarum in Wiltshire.[16] The land on which to establish a *bourg* or suburban market probably lay on Cross Street, between Hamelin's town and the priory church of St Mary that the abbey and

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8 *Premier Cartulaire*, nos. 727, 732.

9 See *ibid*., nos. 726, 729.

10 Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, v, 88, 96 &100 Charter II.

11 *Premier Cartulaire*, nos. 42, 65, etc.

12 There is a memorable description of the situation of the castle in Freeman, E.A., *The Reign of William Rufus and the Accession of Henry the First* (2 vols., Oxford, 1882), i, 209–10. Nothing now remains of it as it was in Hamelin's day: Salch, C.L., *Dictionaire des châteaux et des fortifications du Moyen Âge en France* (Strasbourg, 1979), 688.

13 Rufus's two invasions of Maine are described in detail by Freeman, *The Reign of William Rufus*…, ii, 228–40, 274–96. There are less full accounts in Barlow, F., *William Rufus* (London, 1983), 384–7, 402–6, and Mason, E., *King Rufus: the Life and Murder of William II of England* (Stroud, 2008), 198–200, 210–14.

14 Ponsford, M.W., 'Archaeological Excavations at Castle Street Car Park (1999) and Ewers' Garden (1968–72), Abergavenny, with a Reconsideration of the Early History of the Roman Fort', *Archaeology in Wales*, **46** (2006), 49–86; Olding, F., *Gobannium: the Romans in Abergavenny* (Abergavenny Local History Society, 2009), *passim*.

15 Williams, D.H., 'Notes on the Ecclesiastical Map of Gwent', *Monmouthshire Antiquary*, **16** (2000), 45, quoting Jones, J., *Monmouthshire Wills* (Cardiff, 1997), 193–4; Gray, M, 'Death, Commemoration and the Reformation in Monmouthshire', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, **27** (2011), 49. See also Wade-Evans, A.W., 'Parochiale Wallicanum [as they were in A.D. 1733]', *Y Cymmrodor*, **22** (1910), 72.

16 *Victoria County History of Wiltshire*, vi (1962), 60.

its monks built on its eastern side.[17] This had been the location of the *vicus* or civilian settlement associated with the auxiliary fort that had developed into the Roman small town of Gobannium. The comparatively generous width of the street suggests that it was laid out to contain stalls down the middle on market days. The land on which the priory-church and its offices were built together with gardens, orchards and (interestingly) vineyards, became the demesne manor or 'home farm' of the priory. The church given 'elsewhere' was St Helen's church at Llanellen. In the charter of Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury given below this church is described as 'Saint Helen and *Peris*'. Dr Crouch has suggested that *Peris* might be Penrhos,[18] but in truth the charter reads as though it is an additional dedication of the church.[19] The 'land for ten ploughs' became the priory's manors of Llanellen and Hardwick.

It appears that no monks were sent to Abergavenny at this juncture, either because the endowment was considered insufficient or the unsettled political situation in Wales acted as a deterrent. It was not until after Hamelin had made additional gifts and his brother Winebald had joined in with his own grant that St Vincent's was persuaded to send monks.[20] These gifts were confirmed by Henry I in a charter (now damaged, unfortunately) that may perhaps date from early in 1105, but in any case from within the period 1103–6 –

> Hamelin de Ballon gives to the abbey of St Vincent and St Laurence near the walls of Le Mans, from the subsistence with which he has been endowed by his lords William and Henry, kings of England, all the tithes of all *Wennescoit* [Gwent Iscoed, Lower Gwent, a mistake for Gwent Uwchcoed or Upper Gwent] both of his own [demesnes] and of all the lands which he has given or may give [in fee]. At his castle he gives the church and chapel of the castle and land for making a *bourg* with all dues except the toll on market day; land also for one plough….and between….water for a fishery……the church of St Helen and part of the wood. He also gives the tithe of all his honey and the tithe of skins from his hunting, and the tithe of pannage of swine.
>
> In England he gives the church of [Great] Cheverell and the priest's land and all tithes belonging to the church, and the tithes of cheeses and of first-fruits. He also gives the church of [Great] Sutton after the death of the priest, with the priest's land and all tithes and first-fruits belonging to the church. Winebald, brother of the said Hamelin, gives the said abbey the churches of Tortworth and Aust with all the tithes, and the tithes of Gotherington and Pitcombe and all his tithes in Wales.
>
> King Henry confirms the above gifts for the souls of his father King William and his mother queen Matilda and his brother King William and all his predecessors. The signatories are: King Henry, Queen Matilda, Bishop Roger [of Salisbury], William Peverel, Robert Peche, Abbot Herluin of Glastonbury, Humphrey Golden Testicles (*Aureis Testiculis*), Waldric son of Roger de Courseulles; Winebald [de Ballon] and Elizabeth his wife; Hamelin de Ballon and Agnes his wife and William and Matthew his sons.[21]

Great Cheverell and Great Sutton (Sutton Veny) in Wiltshire were two of the four manors that Rufus had given Hamelin for his sustenance soon after he came to England. The advowson of the church at Great Cheverell passed back into the hands of Hamelin's descendants.[22] The priory's right to present

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17 See plan on p.189 of Blockley, K., Ashmore, F. & Ashmore, P.J., 'Excavations on the Roman Fort at Abergavenny, Orchard Site, 1972–3', *Archaeological Journal*, **150** (1993), 169–242.

18 *The Gwent County History, Vol. 2*, 17 (where, however, it should be noted that Penrhos was in Over or Upper Gwent (Gwent Uwchcoed) and not Nether or Lower Gwent (Gwent Iscoed).

19 Rev Dr David Williams (pers. comm.) thinks that this would be more likely had 'saint' been in the plural.

20 Cowley, *The Monastic Order in South Wales, 1066–1349*, 13.

21 *Premier Cartulaire*, nos. 829–831; Round, *Calendar of Documents…*, nos. 1046–8. Farrer, W., *An Outline Itinerary of King Henry the First* (Oxford, 1920), no. 110, assigns King Henry's deed to 'Jan–Feb 1105'.

22 *Victoria County History of Wiltshire*, Vol. 10 (1975), 42–3, 49.

to the church of Great Sutton was disputed in 1220, but it was still in their possession in 1291, when it had the advowson of the church and fifty shillings of rent.[23] Winebald's manors of Tortworth, Aust and Gotherington lay in Gloucestershire and Pitcombe in Somerset. They had all belonged to Thurstan fitzRolf in 1086.[24] These churches and tithes appear to have been lost to the priory after Hamelin's death. Among the signatories, Humphrey and Waldric were evidently Hamelin's knights, the former undoubtedly a relative of the Ellis *Aureis Testiculis* (also known as Ellis de Thury or Ellis fitzRobert) who owed Earl William of Gloucester the service of ten knights' fees in 1166.[25]

A précis of, or extract from, what seems to have been a third charter of Hamelin's that was preserved at the priory in the thirteenth century is contained in the Abergavenny *Memorandum* (Appendix, no. i). This says that he also gave the churches of Llanvihangel Crucorney, St Nicholas at Grosmont and Llangattock Lingoed, together with two-thirds of the tithe of his demesnes at Llanwenarth and Bryngwyn and with two-thirds of the tithe of Llanvihangel Gobion. The same *Memorandum* (Appendix, no. ii) has a brief note of a charter of Winebald's in which he gives to the priory the church of St Cadog at Caerleon in addition to his tithes in Wales. This grant became a point of contention between the priory and the cathedral church of Llandaff in the mid-twelfth century (see below). How his grant of the same church ('church of *Karion*') to Montacute Priory in Somerset affected the dispute (if at all) is unknown.[26] The twelfth century *Book of Llan Dâv* says that Winebald gave to Montacute the land of Caerleon (*terram de Carlione*) in the time of Pope Honorius II (1124–30).[27]

William Rufus's grant to Hamelin of 'all Gwent Uwchcoed (Upper Gwent)' indicates that the lordship he enjoyed at Abergavenny had a greater extent than it did in later years (see Fig.2). Besides Abergavenny, the cantref (a local Welsh administrative division similar to an English hundred) of Upper Gwent included what became Teirtref or the lordship of the Three Castles of Grosmont, White Castle (Llantilio) and Skenfrith, and also the parts of Monmouth lordship west of the Monnow and Wye.[28] Later in the century neither Teirtref nor the parts of Monmouth were within its lordship. Hamelin had evidently assumed the governance of the whole cantref from his Welsh predecessor and as evidence of this we can quote the third charter of Hamelin mentioned above (Appendix, no. i) which says that he gave Grosmont Church to his priory. Also, it seems likely that the Bertram who is said in archbishop Theobald of Canterbury's charter given below to have given a carucate of land at Grosmont was one of Hamelin's knights.

There was, however, a problem with Hamelin's grant of the church of Grosmont in that William fitzOsbern, earl of Hereford 1067–71 and the first Norman invader of Gwent, had already given this church and 'all the tithe of all the forest of Grosmont'[29] to the priory he had founded at Llangua as a cell of his abbey of Lyre in Normandy. The difficulty this caused both houses was resolved

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23 *Ibid*., Vol. 8 (1965), 63.

24 *Domesday Book*, ff.97b, 164b, 165, 169b. Aust and Gotherington were held under Worcester Cathedral Priory.

25 *The Red Book of the Exchequer* (ed. Hall, H., 3 vols., Record Commission, 1896), 288.

26 Batten, J., *et al*. (eds. & trans.), *Two Cartularies of the Augustinian Priory of Bruton and the Cluniac Priory of Montacute in the County of Somerset*, Somerset Record Society, **8** (1894), no. M11.

27 *The Text of the Book of Llan Dâv* (ed. Evans, J.G. & Rhys, J., Oxford, 1893), 30, 53.

28 Details of the knight's fees appurtenant to Monmouth Castle in later years show that they correspond to the knights (seven of them) who each had a ploughland within the lordship or castlery in 1086 (*Domesday Book*, f.180b) and that the lands on which the service of these fees were owed lay largely within the parts of it west of the Wye and Monnow.

29 *Gallia Christiana, tomus XI* (ed. Piolin, P., Paris, 1877), instrumenta, col. 125.

in 1190/1 when the procurator of Lyre quitclaimed its rights in the church and its appurtenances in favour of the abbey of St Vincent and in return the monks of Le Mans undertook to pay Lyre an annual pension of twenty shillings in the chapter house of Hereford Cathedral.[30] Some of this money must have been payment for its share of the 'tithes of all the forests between the rivers Usk and Wye' that Earl William fitzOsbern had also given to Llangua Priory and to the priory at Chepstow that he had founded as a cell of his abbey of Cormeilles and which Hamelin's grant duplicated in respect of Upper Gwent.[31] In 1291 we find Abergavenny paying three shillings annually to the prior of Chepstow for its share of these tithes[32] and a similar sum was probably included in the twenty shillings it was paying to the prior of Llangua.

Hamelin died within a few years of the issue of King Henry's charter. He is said to have been buried in the priory he had founded.[33] Although he had sons William and Matthew, none of his lands went to them. King Henry kept Abergavenny and Upper Gwent for his own use and, as Dr Crouch has suggested, this was probably because he held them for life as the king's agent and not in fee.[34] This does not explain why his English lands passed with his daughter Emmeline to Reginald fitzCount, her husband, son of Earl Ralph of Hereford (who forfeited his title and lands for rebellion in 1075) and grandson of Earl William fitzOsbern.[35] Some other reason must be found to account for this, and here we may be obliged to note that the *Historia Fundationis* of the priory says a lord of Abergavenny had two sons who were lepers and because of this he put them away in Abergavenny Priory, giving extra lands, churches and revenues (including the tithe of the castle) for their maintenance.[36] Hamelin's two sons, if indeed the reference is to them, are named William and Matthew in the charter of King Henry quoted above.

Abergavenny and Upper Gwent remained in King Henry's hands for several years. Eventually he gave both to Brian fitzCount, a natural son of Alan Fergant, count of Brittany, whom he was bringing up in his court. This was probably in 1114 at the time when he was returning to England through Gwent after his 'conquest' of Wales. Brian gave the priory two-thirds of the tithe of his demesnes at Skenfrith.[37] Grosmont Castle and its lands he gave to Walter, second son of Miles of Gloucester, his colleague and friend in the service of King Henry, sometime after 1135, his grant in fee and inheritance being confirmed by King Stephen.[38]

By Brian's day Hamelin's original market had outgrown its site within the outer bailey of the castle. He therefore laid out an additional market-place outside the bailey to the north. This he supplied with its own church of St John the Evangelist, giving to Abergavenny Priory forty-eight acres of land and land called 'St John's Field' (*Campus Sancti Johannis*) on the occasion of the dedication of the church.[39] It counted as a chapelry of the priory church of St Mary.

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30 Crouch, D., (ed.), *Llandaff Episcopal Acta 1140–1287* (Cardiff, 1988), 97 (no. 15); Hockey, F., 'Llangua, Alien Priory of Lyre', *Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales*, **27** (1990), 9. See also Appendix, no. xiv.

31 *Gallia Christiana XI*, instrumenta, col. 125. See also the charters of King Henry II to Cormeilles and Lyre in Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vi, 1076 Charter II and 1092 Charter I.

32 *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* (Record Commission, 1802), 283.

33 *Historia fundationis cum fundatoris genealogia* in Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, iv, 615.

34 Crouch, D., 'The Transformation of Medieval Gwent' in *The Gwent County History, Vol. 2*, 22.

35 Round 'The Family of Ballon…', 198–212.

36 Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, iv, 615.

37 *Liber Controversarium*, no. 59. I owe my knowledge of this cartulary to Dr David Crouch.

38 *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* (ed. Davis, R.H.C, *et al*. 3 vols., Oxford, 1913–68), iii, no. 314.

39 *Liber Controversarium*, no. 59; TNA, C56/20 m.29 (Confirmation Roll 4 Henry VII).

In 1141 Brian (who had no living heirs of his body) gave Abergavenny to Miles of Gloucester. This he did with the sanction of the Empress Matilda, King Henry's daughter and designated heir, widow of the emperor of Germany and currently at war with Stephen over the throne of England.[40] Miles quickly made it over to Walter of Hereford, his second son (and already lord of Grosmont by Brian's enfeoffment),[41] and he remained lord of Abergavenny until his departure for the Holy Land as a Templar in December 1159.

During Walter's time, Bishop Nicholas of Llandaff (1148–83) disputed possession of St Cadog's church at Caerleon with St Vincent's and its priory in Wales. This was in 1156–7 and was presumably based on the belief that the church at Caerleon had once been a seat of an archbishop, a notion set out by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *History of the Kings of Britain*, and to which the bishops of Llandaff saw themselves as heirs.[42] Pope Hadrian IV appointed as adjudicators Bishop John of Worcester and Abbot Reginald of Pershore and they met at Gloucester with bishop Gilbert Foliot of Hereford. It was there that John and Reginald heard witnesses sent by the abbot of St Vincent. After appeals to the pope and the king (and having presumably seen the charter of Winebald de Ballon preserved at the priory: Appendix, no. ii) a decision was made in favour of St Vincent's and Abergavenny.[43] Pope Hadrian issued a charter confirming this judicial sentence which is only known from a calendar of it in the Abergavenny *Memorandum* (Appendix, no. ix). Bishop Nicholas then made a charter in which he conceded it to St Vincent's in the sight of Prior William of Abergavenny and of William *de Sancto Beato* and Robert *de Pulchro Montis*, monks of the church, and which was witnessed by Massey (*Maci*) the priest, William *Transverso*, Ralph fitzLambert and Walter of Moelfannau.[44] On another occasion bishop Nicholas gave the church of Caerleon to John de Gunderville, to hold by payment of half a silver mark annually to the priory of Abergavenny (Appendix, no. vi). He also gave from his episcopal lands in Upper Gwent two-thirds of the tithe of his demesnes at Bryngwyn and Penrhos and two-thirds of the tithe of Llanvihangel Gobion and Llanfair Kilgeddin (Appendix, no. v). Possession of these lands and tithes in Upper Gwent by the bishops of Llandaff is otherwise unknown. They may have been derived from their predecessor bishops in Gwent.

Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury probably issued this charter to St Vincent's in the time of Walter of Hereford –

> Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, concedes and confirms to the church of St Vincent at Le Mans, the churches of St Mary of Abergavenny, St Michael of Llanvihangel Crucorney, St Cadog of Llangattock Lingoed [*Machalenim*], St Nicholas of Grosmont, St David of Llanddewi Rhydderch and Saint Helen [of Llanellen] and *Peris*, with all their appurtenances; and at Abergavenny land for making a *burgum* with all its customary dues except the toll of market day; a mill for all their men wherever they are living in their land; a carucate of land before the castle and half a carucate of land that Ralph Alis and his wife gave us when he became a monk; and next to that land all that

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40 Round, *Ancient Charters*…, no. 26.

41 The list of former holders of Abergavenny given in William de Braose's charter below goes straight from Brian to Walter and does not include Miles. Miles was William's maternal grandfather, so he had every reason to include him if he had been lord of Abergavenny for any length of time.

42 Brooke, C.N.L., 'The Archbishops of St David's, Llandaff and Caerleon-on-Usk' in Brooke, C.N.L. (ed.), *The Church and the Welsh Border in the Central Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1986), 19–49.

43 Cheney, M., Smith, D., Brooke, C. & Hoskin, P. (eds.), *English Episcopal Acta 33: Worcester 1062–1185* (Oxford, 2007), no. 133 and notes.

44 *Liber Controversarium*, no. 49. This seems also to be the charter of bishop Nicholas noted in *Memorandum*, no. viii.

> part of the land the monks bought from Payn the Priest for twenty shillings; and forty-eight acres that Brian fitzCount gave at the dedication of the church of St John the Baptist and the land there called 'St John's Field'; a carucate of land at Llanddewi Rhydderch that Ralph Alis gave for his son John when he became a monk and all that land he gave for the soul of Gilbert his son; and land on both sides of the stream [of the Usk?] as far as St Helen's, and the wood, and in the woods all the honey and every woodland spoil except fawns, boars and hawks. A carucate of land at Grosmont which they have of Bertram; and the meadow of St Michael; and the tithe of the demesne of the lord in the town of Abergavenny and of the lord's mill, honey, pannage, hides, venison, cheeses, apples, fodder, foals, calves and lambs; the tithe of Walter of Moelfannau [*de Ma*(*lvenon*)] at Ysgyryd Fach (*Minori Skirret*) and in another part of that mountain four acres above and two acres below the way they have for the soul of Robert [of] Hazelgrove (*Baselegrue*); and one acre on the boundary of his land and Philip fitzRobert's that Philip gave them; and two-thirds of the tithe of the lord's demesne of Bryngwyn, Skenfrith, Penrhos, Llanvihangel Gobion [*Villa Ricealdi*] and [Llanfair] Cilgeddin, of the land of Godfrey, of St Michael of *Villa Malchu* [Llanvihangel Crucorney] and of the vill of Philip fitzRobert.
> We put our seal to this, just as our brother Nicholas, bishop of Llandaff, confirmed by his charter within our sight.[45]

The carucate of land near the castle, the half carucate given by Ralph Alis and the land bought from the priest became part of the priory's 'home farm'. Philip Alis, was a landholder in Herefordshire in 1166[46] and gave lands when his brother became a monk. Bertram may have given the carucate of land at Grosmont in Hamelin's day. Hugh de Beauchamp's deed (see below) has the priory being allowed six pence annual rent from Bertram's land 'for the souls of my knights lying there [at the priory]'. Hugh's relatively short time as lord of Abergavenny saw heavy fighting with the Welsh.

The charter of Bishop Nicholas referred to in Theobald's deed could be this one, issued at Abergavenny in the time of Prior William and in the presence of Abbot Robert of St Vincent's –

> Nicholas, bishop of Llandaff, confirms to the church of St Vincent of Le Mans and the monks there serving God, the church of St Mary of Abergavenny, the church of St Cadog of Llangattock Lingoed [*Sancti Cadoci de Machelevin*], the church of St Nicholas of Grosmont, the church of St David of Llanddewi Rhydderch and the church of Saint Helen and *Peris* [*ecclesiam Sancte Elene et peris*], with their appurtenances.
> Witnesses: Merchider the dean [of Upper Gwent?], John son of *Crunori*, canon of Llandaff, Gilbert the monk, William *Transverso*, Herbert [canon of] Hereford, Wilfred the priest, Abel the priest, *Ekenegen* and Thomas his son, John *de Curtbus*, Robert *de Pulchro Monte*, Master Ieuan [*Iwonis*], Wingood [*Wilnegoto*] the reeve and David his son, Ralph *Genero*, Wingood [*Guinegoto*], Ralph [fitz]Lambert, William [prior of] Abergavenny. Witnessed by Robert, abbot of St Vincent of Le Mans. This charter was [made] at Abergavenny.[47]

Canon Herbert of Hereford Cathedral settled a dispute concerning the church of Inkberrow in Worcestershire with William, a chaplain of Archbishop Theobald, in 1148–63.[48] Ralph fitzLambert also witnessed the charter of Hugh de Beauchamp (c1166–75) given below. Prior William, Merchider the dean and John the canon of Llandaff are unknown apart from this charter.

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45 *Liber Controversarium*, no. 59. This is apparently referred to in the *Memorandum*, Appendix no. xiii, which says Theobald 'confirmed all the premises' to the priory. I am grateful to Mr Richard Morgan for assistance with the place-names in this and subsequent deeds.

46 *The Red Book of the Exchequer*, 284.

47 *Liber Controversarium*, no. 46.

48 Morey, A. & Brooke, C.N.L. (eds.), *The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot* (Cambridge, 1967), no. 314.

Walter of Hereford had no living children of his own when he set out for Jerusalem in 1159 so the king, Henry II, allowed him to place all his lands and affairs in the hands of his brother Henry. Before they were allowed to pass to Henry, however, the king detached Grosmont and Skenfrith from the lordship of Abergavenny and joined them to White Castle (Llantilio, which he had from king Stephen) to form the 'lordship of the Three Castles'.[49] Henry of Hereford was slain by Seisyll ap Dyfnwal, leader of the Welsh of Upper Gwent, in 1165 and Abergavenny then went to a fourth brother Mahel, who was killed by a stone falling from the castle at Bronllys in Brecknock a few weeks later. None of the brothers left living children so, apart from Abergavenny, which King Henry retained (presumably under the same condition that his grandfather kept it after the death of Hamelin) to counter the growing power of Rhys ap Gruffudd (the 'lord Rhys') of Deheubarth and his Welsh allies, their lands were divided among their three sisters and their husbands.

Once in his hands, King Henry began building work at the castle and placed Walter of Beauchamp in charge of it.This came to an end in April 1166 and he then gave Abergavenny and its lordship to Walter's elder brother, Hugh II de Beauchamp of Eaton Socon in Bedfordshire. Hugh issued his own charter to the priory confirming his predecessor's gifts and adding some of his own –

> H[ugh] de Beauchamp to all his faithful men, French, English and Welsh, greeting. For the soul of King Henry and the queen and for mine and my wife's, know that I have given to God and the monks of Abergavenny all those possessions given by my predecessors Hamelin de Ballon, Brian fitzCount and other lords of Abergavenny, that is, in churches, tithes, lands, woods, waters, meadows, mills, pannage, chickens, cheeses, pennies and apples, and in all tithes which the lord or the knights of his honour gave in due form or will give, save my right and honour. Additionally I concede the land that Philip Alis gave for Ralph his brother when he became a monk there. Also the land lying by Ysgyryd Fach [*Minorem Eschireir*] that Walter of Moelfannau [*de Malvenon*] gave when he assumed the religious habit. Also 16d rent from Bertram's land, for the souls of my knights lying there [at the priory].
> Witnesses: Walter and Richard brothers of the lord, Ralph of Norfolk, Philip fitzRobert, Simon the chaplain, Walter the clerk, Robert [fitz]Gunter, *Anisen*, Robert the reeve, Ralph [fitz]Lambert [and] Imbert. Of the monks Durand the prior; Harvey, Herbert, Maurice, Walter, Reginald, Ralph and Burgoyne (*Burgonio*) the monks; Matthew and Albin the priests; Peter, Matthew and William the clerks; Seisyll and Herbert brothers of those clerks; Henry the reeve; Ralph the cook and Warin his son; and many others.[50]

Gunter and his son Robert were stewards to the Anglo-Norman lords of Abergavenny. Their family was prominent in the affairs of Abergavenny over many centuries. Durand the prior and the seven monks who witness the deed presumably formed the monastic community at St Mary's at this point.

A serious revolt against King Henry's rule that broke out in 1174 saw, coincidentally, another change in ownership at Abergavenny. The revolt was led by Henry's sons and supported enthusiastically by many leaders of the Welsh in south Wales, including the lord Rhys. The revolt in England and Normandy was put down after much hard fighting and in July 1175 Henry summoned these Welshmen to meet him at Gloucester to make peace. At this same meeting, it seems, the future of Abergavenny was also determined, for we find William III de Braose of Radnor, Bramber and Brecknock in charge there before the end of the year. William was the son of one of the sisters and ultimate heiresses of Walter of Hereford, so he perhaps had a claim to it through his family that

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[49] The Three Castles first appear in royal hands in 1162/3: *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Ninth Year of the Reign of King Henry the Second A.D.1162–1163* (Pipe Roll Society, London, 1886), 7.

[50] Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, iv, 616 Charter II.

Henry was prepared to recognise. Unlike its previous holders (except Brian fitzCount), William was able to pass the lordship to his successors, so it must have been given in fee.

In the same year as the Gloucester meeting, Braose killed Seisyll ap Dyfnwal and other leaders of the Welsh of Upper Gwent in Abergavenny Castle in revenge for the slaying of Henry of Hereford, his uncle, ten years before. The Welsh had their own partial revenge for this in 1182 when they attacked and destroyed the castle except for the keep. It is probably to a period of recovery after this event (and probably before the death of Henry II in 1189) that we can date this charter of Braose's, through which the priory became fully conventual –

> To all sons of holy mother church, William de Braose, salutation in the Lord. Note that I William de Braose give and concede to the church of St Mary at Abergavenny and the monks there serving God, all the tithe of the castle of Abergavenny, in bread, wine, beer, etc., and of all my general expenses, small and great, at that castle, pleas, aids, etc., and of everything pertaining to that castle. Additionally, I give to the men of St Mary's two silver marks each year in the vill of Speen (*Despines*), and two silver marks in England whenever God allows me the increase of my lands, or £40 of rent, and the toll on market day within the gate of that castle, free and quit for the health of the soul of King Henry my lord, and for mine and Matilda my wife's, etc. On this condition and tenor, that the abbot of St Vincent of Le Mans shall make a convent at the church of St Mary of Abergavenny for the relief of my soul with God, etc. Besides which [I give] to God and the church of St Mary of Abergavenny all tithes, donations and benefices given by Hamelin de Ballon, Brian fitzCount, Walter of Hereford and Henry of Hereford. Confirmed by the charters of King Henry, the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Llandaff.
> Witnesses: Roger my brother, William [of] Barn House, Philip Talbot, Geoffrey le Bret, Nicholas de Dammartin, Philip of Penrhos, Matthew de Mesnières (*Manners*), William of Hazelgrove, Matthew the Dean, Robert [de Dammartin] the Provost, Aelfric and many others.[51]

The charters of King Henry, the archbishop and the bishop have not survived. Speen in Berkshire had belonged to Bernard de Neufmarché, his maternal grandfather, in 1079.[52] It was lost to Bernard sometime over the next seven years, but had been reacquired by his descendants before 1166, when it was in the hands of William de Braose's father, husband of one of Bernard's grand-daughters.[53] Geoffrey le Bret's family held Weston Bret (Weston-under-Penyard) in Herefordshire in William's barony of Brecknock.[54] Nicholas de Dammartin was William's brother-in-law, and both he and William of Barnhouse were subtenants in his barony of Bramber,[55] as also was Matthew de Mesnières. Nicholas, together with Robert and Massey (*Maci*) de Dammartin, the provosts of Abergavenny, witnessed a charter of William's to Flaxley Abbey.[56] The tithe of the castle mentioned here was later commuted to an annual payment of £10 and in 1335, when the prior petitioned the king for arrears of this amount annually, he produced Braose's charter as evidence of his entitlement.[57]

One of the few priors of Abergavenny whose names are known was one Henry. He was made bishop of Llandaff in December 1193 and was responsible for establishing a chapter at the cathedral

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51 Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, iv, 616 Charter III.

52 Orderic Vitalis: *The Ecclesiastical History* (ed. & trans. Chibnall, M., 6 vols., Oxford, 1969–80), ii, 263–4.

53 *Victoria County History of Berkshire*, Vol. 4 (1924), 98–9.

54 Galbraith, V.H. & Tait, J. (eds.), *The Herefordshire Domesday Book 1160–70* (Pipe Roll Society, London, 1950), 63; *The Book of Fees* (3 vols., H.M.S.O., London, 1920–31), 800, 801.

55 Salzman, L.F. (ed.), *The Chartulary of the Priory of St Peter at Sele* (Cambridge, 1923), nos. 9, 11.

56 Crawley-Boevey, A.W. (ed.), *The Cartulary and Historical Notes of the Cistercian Abbey of Flaxley* (Exeter, 1887), no. 8.

57 *Calendar of Close Rolls 1333–7* (H.M.S.O., London, 1898), 438.

where none had existed before.[58] As part of this process, the revenues of the churches of Llantilio Pertholey, Llantilio Crosseny, Dingestow, St Cadog (*Landendoc* or *Landeudoc*) at Penrhos and Llanarth, all in the lordship of Abergavenny (apart from Dingestow, which was in the lordship of Monmouth), were assigned to the support of canons or prebendaries of the cathedral.[59] Probably at the same time and with the same purpose in mind he laid claim to the churches of St John at Abergavenny, St Nicholas at Grosmont and (despite the agreement of 1156/7) of St Cadog at Caerleon. The claim was rejected by the priory, and the dispute (if such it was) was resolved in its favour by the time of Bishop Henry's death in 1218. Charters of Pope Innocent II (1198–1216), of the new chapter of Llandaff, of Bishop Henry himself and of Bishop William II of Llandaff (1219–29) giving effect to the decision are all noted or calendared in the Abergavenny *Memorandum* (Appendix, nos. x–xiii). Henry eventually made the share of the revenues of Caerleon church remaining after the pension was paid to Abergavenny appurtenant to a prebendary.[60]

Appendix – the Abergavenny Memorandum[61]

Memorandum, that in the third year, and second […..] in the church of St John of Abergavenny, Christopher, the prior of that place, exhibits:

i. A charter of Hamelin de Ballon, founder of the priory of Abergavenny and protector of the church of St Vincent of Le Mans and of the abbot and monks serving God there, [granting them] the church of Llanellen and the churches of Abergavenny with their tithes and first fruits. Item, the chapel of the castle, and the church of Llanvihangel Crucorney, and the church of St Nicholas of Grosmont, and the church of Llangattock Lingoed [*Sancti Cadoci de Mychelmy*]. Item, two parts of the tithes of his demesne of Llanwenarth [*de Sancto Waynardo*], and two parts of the tithe of his demesne of Bryngwyn, and two parts of the tithe of Llanvihangel Gobion [*Sancti Michaelis de Villa Realdi*].

ii. The same prior shows in turn a charter of Winebald de Ballon presenting to the church of St Vincent, and the church of St Mary of Abergavenny and the monks serving God there, the church of St Cadog of Caerleon.

iii. He displays also a charter of King Henry of old [King Henry I] granting to the said monks all gifts which Hamelin de Ballon made them in England and Wales.

iv. He exhibits also [the charter] of the same Henry granting and confirming to the said monks all gifts which Hamelin de Ballon and Winebald his brother made in England and Wales.

v. He shows also a charter of Nicholas, bishop of Llandaff [1148–83], granting to the said monks, the servants of God, two parts of the tithe of his demesne of Bryngwyn, two parts of the tithe of Llanvihangel Gobion, two parts of the tithe of his demesne of Penrhos and two parts of the tithe of [Llanfair] Kilgeddin.

vi. The same prior displays another chirograph of Nicholas, bishop of Llandaff, giving and granting to John de Gunderville a portion of the church of St Cadog of Caerleon, holding it by [payment of] half a mark of silver every year to the prior of Abergavenny for fulfilling the terms contained in the charter exhibited, also in the said charter that the same John maintains by corporal oath that he will be faithful to the said monks.

vii. The same prior exhibits also the charter of the bishop of the church of Llandaff admitting Andrew of Caerleon, chaplain, to a moiety of the perpetual vicarage of the church of Caerleon, paying to the prior and monks three marks yearly in the name of pension [*pencony*].

viii. He shows also the charter of Nicholas, bishop of Llandaff, granting to the said monks the church of St Cadog of Caerleon according to that which is decreed by the bishop of Worcester and the abbot of Pershore by the authority of the lord pope.

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58 Crouch, *Llandaff Episcopal Acta*, p.xv; *The Text of the Book of Llan Dâv* (eds. Evans & Tait), 284.

59 Lunt, W.E. (ed.), *The Valuation of Norwich* (Oxford, 1926), 317.

60 Denton, J. & Taylor, B. (eds.), 'The 1291 Valuation of the Ecclesiastical Benefices of Llandaff Diocese', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, **147** (1998), 147 and note 25 on p154.

61 I am grateful to the Rev Dr David Williams for assistance with the translation of this document. The numbering of the documents is not original and has been done for ease of reference.

> ix. He also displays the confirmation by Pope Adrian [1154–9], confirming the decree of the said lord of Worcester and of the abbot [of Pershore].
> x. He exhibits also the grant and confirmation of the lord pope, Innocent III [1198–1216], concerning the church of St John of Abergavenny and the church of St Nicholas of Grosmont, and the church of St Cadog of Caerleon, and concerning all [their] ecclesiastical and worldly goods.
> xi. He shows also a charter of the chapter of the church of Llandaff, granting the church the revenue of the church and all benefices which the abbot and convent of St Vincent of Mans and also the prior of Abergavenny [have] in the diocese of Llandaff, [which] are specifically and lawfully obtained within the church of St John of Abergaveny, the church of St Nicholas of Grosmont, [and] the church of St Cadog of Caerleon, having [them] towards their own use.
> xii. He displays also charters of Henry [1198–1218] and William the Second [1219–29], bishops of Llandaff, [giving] a general confirmation of all things mentioned.
> xiii. He exhibits also the charters of Theobald [1139–61] and Hubert [1193–1205], archbishops of Canterbury, confirming all the premises.
> xiv. He shows also a charter of the church of Llandaff and the chapter of Llandaff concerning twenty shillings to be received annually by the chapter of Llandaff as defined in the terms of the charters.
> All these deeds were [exhibited] in the chapel of St John of Abergavenny, the day after [the feast of] St Matthew the Apostle [22 September], in the presence of Master Simon *de Sancto Juone*, then official in Llandaff,[62] and in the year of the Lord given before, in witness of these things the seal of the official of Llandaff is appended to this existing memorandum.n

Its dating clause is clearly corrupt, but as the dates of the deeds it quotes run fairly continuously from early in the twelfth century until 1229, and because there are none dating from after that, it probably dates from not long after 1229. On this basis, though highly unusual in form, the date clause may originally have referred to the third year of the current bishop Elias of Radnor (1230–40) and, incidentally (because he is unknown apart from this one reference), the second year of Christopher's time as prior of Abergavenny. This would make the date of issue 22 September 1233. Andrew of Caerleon, the chaplain admitted to the perpetual vicarage of a moiety of the church of Caerleon in no. vii, witnessed an agreement made in 1222 at Goldcliff Priory regarding tithes due to the priory from its Somerset lands.[63] He is probably the same Andrew, vicar of Caerleon, who was a juror for Lower Gwent in the Norwich 'Valuation' of 1254.[64]

It seems that in Christopher's day possession of the churches of St John of Abergavenny, St Nicholas of Grosmont and (again) St Cadog of Caerleon was being disputed with the bishop of Llandaff, but no conclusion regarding it is included in the *memorandum*. Llandaff clearly thought it had a claim to the advowsons of these churches, but by what authority does not appear. Possibly, they were either known to be, or thought to be, among the churches possessed by bishops with authority in Gwent in the Early Middle Ages, to which the metropolitans of Llandaff claimed to be successors. That they are among many churches recorded in the *Book of Llan Dâv* whose locations are unknown would be a mere guess. Prior Christopher evidently proved the prior's possession of the churches, since in 1291 it had 'Abergavenny church and its chapels', the church of Grosmont and its pension in Caerleon church, the latter as provided for in the agreement of 1156–7.[65]

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62 The 'official' was the presiding officer of the bishop's court.

63 Bruce Dilks, T. (ed.), 'A Calendar of Some Medieval Deeds in the Custody of the Bridgewater Corporation: Brymore and Steyning MSS', *Collectanea III*, Somerset Record Society, **57** (1942), 26–7.

64 Lunt, *The Valuation of Norwich*, 320.

65 Denton & Taylor, 'The 1291 Evaluation…Llandaff Diocese', 143, 147. The other chapel (if only one other) implied by plural 'chapels' could have been the now lost St James's.

POETRY AND PATRONAGE IN LATE MEDIEVAL WALES: THE CASE OF WILLIAM HERBERT OF RAGLAN (D. 1469)

By Barry J. Lewis

Nawdd teuluoedd o dras fel yr Herbertiaid a fu'n gyfrifol am greu barddoniaeth o'r safon uchaf yn y cyfnod diddorol a gwerthfawr hwn yn hanes ein llenyddiaeth, ac i deuluoedd pendefigaidd o ruddin yr Herbertiaid y mae priodoli'r amodau a wnaeth y canu hwn yn bosibl. Gellir honni bod y canu i'r teulu arbennig hwn yn rhan o ganu beirdd yr uchelwyr ar ei orau, a bod i Raglan le anrhydeddus iawn yn y traddodiad barddol Cymraeg.[1]

It was the patronage of families of lineage such as the Herberts which was responsible for creating poetry of the highest quality in this interesting and precious period in the history of our literature, and it is to high-ranking families of the Herberts' calibre that the conditions that made this poetry possible are to be attributed. It can be claimed that the poetry addressed to this noteworthy family is among the very best of that composed by the poets of the gentry, and that Raglan enjoys a most honoured place in the Welsh poetic tradition.

So William Gwyn Lewis concludes his survey of the Welsh poetry produced under the patronage of the Herbert family of Raglan at the end of the Middle Ages. The verdict passed on the Herberts is a wholly positive one. They were upholders of the Welsh poets, and thereby of Welsh culture and national identity, in a period when these rested on few other institutional or even quasi-institutional supports. Such a view is generally representative of the attitude of Welsh literary historians towards the landowning *uchelwyr* class who patronized the poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was classically expressed by Saunders Lewis in a series of highly influential studies.[2] It grants the *uchelwyr* a certain agency, in as much as it acknowledges that their money and their gifts of food, drink and clothing sustained the makers of Welsh poetry. Yet there has been a reluctance to conceive of the *uchelwyr* as influencing, still less determining, the content of the poetry for which they paid. True, it is acknowledged that the great bulk of the poetry is praise poetry, and as such it reflects what patrons wanted to hear about themselves: that they were brave, strong, noble, handsome, generous, well-born and well-descended, and the like. Control over the discourse of praise, however, was firmly in the hands of 'the poets' – *y beirdd*. The words were their words. The ideals, hopes and fears expressed were their ideals, hopes and fears. The politics of the poetry were their politics. The poets 'looked upon William Herbert as the one to unite Wales and lead it to victory'. 'The Welshness of the Herberts was uppermost in the view of the poets.' 'The contest between York and Lancaster was a secondary consideration for the poets. Their loyalty was loyalty to a nation, not to any political party.'[3] Given that the entirety of this poetry was paid for by men (and occasionally women) who were not poets, we may well ask whether the balance of power between poet and patron is being fairly represented here.

Three factors may be identified which have arguably contributed towards the marginalization of the patron's role in modern scholarship. One is the author-centred approach of traditional

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1 Lewis, William Gwyn, 'Herbertiaid Rhaglan fel Noddwyr Beirdd yn y Bymthegfed Ganrif a Dechrau'r Unfed Ganrif ar Bymtheg', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, (1986), 60. All translations from Welsh texts, medieval and modern, in this article are my own.

2 Notably in his *Braslun o Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg* (Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, Caerdydd, 1932), 51–69.

3 Lewis, 'Herbertiaid Rhaglan fel Noddwyr Beirdd', 44, 45, 34.

criticism. The text, in such a view, is the product of an individual human mind, an expression of the individual's feelings and views. A poem by Lewys Glyn Cothi is thus an entrance-way into the mind of Lewys Glyn Cothi. The second is the patriotic impulse to monumentalize medieval Welsh poetry as an expression of Welsh culture and nationhood. This tends to detach the poems from their immediate social and political environment and set them apart as purely cultural monuments, expressions of an essentially unchanging national identity. In effect, the poetry is valued as part of a great tradition rather than for its place in contingent history. W. Gwyn Lewis does acknowledge that William Herbert might have 'himself used the poets to promote his own cause and the Yorkist cause in general in Wales', but his discussion of this possibility might fairly be described as unenthusiastic: 'one should not discount the possibility that William used the poets in this way.'[4] Howell T. Evans, in his pioneering discussion of the historical value of medieval Welsh poetry, begins by admitting that the poets 'colour, and frequently distort, facts to suit the exigencies of the occasion, and in the interests of those whose patronage they solicited.'[5] Yet presently he insists that

> … the supreme importance of the poets lies in another direction. It is not theirs to record facts. It is theirs to give expression to the debates and the promptings of the nation's soul. And if we are to seek in them an accurate interpretation of popular feeling, the dynastic question as such had no meaning in Wales … They were consistent in their nationalism.[6]

The third factor is the authorial attitude within the poetry itself. The poets do indeed consistently portray themselves as independent voices. They speak in the first person singular. They pass judgement over their patrons: do they meet the criteria for winning honourable praise? The position of the praise poet implies a degree of authority over his patrons, for only he can discharge the duty of praise, which the patron must earn by diligent adherence to the proper social norms. The poet, being intrinsically itinerant, could always go elsewhere if he were not satisfied with his treatment. Such an attitude of quiet, dignified authority pervades the poetry. The question for the modern reader must be: to what extent is it a *trompe-l'œil*? How can dependency on patronage be reconciled with holding authority over one's patron?

Two recent studies by Dylan Foster Evans have gone some way to restoring balance by emphasizing the importance of the patron. One concerns the poem composed by Hywel Swrdwal (or his son Ieuan) on the events of 1456, when William Herbert's half-brother Walter Vaughan was murdered in Hereford.[7] Herbert and his allies responded to this crime by taking over the city and forcibly hanging the men they deemed responsible. Evans convincingly interprets the poem as a piece of propaganda justifying Herbert's actions. The second, and more wide-ranging study, discusses Herbert's relations with the poets in the wider context of his other acts of artistic patronage. Evans concludes:

> The extent to which the patrons could influence the contents of the poems composed for them is probably unknowable, but the poetry to Herbert gives a sense of a patron who asks his poets to do

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4 '… ni ddylid diystyru'r posibilrwydd i Wiliam ddefnyddio'r beirdd yn y fath fodd': Lewis, 'Herbertiaid Rhaglan fel Noddwyr Beirdd', 42–3.

5 Evans, Howell T., *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1915; second edition, Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 1995), 2. All references will be to the second edition.

6 Ibid., 7.

7 Evans, Dylan Foster, 'Murder in the Marches: Poetry and the Legitimisation of Revenge in Fifteenth-Century Wales', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 18/19 (1998/1999), 42–72.

> more than rephrase time-honoured blandishments ... it is appropriate to suggest that his patronage was another example of his mastery of public discourses.[8]

This is a historicizing reading of medieval Welsh poetry. Poems are seen not as timeless acts of homage to Welsh identity, but rather as individual interventions in the course of historical events. They had purposes at the time which may well have little or nothing in common with the interests of their modern readers. It is essential to read them against the time and circumstances in which they were composed. This is likely to lead to fragmentation within our interpretation of the Welsh poetic tradition. Indeed, the logical end point may well be the dissolution of the idea of 'the poets', *y beirdd*, as an entity about whose political views it is possible to generalize.

That said, we are left with an acute dilemma. We have moved from assuming that everything in our texts puts us straightforwardly in touch with 'the poets'. It would be possible to continue to move away from this idea to the point where we would be left arguing that every word was dictated by overbearing paymasters. If we can agree that that view is just as simplistic as the former one, where then do we, in fact, stop moving? As Evans notes, this is 'probably unknowable'. The implications of this lack of knowledge on historical readings of the poems are profound, as the case-studies in the rest of this article will attempt to demonstrate.

William Herbert of Raglan

William Herbert (*c*.1423–69), first earl of Pembroke, was the son of Sir William ap Thomas of Raglan. William ap Thomas rose to be a prominent figure in early fifteenth-century Gwent through two fortunate marriages and through his service to Richard, duke of York (d. 1460), who was lord of Usk, in which lordship Raglan lay. When Sir William died in 1445, it was his eldest son, William Herbert, who inherited Raglan castle. Herbert followed in his father's footsteps in entering the service of the duke of York. He fought in Normandy during the final throes of the Hundred Years' War, seeing action at the fateful battle of Formigny in 1450, where the cause of English Normandy died. On returning to Wales, Herbert was pulled into the confrontation between York and the Crown which developed during the 1450s. Though prominent on the duke's side, Herbert never compromised himself to the point of a total breach with the court party; meanwhile, the increasing disorder of that decade allowed him and his network of allies to build up a commanding position within Gwent and Herefordshire. Much of his influence in the English shire followed from his marriage to Ann, daughter of Sir Walter Devereux of Bredwardine. In the crucial period 1460–1 Herbert finally sided with the duke of York against the court party of Henry VI. He fought alongside York's son, Edward, at Mortimer's Cross in February 1461. He then accompanied Edward to London where Edward was acclaimed king. Herbert was also present at the battle of Towton in Yorkshire later that year, the encounter that secured Edward IV's grip on the throne. After that, Edward showered Herbert with offices and lands. Just about every position which fell vacant in south Wales and its lordships was allotted to Herbert. He was given charge of the suppression of Lancastrian resistance, a task which he performed diligently. Soon his power was being extended into north Wales as well. His greatest triumph was the capture in 1468 of Harlech castle. Harlech had held out for the Lancastrian cause ever since 1461, and Herbert was rewarded for its fall by a grant of the earldom of Pembroke.

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[8] Evans, Dylan Foster, 'William Herbert of Raglan (d. 1469): Family History and Personal Identity', in Evans, D.F., Lewis, B.J. and Parry Owen, A. (eds.), *'Gwalch Cywyddau Gwŷr': Essays on Guto'r Glyn and Fifteenth-Century Wales* (Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth, 2013), 83–101.

Less than a year later, however, the whole edifice of Herbert power was shaken to its foundations. Herbert's rise had profoundly alienated the powerful earl of Warwick, Richard Neville. Rebellion, fomented by Warwick, broke out in Yorkshire. Herbert was summoned by the king to engage the rebels. The battle took place at Edgecote in Northamptonshire on 24 July 1469.[9] Herbert was defeated and captured, along with his brother Richard. Both were taken to Northampton, tried and condemned to death by Warwick and his supporters. William Herbert was beheaded on 27 July. He was buried in Tintern abbey.

It is remarkable that William Herbert has not been the subject of a biography. The nearest approach to one, besides Ralph Griffiths' succinct account in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, was an MA thesis submitted to the University of Wales by D.H. Thomas in 1967, and subsequently published by a little-known press.[10] Historians of mid-fifteenth-century Wales have allotted Herbert some space in their accounts, notably Howell T. Evans and Ralph Griffiths again.[11] Within more general works on the period, Herbert appears a somewhat shadowy figure. Though some attention is given to the way in which he flourished in the 1460s under the patronage of Edward IV, he tends to suffer in comparison with the outsize figure of his nemesis Warwick the Kingmaker.[12] The significance of William Herbert – the first Welshman of full blood to receive an earldom, and virtual ruler of Wales by the time of his death – deserves a far more extended treatment than it has received to date.

When such a treatment is eventually undertaken, one of its chief tasks will be to fit the Welsh poetic evidence within the framework provided by narrative and documentary sources. For Herbert was a prolific patron of Welsh poets. Guto'r Glyn, Hywel Dafi, Lewys Glyn Cothi, Dafydd Llwyd of Mathafarn and Hywel Swrdwal all sang before him, while Huw Cae Llwyd appears among those who composed elegies for him after his death. His brother, Richard Herbert of Coldbrook near Abergavenny, was also a notable patron. The deaths of both men at the hands of Richard Neville, earl of Warwick, in July 1469 called forth what are perhaps the most impassioned elegies in Welsh of the whole fifteenth century. Furthermore, the tradition of patronage was kept alive in the next generation by the two men's sons, among them William Herbert, the second earl, and his brother Walter.[13]

In the following discussion, the principle will be followed that each poem composed in honour of William Herbert should be read individually and in its own context. Only a selection can be examined within the allotted space. I have chosen one from early in Herbert's career, one from the mid 1460s when Herbert was newly risen to dominance in much of Wales, and one from 1468, in his hour of triumph. Each one presents an image of William Herbert which can be seen to respond to

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[9] Barry J. Lewis, 'The Battle of Edgecote or Banbury (1469) Through the Eyes of Contemporary Welsh Poets', *Journal of Medieval Military History*, IX (2011), 97–117.

[10] Griffiths, R.A., 'Herbert, William, first earl of Pembroke (*c*.1423–1469)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004); Thomas, D.H., 'The Herberts of Raglan as supporters of the House of York in the second half of the fifteenth century' (MA Wales, 1967), published as Thomas, D.H., *The Herberts of Raglan and the Battle of Edgecote 1469* (Freezywater Publications, Enfield, 1994).

[11] Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses*, passim; Griffiths, R.A., 'Lordship and Society in the Fifteenth Century', in Griffiths, R.A. et al. (eds.), *The Gwent County History*, 2: *The Age of the Marcher Lords,* c.*1070–1536* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2008), 241–79.

[12] Probably the best treatment within a general work is Ross, Charles, *Edward IV* (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974), 75–8.

[13] For a general survey of Welsh poetry in south-east Wales during this period, see Dylan Foster Evans, ' "Talm o Wentoedd": The Welsh Language and its Literature, *c*.1070–*c*.1530', in Griffiths, R.A. et al. (eds.), *The Gwent County History*, 2: *The Age of the Marcher Lords*, c.*1070–1536* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2008), 280–308.

political need rooted in specific circumstances. Yet in each case there remains an ambiguity: are we to read these texts as entirely reflective of an agenda set by Herbert himself?

Lewys Glyn Cothi, 'Y gŵr fu'n nerthu'r Goron'[14]

This poem dates after the elevation of Jasper Tudor to the earldom of Pembroke in November 1452, but probably before Herbert himself was knighted in early January 1453.[15] Although he is described at one point as *marchog antur* (l. 53), the context is a retrospective description of Herbert's appearance on the battlefield in France, at which time Herbert was not a knight; hence the translation 'daring horseman' may be more appropriate than 'daring knight'. In l. 56 Herbert is called *Maestr Wiliam*, an unlikely form of address for a knight, and the absence of the title *Syr* from the poem is also strongly suggestive, since the poets were very strongly inclined to parade such titles as their patrons bore. Late 1452 was an important moment for Herbert, Jasper Tudor and the king.[16] In 1450 all the English possessions in Normandy had been lost – a calamitous outcome to the war which had dragged on for decades, and a humiliation for Henry VI, the son of King Henry V who had conquered the duchy. Political crisis followed immediately, with the downfall of the duke of Suffolk, who had been dominating the court, revolt in Kent and the unasked-for return of the duke of York from Ireland, demanding a role in government which the court was disinclined to give him. Armed confrontation between the duke and the king was averted in March 1452, but York was arrested and forced to make a public declaration of loyalty. On 10 October 1452 William Herbert received a general pardon:[17] evidently he had been active in York's cause, and the court was now reasserting its authority over York's supporters in the Marches. The elevation to earldoms of Henry's half-brothers, Edmund and Jasper Tudor, was another element in the strengthening of the Lancastrian position. The knighting of Herbert was evidently an attempt by the court to attach Herbert firmly to the court party. Such is the context of Lewys Glyn Cothi's poem, '*Y gŵr fu'n nerthu'r Goron*' – 'the man who gave strength to the Crown'.

This poem has two messages which it delivers with the insistence and subtlety of a pile driver. One is that Herbert is a loyal servant of the Crown who has nobly served his king in France. The other is that he is devoted to Jasper Tudor. It is in fact with these two messages that the poem opens, allotting a couplet to each one:

> Y gŵr fu'n nerthu'r Goron
> O Loegr hwnt ar ael gwŷr Rhôn,
> bendith canmil i Wilym,
> barti i'r iarll, Herbart rym.[18]
>
> The man who gave strength to the Crown / of England over there beside the men of Rouen, / a hundred thousand blessings upon William, / the earl's supporter, mighty Herbert.

Having set out his agenda thus, the poet turns to the traditional topoi of Welsh praise, explaining the ancestry of William Herbert and his intimate ties with 'the wheat-land of Gwent'. 'Is it not right',

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14 Johnston, Dafydd (ed.), *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi* (Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, Caerdydd, 1995), poem 111.

15 For these dates, see Griffiths, R.A., *The Reign of King Henry VI* (second edition, Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 1998), 698–9.

16 For the events of 1450–2, see *ibid*., 676–700.

17 Thomas, *Herberts of Raglan*, 15.

18 *Ibid*., 111.1–4.

he asks, 'that William has the profit of the whole world, and the inheritance of his ancestors?'[19] The justificatory tone is noteworthy. It is a feature of the poetry addressed to Herbert which we shall encounter again.

The theme of loyal service to the Crown in France recurs in lines 23ff. It was William, the poet tells us, who saved the life of the near-legendary Welsh captain, Mathew Gough.[20] The two of them 'would not hold back from giving battle'. The poet now neatly manoeuvres himself back to the theme of how loyal Herbert is to Jasper Tudor. He cites the historical parallel of Charlemagne and Roland. Naturally, the reader assumes that he is still talking about Gough and Herbert in France. But in fact he has moved on:

> I'r gad flaen i Siarlmaen Sant
> ar ei ail ydd âi Rolant;
> i'r gad y bai fwya'r gwaith
> yr âi Wiliam yr eilwaith.
> O bai ar Siasbar daro,
> trwy fil y trawai efô.[21]
>
> Roland used to go in second place to St Charlemagne / into the front line of battle; / to battle, where the fighting was greatest, / William would go in second place as well. / Should Jasper need to strike a blow, / he [Herbert] would cleave a way through a thousand men.

Herbert is Roland to Jasper Tudor's Charlemagne. Lewys now enumerates Herbert's loyalties: first of all, to God, then to the Crown, and thirdly to the earl of Pembroke. This is the third time that he has told us how strongly Herbert supports the earl. This is immediately followed by an extended description (ll. 45–54) of Herbert's appearance on the battlefield in France. The poet now concludes with more praise for Herbert: he was 'guardian over the land of France'; he guarded there 'the towns and the towers and the free land'; now let him guard his own people at home, while his own patron St Teilo guards him (ll. 59–64). It is a masterly performance, and we almost forget that France was lost.

Far from being a 'conventional' Welsh praise poem, this is an extraordinarily politicized statement. Whoever controlled its contents wanted to leave no lingering doubts in the audience's minds that William Herbert was loyal to Henry VI and his Tudor half-brother. Moreover, it is difficult to detect here any sign of a Welsh national element. The poem is a thoroughly partisan piece of politicking. The humiliation of York earlier in the year left Herbert dangerously exposed politically, while the abrupt rise of the Tudor brothers to power in west Wales gave that political exposure an ominous physical dimension. Herbert bowed to the pressure, and was rewarded with restoration to royal favour and by being knighted alongside the Tudor brothers. Small wonder that he commissioned this piece of special pleading to ease his position among the Tudor-Lancastrian party in west Wales, with whom Lewys Glyn Cothi was closely associated.[22] Or did he? It is not out of the question that Jasper Tudor was the guiding force behind this poem. A public performance of this

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[19] *Ibid*., ll. 7ff.

[20] For Herbert fighting with Gough in 1449, see Probert, Y., 'Matthew Gough 1390–1450', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1961, 42, and references there given.

[21] Johnston, *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, 111.31–6.

[22] See ibid. poems 10–13 for his Tudor connections, and poems 16–23 for Gruffudd ap Nicolas and his grandsons, who eventually sided with the Tudor-Lancastrian party (Griffiths, R.A., *Sir Rhys ap Thomas and his Family: A Study in the Wars of the Roses and Early Tudor Politics* (Cardiff, 1993), 23–4).

work, in front of himself, Herbert and the two men's supporters, might well have been intended to bind Herbert irrevocably to the court party and to force him to abandon York. Alas, we cannot know for sure. In any event, the loyalties which it pleads were to prove fragile.

Lewys Glyn Cothi, 'Dart Arglwydd Herbart, baham – na thorres'[23]

Our second poem, likewise by Lewys Glyn Cothi, dates in my view from 1463 or 1464. It refers to Edward IV's suppression of problems at Durham in late 1462[24] and associates Herbert with Gwynedd; Herbert had been made justice in Merionethshire in June 1463.[25] Above all, its frequent references to Edward as a crusader indicate a date during late 1463 or 1464, when Edward was making apparently serious preparations for an expedition to the Holy Land.[26] At any event, there is no mention of Harlech or of Herbert's earldom, so we can be assured that the poem is not later than August 1468.

This is a much longer and more ambitious piece than the previous poem. It is in *awdl* metres, which we may take to have been more prestigious than the workaday *cywydd* metre of the 1452 poem, while its 124 lines place it amongst Lewys's longest compositions. The poet himself, in preparing his very fine autograph collection of his own works, gave this poem pride of place.[27] It reprises some of the themes of the earlier piece, but others here are wholly new.

The dramatic opening lines set William on a wider stage than his south Wales home: 'The spear of lord Herbert, why did it not break, / in martyring Durham?' The reason, which the poet does not tell us, is that Durham was never actually held against the king, even though Bishop Booth was arrested in 1462 and only restored to favour in 1464.[28] Hence the town escaped without being 'martyred'. Nevertheless, Sir William on his white charger is a Sir Perceval and a Sir Kay, lording it over the men of Scotland (where the fugitive Lancastrians were being sheltered). At the same time, his new-found power is given a distinctively Welsh national dimension. The first part of Wales to be mentioned is not Herbert's own home patch, but Gwynedd (l. 9). Evidently, Herbert's new position in north Wales was a matter of pride, but equally it seems that the poet is presenting Herbert as a distinctly Welsh-national figure:

> Gwyn yw byd Gwyndyd a'u gwŷr
> gael tadog i gloi Tewdwr;
> gael Cymro a garo'r gwir,
> gael ffynnu i Gymru gâr.[29]

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[23] *Ibid*., poem 112.

[24] Durham is the subject of ll. 1–2. Edward visited Durham in 1461 after his victory at Towton. Later that year a Lancastrian raid on the Durham area was repulsed, see Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 45–6. More relevant, probably, is Edward's arrest of the bishop of Durham and seizure of his temporalities in December 1462, while the king was again at Durham trying to stamp out Lancastrian resistance in northern England. The temporalities were returned in April 1464 (Pollard, A.J., *North-eastern England During the Wars of the Roses: Lay Society, War and Politics 1450–1500* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990), 294–7).

[25] Thomas, *Herberts of Raglan*, 30.

[26] Hughes, Jonathan, *Arthurian Myths and Alchemy: The Kingship of Edward IV* (Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 2002), 193; Ross, *Edward IV*, 377.

[27] Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS Peniarth 109, where it is the first poem. The manuscript was probably written by Lewys during the 1480s.

[28] See note 24 above.

[29] Johnston, *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, 112.9–12.

> Blessed are the men of Gwynedd / getting a foster-father who outdoes Tewdwr; / getting a Welshman who loves justice, / a friend of Wales getting to flourish.

In fact it is highly unlikely that Herbert's authority meant anything in Merionethshire at this time. With Harlech still in Lancastrian hands, and the garrison widely sustained by the local gentry, the shire was essentially out-of-bounds to royal officials and delivered practically no income to the Crown.[30] We note the justificatory tone which the poet had previously used, but it is even stronger here:

> Bond da fu i Gymru, Môn, Gwent, – bedeirgwlad,
> bod arglwydd o Barlment,
> bod ei arlwy yn nwyWent,
> bod ei wraidd drwy'r byd a'i rent?[31]

> Has it not been a good thing for Wales, Anglesey, Gwent, the four lands, / that there is a lord of parliament, / that his sustenance is in the two regions of Gwent, / that his roots spread through the world, and his rent?

Herbert was indeed summoned to parliament as a lord in 1461.[32] The case which the poet sets out is that Welshmen should be happy to see one of their own enjoying such influence and power. The world is 'in the hands of the lord Welshman' (l. 18). Lewys reminds us of Herbert's ancestry from Sir Dafydd Gam and William ap Thomas. The latter used to uphold justice (a view with which not all would have agreed, to judge by his legal and extra-legal activities).[33] Lewys describes both the friends and the enemies of Herbert: some seek out his home as if that of the biblical rich man Lazarus; others run away to hide in the woods. Blessed are they whom this Welshman loves, but woe betide those whom he does not. The topos is a well-worn one in Welsh praise: a lord is praised for being fierce towards those who deserve it, and mild towards those who do not – his loyal friends and supporters, the weak (women, the poor, poets, etc.). Interestingly, for all his graphic descriptions of Herbert's unrelenting ferocity in battle, the poet is quite careful to cite actual examples which are not in Wales. Durham; York (i.e. Towton in 1461); Scotland; the Trent:[34] all these suffer the horror of his anger. Gwent, by contrast, is made into a sanctuary, while the Welsh are simply 'turned towards the man who loves them' (i.e. Edward IV). That this turning had a strongly military aspect, that west Wales had in fact to be conquered for Edward by Herbert and his supporters in the period 1461–3, is glossed over. Even better if the military prowess of Edward and Herbert can be turned towards an enemy whom everyone can agree to hate. Hence the importance of the crusade in this poem. It is first mentioned in lines 61ff. Edward IV will go, before January, 'to rescue the Cross from prison and guard'.[35]

This is the turning point of the poem. Lewys is moving from Herbert to his master, the king. The metre changes from *gwawdodyn* to a more unusual form, lines of nine syllables arranged in four-line stanzas, with consonantal rhyme on a repeating pattern, which will be sustained to the end

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30 Owen, D.H. and Smith, J.B., 'Government and Society 1283–1536', in Smith, J.B. and Smith, Ll.B. (eds.), *History of Merioneth*, ii: *The Middle Ages* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2001), 122–3.
31 Johnston, *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, 112.13–16.
32 Thomas, *Herberts of Raglan*, pp. 24 and 27.
33 *Ibid*., 11.
34 For the Trent perceived as the boundary of Edward IV's authority before Towton, see Ross, *Edward IV*, 35.
35 Ll. 61–4.

of the poem. Edward, bearer of the white roses, has conquered in battle. The poet recounts Edward's ancestry, and hence his title to rule. Most of all, he is interested in Edward's Welsh claims. As a descendant of Gwladus Du, daughter of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, he is descended from the kings of Gwynedd, from Llywelyn, from Iorwerth Drwyndwn, from Maelgwn, from the seed of the Britons (*o flaen Brytaen*).[36] But he also descends from *Edwart Caer-yn-Arfon*, Edward II, who was born in Caernarfon castle.[37] There could be few more eloquent expressions of Welsh loyalty to the Crown of England than this one. Moreover, the intervening Lancastrian dynasty receives no mention.

It is now time for the poet to reintroduce William Herbert. Just as in the previous poem, Herbert is praised as a loyal subordinate. Back in 1452, it was to Henry VI and Jasper Tudor; more than a decade on, it is to the Crown again, but in the shape of Edward IV:

> Edwart a Herbart, ffordd y mae hin,
> a geidw'r gwŷr oll gyda'r Goron.[38]
>
> Edward and Herbert, wherever there is a storm, / will keep all men loyal to the Crown.

Yet, in this poem professing utter loyalty to the English Crown, we note the subtle manipulation of Welsh-English resentment:

> Ac anadl Herbert, myn delw Gynin,
> yr oedd yng nghefn y Nordd anghyfion.[39]
>
> And Herbert's breath, by the image of St Cynin, / was down the necks of the unrighteous northern English.

Welsh saint confronts English enemy in the same couplet. In Wales, Herbert is presented as the embodiment of order. He is exercising a lawful commission of the king. He 'measures Wales', reduces it to measure and order. Edward 'the Conqueror' (l. 101), on the other hand, is a Julius Caesar over the English. The image suggests that Edward, like the more famous conqueror William, overcame the English in battle. Edward is Charlemagne, Herbert is Roland – a theme we met in the 1452 poem. Edward is Arthur, Herbert is Gawain. Herbert is a spear transfixing England from Gwent to Southampton. The poem now reaches its tremendous climax, eight lines conveying the uniqueness of Herbert by playing on the numeral *un* 'one'. Herbert is the one pillar and one head, one vineyard and one corset of steel, one sword, one buckler defending the common people, one claim in law for the ancient nation or tongue (i.e. the Welsh), one ear of all Wales, the one lock of King Edward:

> Unclo'r Cing Edwart yw'r Herbart hwn.[40]

No wonder Lewys proudly set this poem at the head of his personal collection.

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[36] Gwladus Du ('the black') married Ralph Mortimer. Edward IV descended from this couple through his paternal grandmother, Ann Mortimer.

[37] Edward was a direct descendant in the male line of Edward II, his great-great-great-grandfather.

[38] Johnston, *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, 112.81–2.

[39] *Ibid*., ll. 85–6.

[40] *Ibid*. l. 124.

Herbert, as Lewys says, 'measures Wales with his commission'. Edward had indeed granted Herbert a commission to receive Lancastrian supporters into the royal peace.[41] This gave Herbert a mighty weapon against his enemies; in effect, it was the power of life and death over penitent rebels, and indeed anyone suspected of disloyalty to the Yorkist king, and especially it gave Herbert the power to dispose of their lands and goods as he saw fit. Lewys Glyn Cothi was one such rebel.[42] The defeat of the Lancastrian cause in 1461 forced him into hiding in rebellious Merionethshire – just the region which now, *c*.1464, Lewys was claiming as Herbert's rightful possession and as being grateful for Herbert rule. At some point, then, in the early 1460s, Lewys himself had had to make the terrifying journey into the presence of William Herbert. Maybe he did so in the north, while Herbert was attempting without success to bring Harlech to heel.[43] Or maybe he went all the way down to Raglan. Either way: are we hearing here the voice of a man singing for his life? Was this poem the price for Herbert's forgiveness? How much of it was Lewys Glyn Cothi's own opinion, and how much dictated by William Herbert? Once again, we are left with a document whose political message is clear, but we lack the knowledge to penetrate its psychology.

***Guto'r Glyn 'Tri llu aeth i Gymru gynt'*[44]**

The year 1468 was the culmination of William Herbert's career, and this poem is precisely datable within it: it belongs to the brief period between the fall of Harlech castle to William Herbert on 14 August 1468 and his elevation to the earldom of Pembroke on 8 September.[45] 'Its dyke, Harlech's, did not stand up at all / to you, any more than a sheep-fold', says the poet, the past tense showing that the castle was by now in Herbert's hands (ll. 23–4). On the other hand, Herbert is twice called *Arglwydd Herbert* 'Lord Herbert' (3, 7), the title which he had received on being summoned to parliament in 1461, but he is not described as an earl, an entirely inconceivable omission if he had already received that honour. The only Welshman given an earldom before Herbert had been Jasper Tudor, who was half-brother to Henry VI on his mother's side. Guto could not have failed to mention Herbert's unprecedented promotion had it already occurred. This poem, then, was composed and performed within three weeks of the fall of Harlech.

By 1468 Harlech was the only castle in Wales or England which was still held by the Lancastrians. Attempts were made to capture it, but they failed: no-one could dislodge the garrison, led by Dafydd ab Ieuan ab Einion. In the end, it appears to have been a plan by Jasper Tudor, Henry VI's half-brother, to land in Merionethshire early in 1468 which provoked the king to order yet another attempt to capture Harlech.[46] This time he made William Herbert commander. The poem shows that Herbert's army went north in three divisions. One was led by Herbert's brother, Sir Richard Herbert of Coldbrook. It was Sir Richard's force that intercepted and defeated Jasper Tudor after the latter had burnt the town of Denbigh.[47] William himself, of course, would have led one of the others. The third commander was probably his brother-in-law, Walter Devereux, Baron Ferrers of Chartley: he, after all, had been jointly named with Herbert in the commission

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41 Thomas, *Herberts of Raglan*, 30–1.

42 So the poet tells us himself: Johnston, *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, 17.17–20.

43 Herbert tried to take the castle in autumn 1464, unsuccessfully (Thomas, *Herberts of Raglan*, 39).

44 www.gutorglyn.net poem 21 (edited and translated by Barry J. Lewis). All quotations from this web-based edition were accessed 10 July 2013.

45 For these dates, see Thomas, *Herberts of Raglan*, 40.

46 Owen and Smith, 'Government and Society', 121–4.

47 Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses*, 99.

which the king gave them on 3 July, authorizing them to raise forces to meet Jasper Tudor.[48] We know little else about the campaign, since the contemporary sources are poor. The chief source is a chronicle attributed to William Worcester, though the attribution is wrong.[49] There are more details in the Herbert family history, which dates from the seventeenth century and is preserved in Cardiff Central Library Manuscript 5.7, but it is difficult to verify its colourful descriptions, and indeed there must be a strong suspicion that they were influenced by Guto'r Glyn's poem. That is also true of the comments of Sir John Wynn of Gwydir.[50] We do know that the castle surrendered sometime after the victory over Jasper Tudor; it is not clear how much opposition Herbert actually faced.

This poem poses in the most insistent way possible the question, whose voice are we hearing here? For it is far from being a straightforward praise-poem: it is also an impassioned appeal to Herbert to spare the people of Gwynedd from his vengefulness. Guto begins by drawing historical parallels between William Herbert's campaign and two other invasions of Gwynedd in the past. Unfortunately, the references in this first part of the poem remain obscure. The host of the '*Vipwnt*' appears to refer to a not particularly famous episode in the thirteenth century, which furthermore involved Powys more than Gwynedd, while the remaining parallel, the host of '*Y Pil*', is unidentified.[51] They have the appearance of learned references obtained from some unknown source, almost certainly a written one. The next few lines are made difficult by our lack of understanding of the first four, but the poet appears to be describing the three routes taken by Herbert's three divisions: along the border, symbolized by Offa's dyke, along Sarn Elen (i.e. northwards through west Wales) and William's own route, unspecified. As he describes the progress of the Herbert forces, Guto imagines himself back at the time before the castle fell. He asks for God to guide the host and its baggage train. The failure of previous expeditions is mentioned obliquely – the rain experienced by the earlier armies has given way to sunshine now that Herbert is in command. The poet has predicted that Herbert will occupy Gwynedd and 'restore Anglesey to the one who rightfully possesses it', that is, the king (l. 12). There is a hint here of the traditional role of the Welsh poet as prophet. Prophecy is not a type of poetry with which Guto'r Glyn, to judge by his surviving poems, had much to do, but he was thoroughly familiar with its conventions, as can be seen from the way in which he adapts Welsh prophetic themes to the rule of Edward IV in a slightly later poem from the early 1470s.[52] The fundamental idea within Welsh prophecy was the return of a rightful ruler to lead the Britons – i.e., the Welsh – to a restoration of their former dignity and power throughout the island of Britain. The phrase '*i'r dyn a'i medd*' – 'to the one who rightfully possesses it' – may reflect this kind of discourse. On the other hand, it may also acknowledge that Anglesey, along with the other two shires of north Wales, belonged to the king of England. The basis of Edward IV's right to rule Gwynedd is left hovering between these two sources of legitimacy.

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48 Thomas, *Herberts of Raglan*, 38.

49 Stevenson, J. (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France during the Reign of Henry VI*, ii.2 (London, 1864), 791 and DNB (Online) s.n. *Worcester, William*.

50 Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses*, 100.

51 For suggestions, none of them very satisfactory, see www.gutorglyn.net 21.3n.

52 www.gutorglyn.net poem 29.

The conceit that Guto is speaking during the uncertain days of the campaign itself continues in the next lines:

> Berw Lloegr, pawb a rôi'u llygaid,
> Pe ceisiech Harddlech, o chaid.[53]

England is in a ferment, every man would give his eyes, / if you attempted Harlech, if it might be taken.

The audience is then reminded of William Herbert's past triumphs: the seizure of Pembroke castle (in 1461) and of Carreg Cennen (1462). The latter was slighted on its capture, an action to which Guto explicitly refers (ll. 21–2). Only now does the poetic voice return to the present, revealing that Harlech did in fact suffer the fate of these other Lancastrian holdouts:

> Ni ddaliawdd ei chlawdd achlân
> Ywch, Harddlech, mwy no chorddlan.[54]

Its dyke, Harlech's, did not stand up at all / to you, any more than a sheep-fold.

The next, triumphal section of the poem describes in hyperbolic terms the progress of Herbert's forces through north Wales. Herbert's men are depicted as heroically overcoming nature as well as man. His footsoldiers pierce the woods like dragons. The warhorses climb the face of Snowdon, 'where cattle would fear to tread'. They scorch footmarks into the bare rock, they devastate Snowdonia, they penetrate the moorland and the waste. The difficult landscape seems to be implied to be a kind of fortification, analogous to the castles which Herbert has taken.

Yet the poem's relationship to Gwynedd is a fraught one. On the one hand, Gwynedd is the territory of the enemy. As such, it must be overcome, and within the accepted conventions of Welsh praise poetry such a victory is a matter for praise and celebration. But the poem is also trying to depict Herbert as a unifying figure, one who incorporates legitimate power over Gwynedd within his broader identity as a Welsh leader. Though Gwynedd can be seen as exterior to Herbert's own *teirgwlad* ('three lands'), yet his kin unite '*Deau a Gwynedd*' ('South Wales and Gwynedd') among themselves (ll. 27, 32). The legitimacy of Herbert's onslaught against Gwynedd is therefore a matter of concern, and this section of the poem concludes on a defensive note:

> Od enynnaist dân ennyd
> Drwy ladd ac ymladd i gyd,
> Dyrnod anufydd-dod fu
> Dernio Gwynedd a'i dyrnu.[55]

If you kindled fire once / while striking and fighting non-stop, / the mincing and thrashing of Gwynedd / was simply a blow struck against disobedience.

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[53] Ibid. 21.13–14.
[54] Ibid. ll. 23–4.
[55] Ibid. ll. 41–4.

This is the turning-point of the poem. So far, it has been a straightforward praise poem, albeit containing some quite unconventional imagery. But at this point the poetic voice turns from praise to counsel. Guto compares Gwynedd to St Paul. Paul once persecuted Christians, but then became one himself. Christian forgiveness washes away sins such as Paul committed. Herbert is urged to behave towards a repentant Gwynedd in the same Christian spirit of forgiveness as God showed to Paul. This final section of the poem is so full of meanings that it must be quoted in full:

Chwithau na fyddwch weithian
Greulon wrth ddynion â thân.
Na ladd weilch, a wnâi wledd ynn,
Gwynedd, fal Pedr y gwenyn.
Na fwrw dreth yn y fro draw
Ni aller ei chynullaw.
Na friw Wynedd yn franar,
N'ad i Fôn fyned i fâr,
N'ad y gweiniaid i gwynaw
Na brad na lledrad rhag llaw.
N'ad trwy Wynedd blant Rhonwen
Na phlant Hors yn y Fflint hen.
Na ad, f'arglwydd, swydd i Sais,
Na'i bardwn i un bwrdais.
Barna'n iawn, brenin ein iaith,
Bwrw 'n y tân eu braint unwaith.
Cymer wŷr Cymru'r awron,
Cwnstabl o Farstabl i Fôn.
Dwg Forgannwg a Gwynedd,
Gwna'n un o Gonwy i Nedd.
O digia Lloegr a'i dugiaid,
Cymru a dry yn dy raid.

You too, now, do not inflict / cruel fire upon men. / Do not kill the falcons of Gwynedd / who used to serve us mead, like St Peter the bees. / Do not exact a tax on the land over there / which cannot be gathered. / Do not churn up Gwynedd into fallow-land, / do not let Anglesey fall into misery, / do not let the weak lament / either treachery or theft from now on. / Do not let Rhonwen's children roam Gwynedd / nor the children of Horsa into ancient Flint. / Do not, my lord, allow any office to an Englishman, / nor give any burgess his pardon. / Judge rightly, king of our nation, / cast their privilege into the fire once and for all. / Take now the men of Wales, / constable from Barnstaple to Anglesey. / Take Glamorgan and Gwynedd, / make all one from the Conwy to the Neath. / If England and her dukes are angered, / Wales will come to your need.

Guto behaves like a spokesman or intermediary for the gentry of the country. He had many patrons in the north-west, 'falcons … who used to serve us mead' (ll. 51–2). But the poem's most striking message is its emphasis on Welshness and its vision of Wales as a single country in opposition to England. The poet's vision of a united, Welsh Wales is one of the most sustained and explicit statements of such an ideal in all medieval Welsh literature. Unity is to be geographical, uniting north and south, Principality and March. Unity is also to be ethno-linguistic. And unity is to be legal. The privileges of the largely English burgesses of the towns are to be consigned to fire. Welshmen

are to occupy office within Wales. And the man to preside over all this is William Herbert. In an unprecedented piece of hyperbole, the poet calls him 'king of our language/nation'. Though exaggerated epithets are common enough in Welsh praise poetry, there were definite limits to this. In particular, in the later Middle Ages the word *brenin* 'king' is exclusively reserved for God and the king of England, alongside biblical and foreign kings. Calling a Welsh patron *brenin* is practically unique. This poem elevates Herbert to a position last aspired to, though never quite achieved, by Owain Glyn Dŵr.

Yet this is not the whole story. Owain is not mentioned in the poem, or for that matter in any poem addressed to the Herberts. William Herbert was the inheritor of a quite different tradition. His grandfather, Dafydd Gam of Brecon, had been one of Owain's greatest opponents in the south-east. On closer examination, the political programme advocated in this poem seems vague and ambiguous. We have already seen that the poet accepts Herbert's loyalty to Edward IV. His attitude to *Lloegr*, England, is ambivalent. On the one hand, he depicts the people of England looking eagerly towards Herbert to take Harlech for them; if this is not an avowedly positive reference to England, it is at least an acknowledgement of the English dimension to Herbert's power and influence. Contrast the final couplet, where the poet reveals doubt as to whether England will accept Herbert in the quasi-royal role which the poet has assigned to him. Herbert is to be 'constable from Barnstaple to Anglesey'. Yes, he is to have unprecedented territorial power – but it is as a deputy, a representative, that he is to operate. The clearest part of the programme advocated by the poet is that Herbert should use this position to favour Welshmen for office and to reduce the privileges of the English within Wales.[56]

No poem poses in more acute form the question of whether the poet's words may be taken as his own or as an expression of what others had asked him to say. We cannot simply subsume his voice as that of 'the poets', as if they formed a collective entity with their own professional common opinion. They may have done, of course. On the other hand, there are the 'falcons' of Gwynedd. Did they commission this poem; or, if not commission it, did they at least beg Guto to put in a word for them the next time he addressed Herbert? It is worth remembering that Guto would probably have considered himself a man of Gwynedd.[57] And what of the role of Herbert in all this? How much of the programme outlined in this poem was his, and how much wished on him by Guto or the people whom Guto had agreed to represent? A cynic might imagine that the whole thing could have been agreed in advance, the prelude to a public act of magnanimity on Herbert's part. The difficulties are made even worse by our lack of knowledge of where this poem was performed and who would have been in the audience. Above all: how much freedom did a professional poet have to speak truth to power, especially power of the kind wielded by Herbert? I do not think we know the answer to any of these questions.

Conclusion

For those Welshmen who enjoyed the favour of William Herbert, having one of their own rise to such eminence may well have seemed a dream come true. There is evidence, however, that others

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[56] For another account of the political programme in this poem, see Fulton, Helen, 'Class and Nation: Defining the English in Late-medieval Welsh Poetry', in Kennedy, R. and Meecham-Jones, S. (eds.), *Authority and Subjugation in Writing of Medieval Wales* (Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2008), 191–212, especially 203 and 206–7. Fulton distinguishes what she terms 'mythic and contemporary discourses' in medieval Welsh writing about the English; for her, this poem combines a mythic vision of a Welsh Britain with contemporary concerns about the encroachments of English office-holders in Wales.

[57] www.gutorglyn.net 20a.40, and see also ibid. poem 20 (background note), where I suggest that he came from Glyndyfrdwy in Edeirnion, Merionethshire.

were not so keen.[58] To the northern poet Llywelyn ap Gutun, Herbert was 'the devil of Gwent' without whose favour he was simply unable to ply his trade anywhere in Glamorgan.[59] The elegies composed after Herbert's death, interestingly, contain hints of the same justificatory tone we have already encountered. Dafydd Llwyd of Mathafarn exclaims that it would have been extraordinary for an emperor to have comported himself the way Herbert did.[60] In the context of an elegy, where hyperbolic descriptions of the dead man's wealth, status and hospitality were expected, this might have just about been taken as a compliment. But then the poet goes on to say:

> O bu ryfygus a balch
> Ennyd awr, benadurwalch,
> Ymbiliwn er mabolaeth
> Â Duw fry, er Difiau aeth.[61]

> If he was arrogant and proud / Now and again, the hawk-like chief, / Let us pray on account of his manliness / To God on high (since Thursday he [Herbert] departed).

Much of Hywel Swrdwal's elegy for Herbert is an impassioned and violently anti-English diatribe. Indeed, of all the poets who composed for William Herbert, it was Hywel Swrdwal who was most insistent on the benefits of Herbert's Welshness, his Welsh lineage and his knowledge of the Welsh language.[62] Nevertheless, Hywel acknowledges that opinions might be divided:

> Na fid Gymro drosto draw,
> O bu dda, heb weddïaw.
> O bu drwm, y byd a red,
> Maddeuent am ei ddäed.[63]

> Let no Welshman there, / If he [Herbert] was good, be without prayer for him. / If he [Herbert] was heavy, that's how the world goes, / Let them forgive him on account of his goodness.

'Heavy lord' was a phrase used in the English of the time to refer to a lord whose favour one did not enjoy. Evidently the Welsh *trwm* could bear the same meaning. Passages such as these remind us just how careful it is necessary to be in employing that over-used word, 'conventional'. Yes, it was a convention within the elegy to pray for forgiveness for the patron and a swift entry into heaven. In that sense, these passages are following convention. But their explicit acknowledgement of problematic aspects of William Herbert's behaviour, and even more the very mention of the suggestion that some members of the audience may not have been well disposed towards him, are not conventional at all. With Herbert dead, his heir underage, and the politics of the whole kingdom in chaos, it was very far from clear what would happen next. Poets operating in this environment

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58 As is noted by Evans, ' "Talm o Wentoedd" ', 291.

59 Daniel, R. Iestyn (ed.), *Gwaith Llywelyn ap Gutun* (Canolfan Uwchefrydiau Cymreig a Cheltaidd, Aberystwyth, 2007), 15.5–6.

60 Richards, W. Leslie (ed.), *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn* (Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, Caerdydd, 1964), 54.57–8.

61 Ibid., ll. 85–88. 'Thursday' refers to the day of Herbert's execution on 27 July 1469.

62 Evans, Dylan Foster (ed.), *Gwaith Hywel Swrdwal a'i Deulu* (Canolfan Uwchefrydiau Cymreig a Cheltaidd, Aberystwyth, 2000), 4.49–56.

63 Ibid., 7.65–68.

could not blandly consign Herbert to heaven. They had to fulfil their duty to the affinity which Herbert had constructed, but they also needed to keep one eye on Herbert's many enemies, men who might soon be in the ascendant. The tradition, so deeply rooted in Welsh scholarly culture, of ascribing views to 'the poets' as a collective, with all that that implies as regards their professional independence of their patrons, does not adequately convey the complexity and delicacy of their political position. If it is justified for us today to see Lewys Glyn Cothi, Guto'r Glyn and the rest as icons of Welshness in the bleak political landscape of post-Glyndŵr Wales, it should equally be remembered that in their own time they were simply men trying to make their way in a dangerous and unpredictable world.[64]

[64] I am grateful to Professor Dafydd Johnston for reading and commenting on this article before publication.

‘FOR THE FARTHER SATISFACTION OF THE CURIOUS’: HOW AN ALABASTER CARVING FROM CAERLEON REACHED THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM[1]

By Maddy Gray

In about 1660, some labourers digging in a quarry at a place they called Porth Shini Kran, between Caerleon and Christchurch, made a remarkable discovery. In a large freestone coffin they found a skeleton in an elaborate iron frame, the whole encased in lead. Near this was an alabaster statue of a winged figure holding a sword and scales. The discovery was inspected by a Captain Matthew (or Matthias) Bird, a Caerleon ship-builder, who subsequently acquired the alabaster carving and gave it to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

In his extended edition of Camden’s *Britannia* in 1695, Edmund Gibson describes the find thus:

> About forty years since, some Labourers digging in a Quarry betwixt Kaer Leion Bridge and Christchurch (near a place call’d Porth Sini Krân) discover’d a large coffin of free-stone; which being open’d they found therein a leaden sheet, wrap’d about an iron frame, curiously wrought; and in that frame a skeleton. Near the coffin they found also a gilded Alabaster statue of a person in a coat of mail; holding in the right-hand a short sword, and in the left a pair of scales. In the right scale appear’d a young maiden’s head and breasts; and in the left (which was out-weigh’d by the former) a globe. This account of the coffin and statue I receiv’d from the worshipful Captain Matthias Bird who saw both himself; and for the farther satisfaction of the curious, was pleas’d lately to present the statue to the Ashmolean Repository at Oxford.

Regrettably, the carving seems to have suffered some damage either before or since it reached Oxford. The Ashmolean’s *Book of Benefactors* (effectively an accessions register) describes it as

> Loricatam quandam Statuam, ex Lapide Alabastrite efformatam atque Auro foliato olim obductam, Gladium adhuc integra, gestabat dextrâ: et in sinistrâ bilancem: in dextrâ lance quæ gravior erat, Puellæ facies eminebat; in sinistrâ verò Globus terrestris
>
> (a figure in a coat of mail, sculpted from alabaster, which was once covered in gold leaf, holding a sword, still fully preserved, in its right hand and, in its left, a pair of scales. The right pan of the scales, which is the heavier, shows a girl’s face, the left one shows the globe of the Earth …)[2]

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[1] This short article is a summary of the work of several people. I am particularly grateful to Mark Lewis for drawing the carving to our attention, in the course of a lecture on the University of South Wales’s Caerleon campus; to Nigel Young of caerleon.net for much of the background information including the Ashmolean, Camden and Moll references; to Bob Trett for archival and field work and several valuable suggestions; to Julian Litten for his expertise on late medieval burial practices; to Richard Morgan for his help with place-names; to Jeremy Knight for his help and advice and for the suggestion that the find spot might be the chapel of SS Julius and Aaron; to Andy Seabrook for the details of his excavation there.

[2] http://www.ashmolean.org/ash/objects/makedetail.php?pmu=571&mu=573&gty=asea&sec=&dtn=15&sfn=Title,Page%20Number&cpa=1&rpos=0&obj=&mat=&loc=&art=bird# , with an expandable photograph of the relevant page (accessed 18.11.13).

and says it was dug up in about 1660 and given to the museum in 1693 by Matthew Bird. Writing only two years after this, however, Gibson said that

> The feet and right-arm have been broken some years since, as also the scales; but in all other respects, it's tolerably well preserv'd; and some of the gilding still remains in the interstices of the armour.

From Gibson's description of it as having been broken 'some years since', it seems unlikely that the damage had been done since the carving was given to the Ashmolean, but it is difficult to reconcile the full description in the Ashmolean catalogue with Gibson's reference to the damage to the scales.

The carving is still to be seen in the museum; the sword arm and feet are missing, as are the pans of the scales.[3] It looks from what survives, though, as though the statue originally had the sword arm raised, in a pose similar to that of a carving in the Victoria and Albert Museum's collection in which Michael is energetically attacking the devil while holding the scales.[4] The illustration in Gibson's edition of Camden actually shows a little more of the raised arm than now survives.[5] This illustration was then copied for the marginal decoration of Herman Moll's 1724 map of Monmouthshire, again with the portion of the raised arm, but this seems to have been a straightforward copy of Gibson's illustration and cannot be taken as evidence of the appearance of the carving at that date.[6]

The damage is unfortunate as the missing elements would have added to an appreciation of the carving's iconography. Gibson suggested that

> though at first view it might seem to be the Goddess Astræe, yet I cannot satisfie my self as to the device of the Globe and Woman in the scales; and am unwilling to trouble the Reader with too many conjectures.

In fact, as is clear both from the description and from the present state of the carving, it depicts the Archangel Michael with the scales of judgement. There are examples of similar carvings in Francis Cheetham's catalogues of English alabasters, though interestingly most of his illustrations are of *either* Michael in armour killing the Devil *or* Michael in ecclesiastical vestments weighing souls.[7] There is only one of Michael in armour with the scales, the one referred to above. All the dated examples are fifteenth century.

In a report on the caerleon.net web site, Rodney Hudson suggested a date between 1480 and 1530 for the figure, based on the detail of the head-dress and armour.[8] It is difficult to be that precise about the dating of these carvings because of the degree of stylization. They were produced to a pattern using pricked and pounced parchment templates, though there was always an element of

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3 For a photograph and brief description see http://britisharchaeology.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/highlights/caerleon-figure.html (accessed 18.11.13).

4 Francis Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005 edn), 134.

5 Reproduced from a later edition on http://www.caerleon.net/history/photo/325/index.html (accessed 18.11.13).

6 Herman Moll, *A set of fifty new and correct maps of England and Wales* ... (London: Moll and Bowles, 1724), map 38, reproduced at http://www.caerleon.net/history/photo/325/index.html (accessed 18.11.13). The map is listed in D. Parry Michael, *The Mapping of Monmouthshire* (Bristol: Regional Publications, 1985), but not illustrated. I am grateful to Peter Keelan of the Scolar Library in Cardiff University for tracking down a copy of the Moll atlas.

7 See, for example, Francis Cheetham, *Alabaster Images of Medieval England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), plates 67–69; *English Medieval Alabasters*, 32–3.

8 At http://www.caerleon.net/history/photo/325/index.html (accessed 19.11 13).

Fig. 1: Sculpture of the archangel St Michael from 'Porth Sini Krân' near Caerleon, 15th or early 16th century.

variation in detail and in the skill with which the individual carver followed and elaborated on the basic design.[9] However, a date from the fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries seems the most likely. The armour is made of overlapping plates and could even be interpreted as feathers: this is certainly how the Ashmolean web site describes it. Other depictions of angels (such as the Archangel Gabriel in the stained glass of the Annunciation at Llandyrnog in the Vale of Clwyd) show them with feathered legs, but it is perhaps less likely that an angel would be represented feathered all over and with most of the body exposed.

Cheetham's illustrations of the Weighing of Souls also include depictions of the Virgin Mary. She was often depicted interceding for souls, sometimes placing her rosary on the beam of the scales. This was also how the scene was depicted in medieval wall paintings, such as the one just up river from Caerleon at Llangybi.[10] In the fuller version of the scene painted on the rood screen at Llanelian-yn-Rhos, just south of Colwyn Bay in north Wales, a demon is gripping the other pan of the scales and the soul in that pan is already sprouting horns.[11]

This was also a popular image in Welsh poetry and drama. Tudur Aled's *marwnad* to Morys ab Ieuan ap Hywel of Llangedwyn, who died in about 1525, includes the lines

> Mihangel, pan êl i'w naid,
> Bes rhoen i bwyso'r enaid,
> Ni allo dim, o'r naill du,
> Dal pwys pwys, gyda help Iesu;
> Mae ar bwys Mair, a'i basiwn,
> Maddeu holl, gamweddau hwn;
> Mam ǐ thad, mamaeth ydych,
> Mair, saf gyda Morys wych,
> Par â bys pur ǐ bwyso,
> Poed, ar bwys paderau, y bo!
>
> (When he comes to his judgement, O Michael, let them give it to weigh the soul!
> May nothing stop the weights on one side, with Jesu's help,
> Because his Passion and Mary's rosary
> Can forgive all his sins.
> Mother of her father, you are a nurse, Mary;
> Stand by fair Morys,
> Have him weighed with a faithful finger,
> And be it, on a rosary's weight, as may be!)[12]

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9 Cheetham, *Alabaster Images*, 8–13.

10 For further wall paintings of this, at Slapton (Northants) and South Leigh (Oxfordshire) see http://www.paintedchurch.org/slapweig.htm and http://www.paintedchurch.org/sleigmic.htm. The scene also forms part of a sequence in the Commandery at Worcester, a medieval hospital (illustrated at http://www.bbc.co.uk/herefordandworcester/content/image_galleries/commandery_paintings_gallery.shtml?8: accessed 20.11.13).

11 Illustrated in Peter Lord, *Medieval Vision* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 192.

12 T. Gwyn Jones (ed.), *Gwaith Tudur Aled* (2 vols, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1926), I, 323–4, lines 87–96; translation from Lord, *Medieval Vision*, 192. For further discussion see Andrew Breeze, 'The Virgin's Rosary and St Michael's Scales', *Studia Celtica* 24/25 (1989–90), 91–8.

and in the Last Judgement sequence in the Welsh play *The Dialogue of the Soul and the Body* Mary places her rosary in the scales on the side of the sinner's soul.[13]

Michael also appeared with the scales but without the interceding Virgin on the churchyard cross at Derwen in the Vale of Clwyd: here Lord suggests he may be standing on a globe to represent the world, which has interesting links with the globe in the scales of the Caerleon figure.[14] It is of course possible that the Virgin Mary originally appeared with Michael in the Caerleon carving but that that part of the panel has been lost.

The Caerleon carving almost certainly came from the side panel of a chest tomb. Michael was a particularly appropriate saint for depiction on a tomb. The idea of St Michael weighing the souls of the dead is generally thought to have come from Egyptian iconography. In Christian thinking, though, St Michael represented the conqueror of Satan and the leader of the church militant.[15] We are apt to view medieval religious art through the distorting lens of our post-Reformation inheritance of hell-and-damnation preaching and to see these images in terms of guilt and fear. Depiction of the last judgement was certainly intended to inspire fear, but was also a reminder of hope. Christ was shown in the red robes of a judge but showing his wounds and surrounded by reminders of the Crucifixion, through which the viewer would hope to be saved. Michael, too, was there not to terrify but to defend. His role was to care for the souls of the dead, and the votive Mass of St Michael was the Mass said for the souls of all the dead. In early sixteenth-century Brecon a stipendiary priest was paid 26s 8d a year (roughly equivalent to about £2,500 in 2013 money) to celebrate the Mass of St Michael every week in the town charnel house. This is one of the most striking examples of the medieval tradition that the dead were still in a sense part of the community: even the anonymous and fragmented bones in the charnel house needed and deserved the services of the church.[16]

Alabaster chest tombs were produced on an almost industrial scale by the Nottingham and Derbyshire alabaster workshops. They could be ordered virtually in kit form; agreements for the supply of tombs specify 'images of angels bearing shields', 'niches with figures called weepers' and so on.[17] There is therefore nothing identifiably Welsh, let alone local to Caerleon, about the style of carving. Nevertheless, one assumes it was chosen and paid for by someone in the region.

Gibson's original assumption (from his reference to the goddess Astraea, personification of justice) seems to have been that the carving and the skeleton dated from the Roman period in Caerleon. There are Roman cemeteries on most of the roads leading out of Caerleon, perhaps the best-known being on the road to the north at Bulmore. The carving is clearly much later in date, but there is no necessary connection between the carving and the skeleton. However, from Gibson's

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13 Gwenan Jones, *A study of three Welsh religious plays...* (Bala: R. Evans, 1939), 250–1.

14 Lord, *Medieval Vision*, though in discussing the iconography of the rest of the cross, Lord identifies as a possible Judgement of Solomon a scene which is clearly the Coronation of the Virgin. This in fact strengthens his argument about the depiction of the Virgin on the other faces of the cross.

15 For an overview of the cult and significance of St Michael see, e.g., F. G. Holweck, 'Michael the Archangel', in C. G. Herbermann *et al* (eds.), *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, X (New York: Robert Appleton 1911), 275–7; R. F. Johnson, *Saint Michael the Archangel in Medieval English Legend* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005); Graham Jones, 'The Cult of Michael the Archangel in Britain' in P. Bouet, G. Otranto and A. Vauchez (eds), *Culto e santuari di san Michele nell'Europa medievale-Culte et sanctuaires de saint Michel dans l'Europe mediévale* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2007), 147–82.

16 The National Archives, E178/3503.

17 For examples of contracts see Sally Badham and Sophie Oosterwijk, ' "Cest Endenture Fait Parentre": English tomb contracts of the long fourteenth century' in Badham and Oosterwijk (eds.), *Monumental Industry: the production of tomb monuments in England and Wales in the long fourteenth century* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2010), 187–236.

description of 'a leaden sheet, wrap'd about an iron frame, curiously wrought; and in that frame a skeleton', it seems that the skeleton may also have been late medieval. What we have here is an anthropoid lead shell with internal iron bands.[18] According to Julian Litten, who has kindly advised on this,

> The bands were used to assist the plumber in fixing and soldering the lead, as these anthropoid shells were made in two sections: a lower lead 'tray', with shallow sides, on which to place the corpse (usually wound in a cere-cloth shroud) and an upper 'lid', fashioned to show facial features. The lead was usually quite thin and, therefore, somewhat floppy, thus the iron bands assisted in providing a measure of rigidity when handling the item and, of course, to assist the plumber to position the lid and to solder it to the sides of the lower tray.

He suggests that the coffin was late medieval or early modern. Stone coffins are rare after about 1500, though there are some examples (Litten mentions the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century burials in the vault at Pembroke College, Cambridge, which are all in stone sarcophagi because of the high water table).[19]

What the workmen found, then, seems to have been a fragment of a late medieval tomb chest with accompanying stone and lead coffins and skeleton. It is difficult to be more certain because the skeleton and coffins vanish from the record after 1660. It is also unlikely that the coffins were originally placed inside the chest. Tomb chests were designed to look as though they contained the body but in fact they seldom did so. There are however some documented examples. Mark Duffy mentions some royal tomb chests containing coffins (for example, those of Henry III and Edward I).[20] Recent conservation work on the tomb chest of Blanche Grandison (d. 1347) at Much Marcle (Herefs) revealed a lead-sheathed coffin within the chest. However, as Sally Badham's discussion of this emphasises, both the lead sheathing (as opposed to a pre-shaped lead coffin) and the burial actually in the tomb chest were highly unusual.[21]

The location of the discovery is also problematic. There is nothing remotely resembling 'Porth Shini Kran' on the modern map, or indeed on the tithe map or early Ordnance Survey maps.[22] Bob Trett has looked at the hill between Caerleon and Christchurch and identified some possible quarry sites but none is marked on the maps. Richard Morgan of Glamorgan Archives has pointed out that there is a quarry near Belmont House on the 1883 Ordnance Survey map, but this is some way along the ridge to the east of Christchurch and could hardly be described as 'betwixt Kaer Leion Bridge and Christchurch'.

Richard Morgan also suggested another identification. He says:

> *Porth Sini Krân* as a name is reminiscent of a chapel described as *St. Nigar* 1136–58 and *St. Nigarun* c.1180–1217 recorded in the Calendar of Charter Rolls III, p.449, in 1290. To the best of my knowledge, the name has not been explained. If *Porth Sini Krân* could be amended to *Porth Sinikrân*, it looks uncannily like Welsh *porth* in the sense 'gate, entrance' and St Nigar, possibly in Welsh form *Sain Nicran*, *Sainicran*, reminiscent of place-names such as Llansainsiôr (St Georges) where *sain* is prefixed to a non-Welsh saint.[23]

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18 See also Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death* (London: Robert Hale, 1991), esp. 92–6.

19 By email, 28 Jan. 2013.

20 *Royal Tombs of Medieval England* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003), 28.

21 Sally Badham, ' "What Lies Beneath": A discovery at Much Marcle (Herefordshire', *Church Monuments Society Newsletter* 29(2), Spring 2014, 16–19.

22 I am immensely grateful to Bob Trett for checking the maps for me and for a number of useful suggestions.

23 Email, 22 Feb. 2013.

This is intriguing but gets us no nearer to a location for the find. Jeremy Knight has suggested as an alternative the chapel of Sts Julius and Aaron. Like Belmont, this is along the ridge east of Christchurch, at Mount St Albans, hardly 'betwixt' Christchurch and Caerleon. It is a known chapel site, though its status in the later medieval period is uncertain. It appears neither in *Valor Ecclesiasticus* nor in the Monmouthshire chantry certificates, which only mention Capel Gwenog and the chantry in St Cadoc's church.[24] Even if it was still in use in the fifteenth century, it would only have been a chapelry, with no rights of burial.

There is however evidence of use of the site as a quarry, and Archdeacon Coxe reported finding burials there. In 2008, Andrew Seaman (then of Cardiff University, subsequently at Canterbury) conducted a small campaign of excavation there as follow-up to a desktop and geophysical survey.[25] This located a post-medieval quarry pit, backfilled in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, and some evidence of a structure which may have been a stone-lined cist grave. There is also the fact that the name of the chapel in documents is often abbreviated to 'SS Iun ac Aaron', which could just conceivably be garbled to 'Shini Kran'.

The identification of the site of the finds thus remains at best not proven. It is even more difficult to establish what might have led to the burial of a high-status coffin and fragments of a chest tomb in this location. We have unfortunately no way of identifying the individual whose skeleton was found and then lost. Alabaster chest tombs were generally the preserve of the local elite, people of the rank of Sir William ap Thomas and his wife Gwladus, Sir Richard and Margaret Herbert of Coldbrook and Richard Herbert of Ewyas, all of whose tombs survive at Abergavenny. Fragments of the inscription from the alabaster tomb of Sir William Morgan of Pencoed, which was in Llanmartin church until its destruction in the early nineteenth century, were found in the church at Caerleon and made their way to the museum there.[26] They are now in storage in the National Museum of Wales.

The only family of that status with connections in Caerleon and Christchurch were the Herberts of St Julians. Related to the Herberts of Raglan, Coldbrook and Ewyas, their house at St Julians was in the parish of Christchurch. The most likely candidate for the date of the carving and burial would be Sir George Herbert, who died in France in 1504 but could have been brought home (part of the purpose of lead coffins was to deal with the practical problems of arranging elite funerals which could take place some time after the actual death). However, it seems unlikely that he would have been buried in a remote chapel rather than in his parish church: and it is perhaps even more unlikely that his family would have tolerated the desecration of his grave implied in the damage to the alabaster carvings.

One even more tenuous suggestion relates to the problems of iconoclastic damage to tombs after the Reformation. Tombs in monastic locations were of course especially vulnerable: and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries monastic churches were still very much preferred locations for elite burial. Phillip Lindley has discussed the damage to monuments in the wake of the Dissolution

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[24] *Valor Ecclesiasticus temp. Henr. VIII ...* (London: Eyre and Strahan, 1810–34), vol. 4, 375; TNA, E301/74 f.20, transcribed in M. Gray, 'The last days of the chantries and shrines of Monmouthshire', *Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History* 8 (1991), 21–40, pp. 33–4, available online at http://welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/browse/viewpage/llgc-id:1127665/llgc-id:1128385/llgc-id:1128411/get650 (accessed 2.12.13).

[25] Excavation report at http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/share/resources/Trial%20Excavation%20at%20Mount%20St%20Albans%20near%20Caerleon.pdf (accessed 20.11.13); see also Andrew Seaman, 'The Roman to Early Medieval Transition in South-East Wales: Settlement, Landscape and Religion' (unpublished Cardiff Ph D thesis, 2010), esp. ch. 5 and appendix 4; idem, 'Julius and Aaron, Martyrs of Caerleon', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, forthcoming. Dr Seaman is planning a follow-up excavation at the site in 2014.

[26] Caerleon museum catalogue, typescript, 1909, now in the library of the Legionary Museum, Caerleon.

and cites several examples of families who had their ancestors exhumed and their tombs removed.[27] Lindley's discussion focuses on the immediate aftermath of the Dissolution but, as he points out, numbers of tombs survived that period and were moved or destroyed later. The effigies and chest tombs of William Herbert, earl of Pembroke (d. 1469) and his wife Ann, and of their son William Herbert, earl of Huntingdon and his wife Mary Wydeville, were recorded at Tintern Abbey in the seventeenth century in Sir Thomas Herbert's *Herbertorum Prosapia* but have since disappeared.[28] The second great period of iconoclastic and political damage to tomb carvings was of course the Civil War and Commonwealth: it was then that Lindley argues the tombs at Abergavenny were damaged and disordered.[29] It is possible that the Porth Shini Kran find represents a failed attempt to remove and rescue a coffin and tomb from a monastic location, or even from a parish church.

The final part of the story is if anything even more intriguing. A battered and frankly unexceptional piece of alabaster carving has acquired a provenance, a place in the history books and a home in an eminent museum. This tells us a lot about the development of museums in the past and the ways in which significance can be imputed to run-of-the-mill artefacts.

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27 *Tomb Destruction and Scholarship* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007), esp. 5–18.

28 Cardiff Central Library MS 5.7, 'Herbertorum Prosapia', ff. 145, 151. The 'Prosapia' was probably written in the late seventeenth century: a reference on f. 170v. speaks of 'this present time AD 1680', and that would be consistent with the script. However, the drawings are poor and may have been copied earlier, so it is possible that the Tintern tombs suffered damage during the Civil War. Cf J. A. Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire II (ii): The Hundred of Trelech* (London: Mitchell Hughes and Clark, 1913), 259.

29 *Tomb Destruction*, 199–236.

THE EVIDENCE FOR AN EXTANT CONDUIT HOUSE ON THE TROY ESTATE, MONMOUTH

By Ann C. Benson

Introduction

This article is based on an investigation of the history of the Troy House Estate which lies one mile south of Monmouth and borders the south bank of the River Trothy.[1] It was conducted for an MA in Garden and Landscape History awarded in 2013 by the University of Bristol.[2]

The Estate consists of three main components: the house and its gardens, a walled garden, and a farm with surrounding parkland. Currently, these are under separate ownership. The Estate is important as it was the home of the influential Welsh families, the Herberts followed by the Somersets, the latter being advanced to the title of duke of Beaufort in 1682. During the seventeenth century the Somerset occupants moved in the highest English court circles and travelled throughout Europe.[3] From 1682 Troy served as the administrative centre for the Somersets' extensive Welsh estates and Badminton became their main family seat. However, on the death of the first duke of Beaufort's son in a coaching accident near Llanrothal in 1698, Troy became largely unoccupied by family members and was left in the care of resident stewards. The Estate was auctioned in 1901 leading to a succession of owners of its different parts, including nuns who ran the house as a girls' school until the early 1970s. The house was sold in 1977 to the current owner and initially was managed by two teachers as an approved school for boys, but this also closed in the mid-1980s. Unoccupied since this time, the house is the subject of a planning application for conversion and extension to form a complex of residential units. Overall, the house, farm and walled garden are in poor condition with many historically important features under threat of further deterioration.

Given the status of its owners across centuries, the Estate appears under-researched and represented in the literature.[4] The information provided separately by Cadw and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) also contains few cross-references to its different components. The research upon which this article is based investigates these, first individually, and then cross-references the findings to extend current understanding of them as discreet entities. This provides a unique, holistic view of how they interrelated within the estate across time.[5] A multi-method approach incorporates aerial, ground and geophysical reconnaissance, documentary searches, map regression and overlays. The architectural history of the house is also positioned at the centre of the research to support a consideration of how the surrounding land has been refashioned across time.

This article focuses on a ruined building within the parkland component of the Estate (Fig. 1). The parkland lies south and south-east of the house and farm buildings and slopes up to a ridge some 200 m high, topped by deciduous woodland. From north to south this woodland consists of

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1 See OS Sheet No. SO51SW.

2 Dr. Ann Benson, 'Troy House Estate: a Forgotten Landscape' (unpublished master's dissertation, University of Bristol, 2013).

3 See accounts in the following works: Horatia Durant, *The Somerset Sequence* (London: Newman Neame, 1951); *The Travel Diary (1611–1612) of an English Catholic Sir Charles Somerset*, ed. by Michael G. Brennan (Leeds: Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society Ltd., 1993); Charles Somerset, Lord Herbert, *'A short account of my voyage into France'*, May 1673–April 1674. Badminton Muniments: FmG 4/1.

4 Benson, 6–11.

5 *Ibid*., 126–9.

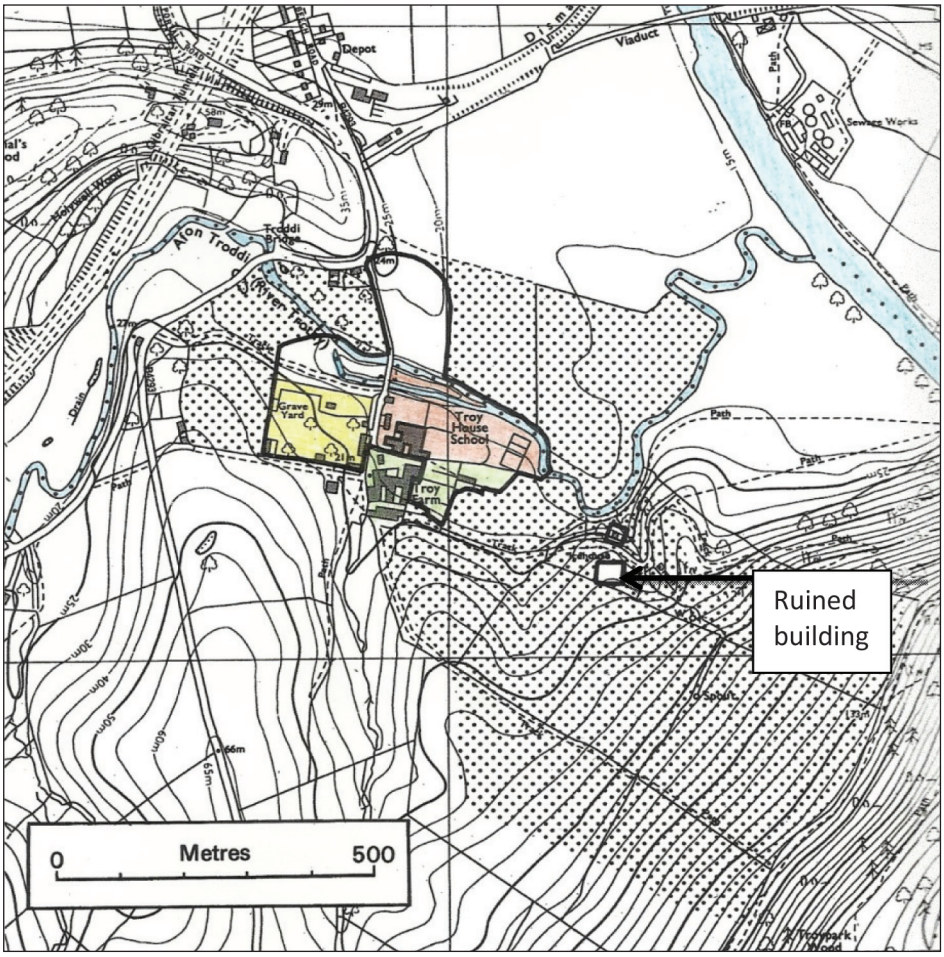

Fig. 1: Location of the ruined building on the Troy Estate.
Reproduced by kind permission of Cadw.
Cadw, Welsh Government (Crown Copyright); Cadw, Llywodraeth Cymru (Hawlfraint y Goron)

Livox Wood, or Livehocks as it was called in 1712,[6] and then Troypark Wood, the original deer park of the Estate, as mentioned in the will of Sir Charles Herbert, dated 1512.[7] This woodland stretches to the south where it joins Troy Orles Wood, presumably full of alders at some time as 'orles' refers locally to this type of tree, and then ends in the south at Craig Wood.[8] The ruined building lies within a meadow on a slope to the south-east and some 300 m from the house. The east side of the building adjoins scrubland which blends into Livox Wood.

After inspection in 1994, Cadw described this ruined building as follows:

> The most probable purpose for it is a game larder (confirmation for this could come from the fact that the atmosphere inside is very dry – a long-dead sheep inside was mummified at the time of the visit!). Date unknown, but possibly contemporary with the walled garden, in which case 17th-century.[9]

Cadw also noted:

> … the 'game larder' from its appearance seems to be older [than the nearby ice house described as eighteenth or early nineteenth century], possibly late seventeenth century.[10]

There has been no subsequent publication about the 'game larder' by Cadw. It is proposed here that the date of this building's construction can be more accurately determined and that it was not designed as a 'game larder'.

Evidence for a new identity

The ruined building is very overgrown by ivy (Figs. 2 and 3), which has dislodged large portions of the roof and some sections of the walls. What remains is a small, dressed sandstone, single-storey building approximately 3 m high and 2.5 m square.

A doorway some 1.6 m high and with a Gothic arch lies on the south side. Depressions and an iron hinge in the stone of this entrance indicate that it was designed to take a wooden door.[11] Half-way up the building there is a moulded string course running all the way around the walls; this is level except for being raised over the entrance. The facing stone remains on the south side, some survives on the west side, it largely exists on the east side together with an intact wider plinth at the base, and some remains up to the string course on the north side.

The roof cannot be seen due to the ivy but Troy's retired groundsman remembers the building well and has drawn it from memory (Fig. 4).

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6 Joseph Gillmore, *Troy in Monmouth-shire, from The Mannor of Troy. Cophill Farme and Whitterns Farme in and about Piercefield – all in Monmouthshire Surveyed Anno MDCCXII* (National Library of Wales, WIAbNL 002846217).

7 Joseph Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire: The Hundred of Trelech*, Vol. 2, Part 2 (London: Academy Books, 1992), 163.

8 Orles is the local word for alder trees: Bradney, p. 164, and private communication with the current owner of Troy Farm.

9 www.Coflein.gov.uk/pdf/CPG268: Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales, PGW(Gt)16, The Park. Accessed December, 2012.

10 *Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales, Part 1: Parks and Gardens, Gwent* (Cardiff, Cadw, 1994), 155.

11 Michael Tamplin, a retired groundsman on the Troy Estate, recalls a wooden door being in situ during the period 1960–1970. Private communication, 2011.

Fig. 2: Cadw's 'Game Larder' seen from the west.
© *Ann Benson*

Fig. 3: Cadw's 'Game Larder' seen from the east.
© *Ann Benson*

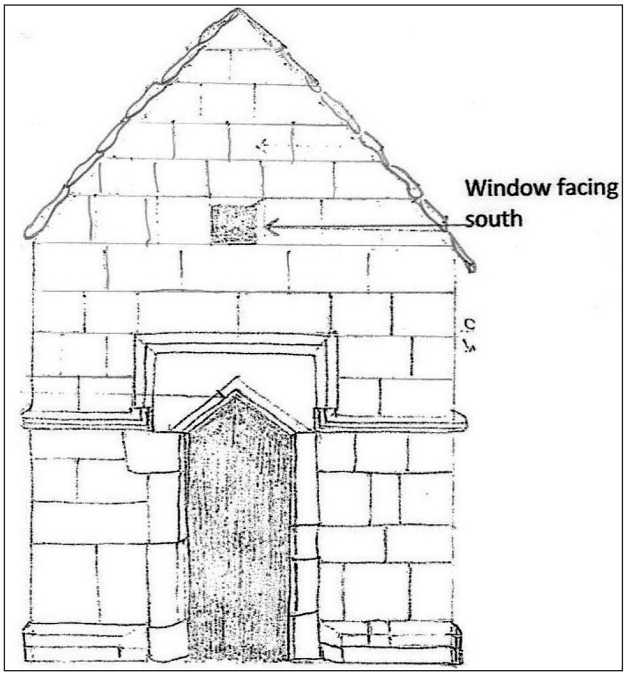

Fig. 4: Cadw's 'game larder' as it appeared in the 1960s.
© *Michael Tamplin*

Fig. 5: The north wall's window close to the barrel roof of Cadw's 'game larder'.
© *Ann Benson*

Fig. 6: The ornamental stone entrance to Troy's walled garden (viewed from inside the walled garden).
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The roof is recalled as being composed of roughly cut, overlapping stone slates, some 45 cm by 60 cm, and of the same colour as the building's walls.[12] Inside there is a barrel roof with small, almost square window openings high in the north wall and above the door on the south wall, the latter being blocked by the encroaching ivy. There are no remains of window mouldings or metal grills. Close examination of the internal walls and ceiling does not reveal any evidence of shelves, depressions or hooks for the storage of game.

One side of the ornamental stone entrance to the Estate's walled garden also has a moulded stone string course (Fig. 6). In the nature of its stone, colour, carved shape and dimensions, the moulding of the string course on this entrance is significantly similar to that seen in Cadw's 'game larder' (Fig. 7) and to such an extent that it is reasonable to say they are the same and were most likely used in the same time period.

The opposite side of this stone entrance, which faces the house, does not have a string course. However, it has a pediment with strapwork decoration on either side of a heraldic shield on which the letters C, S and E are inscribed with a simple flower. The initials refer to Sir Charles Somerset and his wife, Elizabeth, née Powell. Cadw's 1994 report is the earliest traceable claim that 'above the initials [CSE] there was originally a date of 1611 (? the date of the garden's construction),

[12] Tamplin, private communication, 2012.

Fig. 7: Comparison of the moulded string courses.
A: Cadw's 'game larder'. B: the walled garden's ornamental entrance.
© *Ann Benson*

recorded in the early nineteenth century, but this has now worn off'.[13] Unfortunately, this statement is not referenced. Similarly, John Newman records 'a rectangular WALLED GARDEN, entered through a rusticated sandstone doorway with strapwork, a heraldic shield, the initials of Elizabeth and Charles Somerset – son of the fourth Earl of Worcester and his wife – and, formerly, the

[13] *Gwent, Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales, Part 1: Parks and Gardens* (Cardiff: Cadw Welsh Historic Monuments, 1994), 155.

Fig. 8: Enhanced close-up of the walled garden's shield
(viewed from outside the walled garden).
© *Ann Benson*

date 1611'.[14] However, no reference is given by Newman. The shield is not recorded by Joseph Bradney.[15]

The top of the shield is some 3 m from the ground and when closely examined at eye-level from a platform, there is no evidence of any date ever being inscribed either on the shield or the entire pediment. Indeed, there does not even seem to be space for any other inscription on the shield. A photograph of the shield was taken at close range and then enhanced by enlargement and contrast. Any clear inscription on the photograph was then outlined in pencil and scanned to produce an enlarged image (Fig. 8).

The area around the shield's edges appears intentionally smooth and is not large enough to accommodate numbers. The top of the shield appears to have its edges continue as two decorative loops, one on either side. These loops may have been taken to be a date of 1611. It may be possible that a date existed here but given the scale of the rest of the shield it seems highly unlikely that numbers small enough to fit here would have been used. The same enhancing process was used to produce an image of the strapwork on each side of the cornucopia and the remainder of the pediment. No date can be seen within the entire pediment. Furthermore, Horatia Durant, the chronicler of the Somerset family, writes '…over the stone entrance to the orchard where King Charles's dish of

[14] John Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent / Monmouthshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 392.
[15] Bradney, 1992.

"apricocks" had been grown, are the faint initials C and E, and a fainter S looped to the C'.[16] She makes no mention of any date, and given the detail she provides on all matters when writing about the Somerset family, it is reasonable to assume that there was no date. Possibly, speculation about the date of the gateway's creation has prompted an initial claim which has then been repeated in subsequent publications. Sir Charles Somerset's marriage settlement to Elizabeth Powell is dated 1609.[17] One might speculate that the stone entrance may have been constructed in celebration of this couple's marriage. However, the actual date of the marriage is unknown, although it is likely to have been near the time of the marriage settlement.[18]

Strapwork is a stylized representation of straps or bands of curling leather, parchment or metal cut into elaborate shapes, with piercings and interweaving. It was particularly popular in Jacobean architecture of the early seventeenth century.[19] As argued in 'Troy House Estate: a Forgotten Landscape', the ornamental entrance to the walled garden was most likely built between 1612 and 1620 by Charles at the beginning of his residency at Troy as a married man.[20] A 1620 inventory of Troy in Charles's own hand shows that new building work had been completed by that date.[21] The Jacobean plaster ceilings within Troy House are also dated in this research as no later than 1620.[22] Troy Estate rent rolls of 1612, again completed in Charles's own hand, show that his wealthy father-in-law and resident of Troy in 1600, Sir William Powell, had died in 1611.[23] Charles travelled throughout Europe between April 1611 and May 1612, and as evidenced in his travel diary from this period, he had been inspired by the architectural achievements of mainland Europe.[24] The ornamental entrance to the walled garden is a coherent structure. It has a classically inspired design with rusticated cabochon, lozenge and rectangular stone mouldings reminiscent of Jan Vredeman de Vries's designs published in his last work, *Perspective*, in 1604.[25] It seems reasonable to suggest that Charles commissioned the ornamental stone entrance after his return from Europe in May 1612, along with other building work to enhance the Troy Estate.

Stylistically, the ornamental stone entrance appears at odds with the 'game larder's' Gothic doorway. However, their creation during the same period reflects the aesthetic continuum of the time; Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Mannerism were all represented in a powerful combination.[26] It is possible that the well-travelled and cultured Sir Charles Somerset, who is shown here to have lived at Troy from 1612, would have chosen a classically inspired design promulgated by Vredeman for his ornamental entrance to his walled garden near the house to impress his guests, and a Gothic doorway design for a service building like the 'game larder'.

The elevated position of the 'game larder', which is within sight of the house, gardens, and the River Trothy, might suggest that it was used for pleasure rather than as a service building. If

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16 Horatia Durant, *The Somerset Sequence* (London: Newman Neane, 1951), 124.

17 Marriage Settlement 1609, Sir William Powell of Llansoy. Badminton Muniments: OC/1.

18 Private communication with archivist, Badminton House, September 2012, confirming that no date exists for the marriage between Elizabeth Powell and Sir Charles Somerset.

19 Timothy Mowl, *Country Walks Around Bath* (Bath: Millstream Books, 1986), 91.

20 Benson, 37–40, 88–103, 128.

21 Sir Charles Somerset, *An Inventorie of what is mouvable awe left at Troy the 20th of Octob. 1620*. Badminton Muniments: OC/2, RF/1. See the front cover of this inventory.

22 Benson, 38-40.

23 Sir Charles Somerset, 'Booke of Rente-Rolls for 1612, 1621, and 1623 and Inventories etc. in 1622'. Badminton Muniments: OC/2.

24 Brennan, 1993.

25 Adolf K. Placzek, *Jan Vredeman de Vries Perspective* (New York: Dover Publications, 1968).

26 *Ibid*., Introduction.

this were so, one might expect a window or door in the direction of the gardens and river to provide pleasant vistas. However, the two windows are set so high as to provide only views of the sky, and the doorway faces uphill giving limited vision of any land beyond ten metres. Joseph Bradney in his *History of Monmouthshire* offers no indication of the building's use in his brief description, 'on

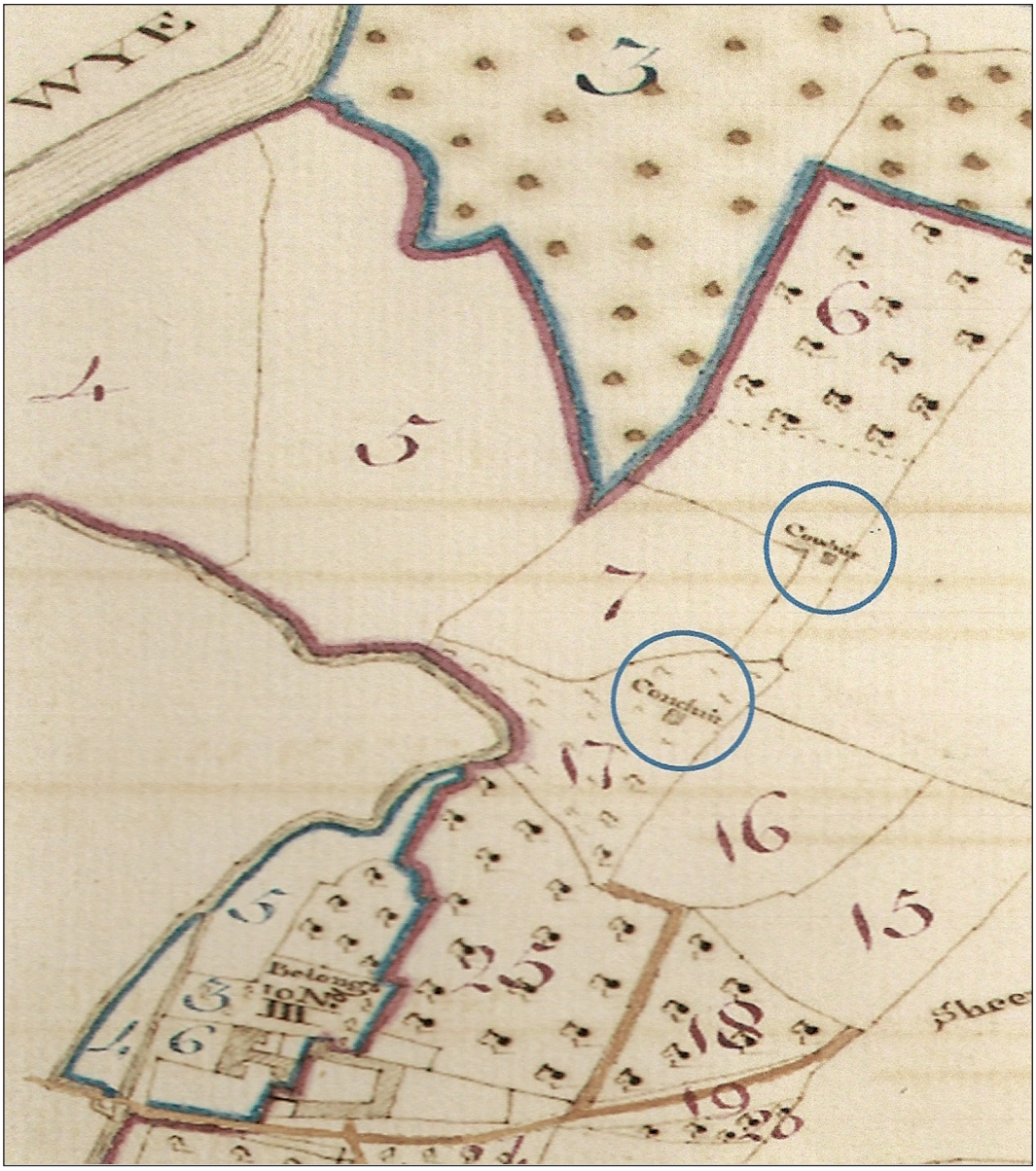

Fig. 9: The two conduits on the 1765 Aram estate map.
Aram map supplied by Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / National Library of Wales

a bank above is a curious square building of the seventeenth century, measuring 8 ft. by 8 ft., with a narrow door and a small window in each pine-end of the roof'.[27]

Searching maps for symbols and words that might indicate the use of this building revealed the word, 'conduit', written on John Aram's Troy Estate map of 1765 and the OS map of 1881 in the location where the 'game larder' stands.[28] Both maps also show a square shape near this word, Aram's being larger than that of the OS. Aram also shows another square and the word, 'conduit', east of the first (Fig. 9). When these two maps are overlaid the conduit squares closest to the house almost coincide and certainly do so within the limits of error in overlaying historic estate maps (Fig. 10). The second conduit of the Aram map lies close to where the OS map shows two water tanks and directly over the letter W, indicating the presence of a well.[29]

The coloured version of the 1881 OS map with built structures shown in red, indicates two red water tanks and some 25 m distant from these, the word 'Well', close to a field boundary (Fig. 11).[30] Although labelling the conduit closer to the house, it does not colour the associated square red. Perhaps this omission explains why current OS maps do not represent this building and instead concentrate on the nearby ice-house; the initial omission has possibly been perpetuated.

Coflein's web site lists the 'game larder' building as NPRN 23108, Troy House Grotto, 'game larder', Monmouth, and describes it as:

> A single-storey, stone built structure, labelled as 'conduit' on OS County series (Monmouth. XIV.8 1881), thought to have been a game larder, possibly 17th C.[31]

Although the building is associated with an OS map's conduit label on the Coflein web site, it is still described as a grotto or 'game larder' in its use. Searches for types of buildings that can be associated with the word, 'conduit', revealed 'conduit houses'.[32] Their purpose can include protecting a water source, for example a spring or well, from animals, as may be the case in the Aram map's second conduit's square, which coincides with W on the 1881 OS map. This location was checked for the remains of a building. One was found with stone foundations and part stone, part brick walls, and a square window opening with a crude wooden shutter (Fig. 12). The rear of the building looks modern with brick walls and wooden barge boards (Fig. 13). Water was issuing from a pipe on the stone side of this building onto the ground below covered in loose, stone blocks. It was not possible to see inside due to the steepness of the surroundings and undergrowth. One can only speculate that the stone foundations were originally for a conduit house dating to the seventeenth century and that the remains have subsequently been repaired with brick. Anecdotal evidence suggests this building was indeed repaired with brickwork in the 1960s.[33]

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27 Bradney, 165.

28 Plan of His Grace The Duke of Beaufort's Estates in the Manor and County of Monmouth, 1765, Jn° Aram. National Library of Wales: WlAbNL004581355. Mitchel Troy Parish, First Edition 1881 OS, Gwent Record Office.

29 W represents a well on the OS Old list: see www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/.../understandingmapping.htm. Accessed December, 2012.

30 Mitchel Troy Parish, Coloured First Edition 1881 OS. British Library: K90134-98.

31 www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/23108/. Accessed March, 2014.

32 See the English Heritage website, www.english-heritage.org.uk/.../conduit-house/history-and-research/ for further examples. Accessed October, 2012.

33 Private communication with Troy Farm owner/occupier, April 2011.

Fig. 10: Overlay of enlarged sections of 1765 Aram and 1881 OS maps.
© overlay, Ann Benson
Aram map supplied by Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / National Library of Wales
© British Library Board (Maps OS 1st ed. Monmouthshire)

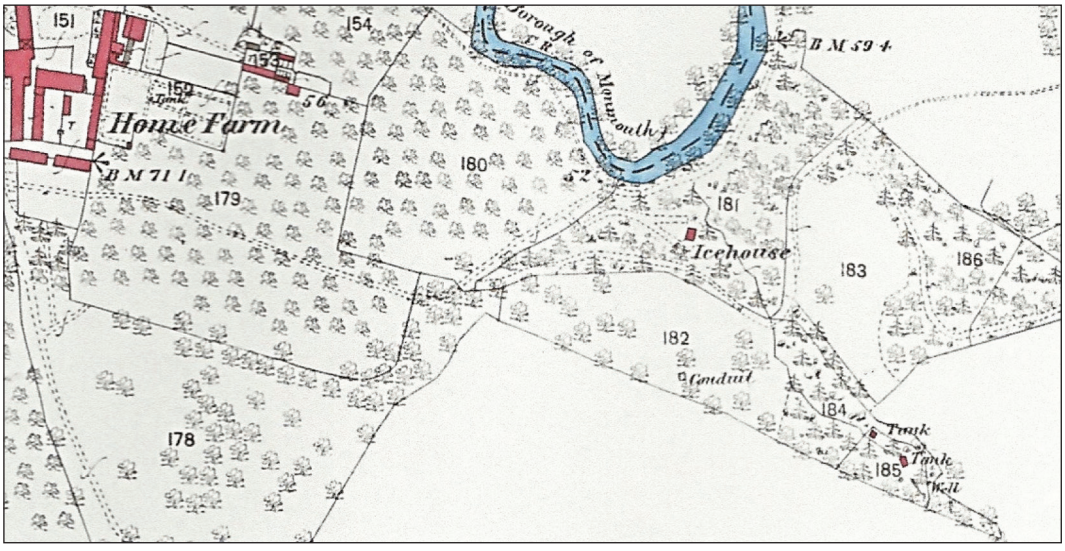

Fig. 11: Coloured 1881 OS map with conduit label and red water tanks.
© British Library Board (Maps OS 1st ed. Monmouthshire)

Fig. 12: West face of what may be Aram's second conduit house.
© *Ann Benson*

Fig. 13: East face of what may be Aram's second conduit house.
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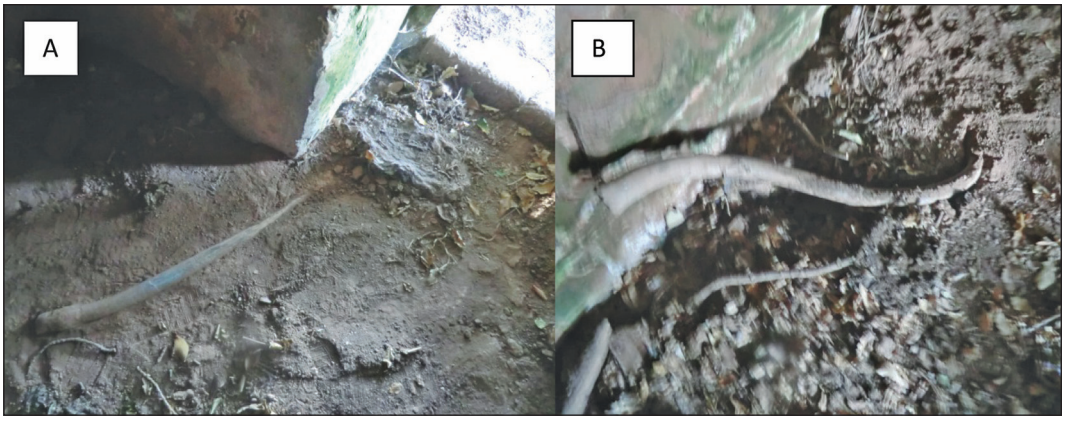

Fig. 14A+B: Pipes within Troy's extant conduit house.
© *Ann Benson*

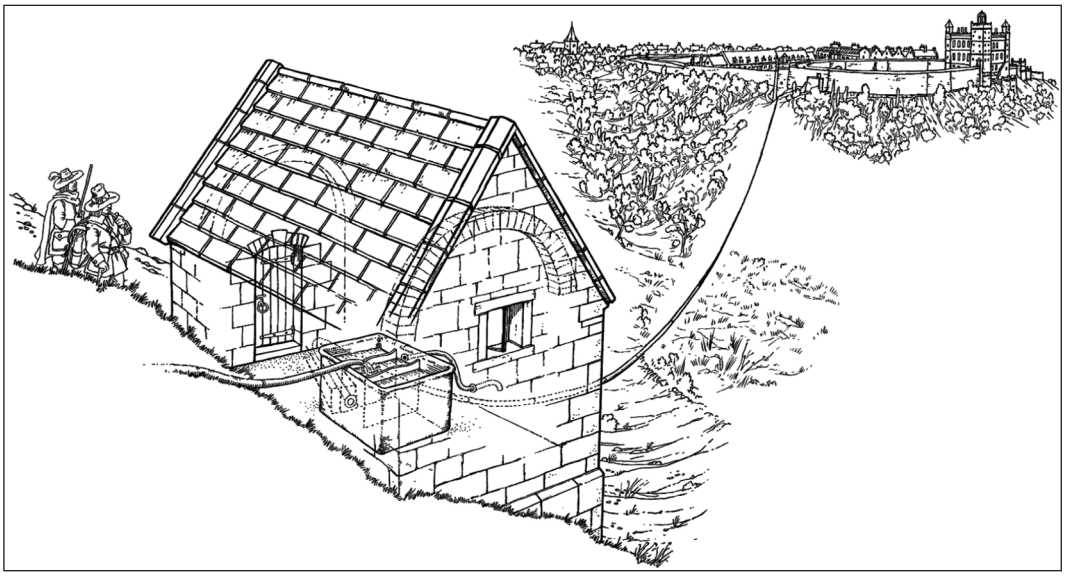

Fig. 15: The Cundy House gravitational system, Bolsover, Derbyshire.
© *Ann Benson*

The floor inside the 'game larder' building, which is the conduit close to Troy House, is compacted earth. When this was scraped away near the entrance a metal pipe approximately 6 cm in diameter and with a broken end, was revealed 3 cm below the surface. It enters the building under the doorway's stone step and extends inside for approximately 0.5 m (Fig. 14A). A similar pipe in the ground near the opposite wall was also discovered. This arises from the floor and the broken, crimped end reaches to an opening between stones at the wall's base (Fig. 14B). Both metal pipes appear to be lead.

Fig. 16A+B: Possible route of underground metal water pipes for Troy's conduit house.
(Route shown with white tape: yellow spikes mark positions of detected metal.)
A: from the spring. B: towards the house.

If this building was designed as a conduit house, it appears to be of the type containing metal pipes connected to a tank made from lead or bricks. A source of water on higher ground than the building would be tapped and transported to it along lead pipes or hollowed-out tree trunks. The water would then be stored in the tank and allowed to flow along another pipe downhill towards Troy House, its flow rate being controlled by a tap within the conduit building. The water is thus transported to where needed by gravity. A similar system existed at Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire, where one of the conduit houses is called the Cundy House (Fig. 15).

Sometimes one tank was placed above another inside the conduit house so that debris could settle into the bottom of the top tank before a pipe at its top then allowed the cleaner water to flow to the lower tank, and from the top of this one, out of the building to where it was required. At the Troy conduit house there is no evidence of any platform to support one tank above another and two tanks would also be unlikely given the building's small size.

To further support the theory presented here that this building is a conduit house and not a 'game larder', a metal detector was used to trace any pipework outside of the building. Metal was detected in a line of some 2.5 m coming down the slope from the direction of the spring known to

Fig. 17: Conduit house S.E. of Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire, before restoration.

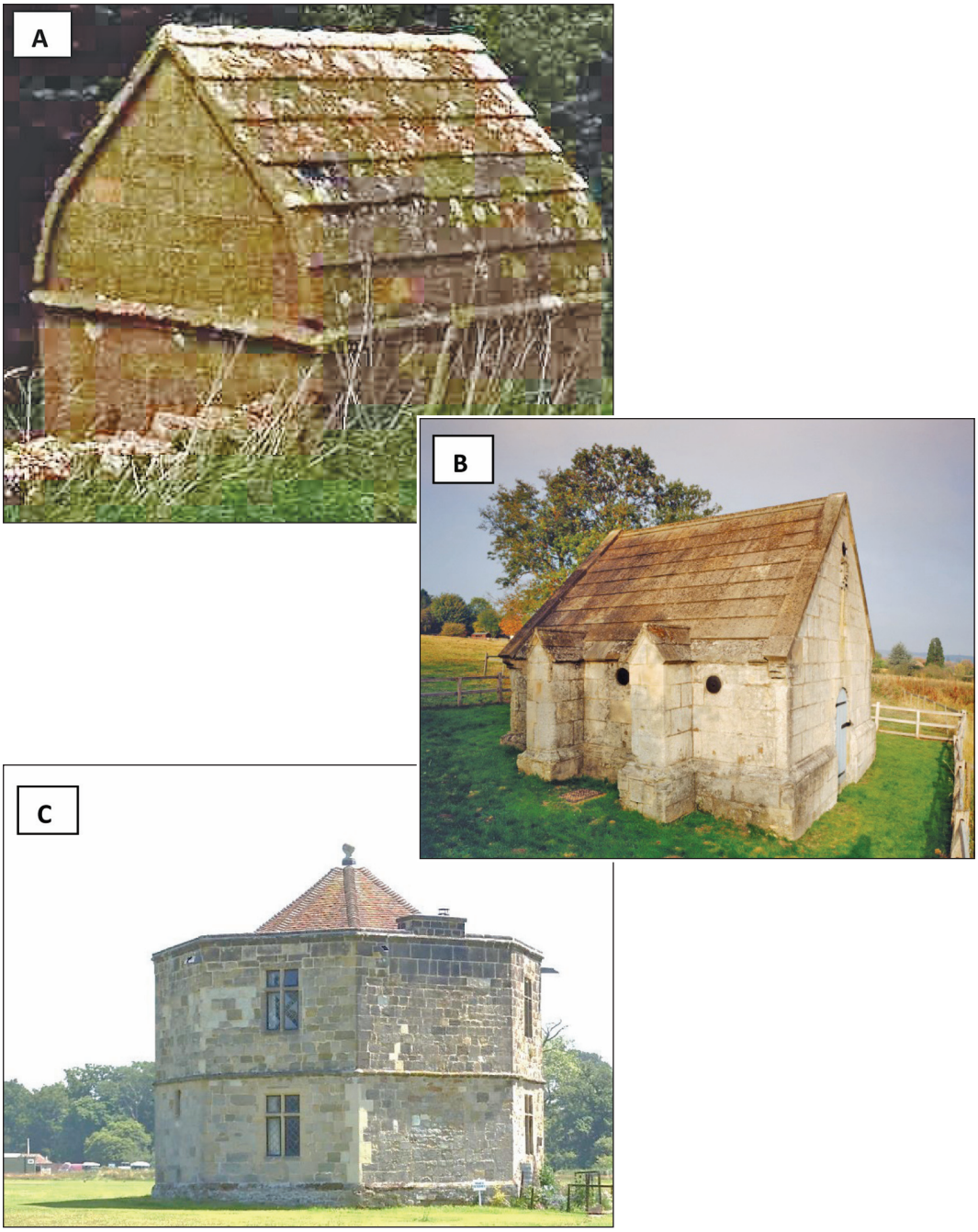

Fig. 18: Examples of conduit houses.
A: North Hinksey, Oxfordshire (*By permission of English Heritage*).
B: Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire (© *Prof Timothy Mowl*).
C: Cowdray Castle, West Sussex (© *Dr Jane Whittaker*).

have fed the Estate's water supply in the twentieth century.[34] Three random sites of metal were also detected near the doorway. Metal was detected downhill from the point where the metal pipe exits the building for some 2 m towards Troy House (Figs. 16A+B). The metal detected at these points may indicate the continuation of the lead pipe found within the ruined building. The building stands within pasture which has been ploughed in previous years.[35] The lack of traceable metal beyond 2 m of the building may be due to disturbance caused by this ploughing.

Solid, stone-vaulted roofs were often used on conduit houses as they were impervious to decay, unlike timber.[36] This can be seen at the conduit house south-east of Bolsover Castle where the top roofing stone slabs are lost but not then masked by ivy as at Troy (Fig. 17). Just like Troy's conduit house (see Fig. 5), this one at Bolsover has closely fitting stones forming a barrel-vaulted roof interior. This design enables condensation to run down the inside walls rather than onto any water tanks below.

Conduit houses were built for a number of country estates during the seventeenth century.[37] Usually unmanned and remote from the building they served, they had to be strong and secure, to protect the water supply from pollution by animals or from other interference. They could be as simple as those at Bolsover and north Hinksey in Oxfordshire, or a little more decorative, as for example that at Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire, built for Sir Baptist Hicks in 1612 with an ogee arched roof like his lodges by the church.[38] They could also be substantially larger and of a more unusual shape, as for example the hexagonal conduit house at Cowdray Castle in West Sussex (Figs. 18 A, B and C).

Finally, it is unlikely that Troy's conduit house has ever been a game larder as has been suggested. Game larders are usually closer to the main residence than the 300 m between the conduit building and Troy House. Troy's 1901 auction details also include the following statement when describing the parts of the house, indicating that a game larder was in use within its confines '… and in a PAVED BACK YARD, Are Dairy, Game Larder, Coal House, and other Offices'.[39]

Conclusion

The evidence presented here indicates that a rare example, particularly for Wales, of an early seventeenth–century conduit house survives on the Troy House Estate, albeit in a somewhat ruined condition. The foundations of a similarly dated second conduit house are also indicated as being extant. Both lie in locations shown as squares and labelled as conduit on the 1765 estate map. When the findings from researching other components of the Estate are taken into consideration, the most likely construction date for these conduit houses is between 1612 and 1620, a period during which Sir Charles Somerset (*c*.1588–1665) aggrandized the house and gardens.

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[34] Private communication, Michael Tamplin, groundsman at Troy Estate until 1976. This spring is still the main water supply for both the farm and house at Troy.

[35] Private communication with Troy Farm owner/occupier, April 2011.

[36] See the English Heritage web site: www.english-heritage.org.uk/.../conduit-house/history-and-research/.

[37] *Ibid*.

[38] See Nicholas Pevsner, *Gloucestershire 1: The Cotswolds* (London: Penguin Books, 1970), 242.

[39] Driver, Jonas and Co., *Troy House Estate Monmouth, To Be Sold on 27th March 1901* (London: Auctioneers Messrs. Driver, Jonas & Co., 1901), 4.

This paper is based on the final section of an MA dissertation entitled *Early Modern Networking: The social capital of Monmouthshire mercers 1668–1738*. The first part was published in 'The Monmouthshire Antiquarian' XXIX.

EARLY MODERN NETWORKING – PART 2: THE INFLUENTIAL RELATIONSHIPS OF MONMOUTHSHIRE MERCERS

By Helen Forshaw

Writing in 2003, John Field suggested that linking social capital 'allows people to leverage resources, ideas and information from contacts outside their own social milieu.'[1] However, the following reference from the inventory of Richard Morgan, a seventeenth-century Chepstow mercer, suggests that this form of social capital is not a new concept:

> 'Item a debt due ... from the old Lady Marchioness of Worcester, widow'.[2]

In order to explore this idea further, evidence of influential relationships, revealed in early-modern mercers' probate documents, was explored.

Initially, Monmouthshire mercers' explicit connections with powerful local families are explored. It is then argued that some mercers chose to associate themselves with influential people. Finally, it is suggested that mercers used a number of strategies, including the promotion of conspicuous consumption, to help establish and advance commercial connections with Monmouthshire's gentry. Evidence is taken from the details of mercers' homes, possessions, shops and stock recorded in their wills and probate inventories proved between 1668 and 1738.

There is proof that Monmouthshire mercers were linked to significant local families. For example, the documents of three Abergavenny mercers include references to the Gunters, a leading family who owned a large property in the town's Cross Street.[3] Robert and Thomas Gunter were nominated as overseers of James Body's will, with Mary Gunter having witnessed the document.[4] In addition, Edward Packer (died 1734) referred to Elizabeth Gunter as his aunt; whilst Henry Stephens named 'Uncle Gunter' as one of his overseers.[5] These references demonstrate that some mercers were associated with, or related to, important Monmouthshire families.

Other mercers also appear to have had influential connections. For example, the wills of Charles and William Rogers from Usk contain references to Sir Trevor Williams, probably the Llangybi landowner.[6] In the case of Charles, there is the mention of debts due from Sir Trevor.[7]

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1 Field, J., *Social Capital* (Routledge, London, 2003), 1; Halpern, D., *Social Capital* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2005), 66.

2 Richard Morgan (National Library of Wales, hereafter NLW: wills proved at the consistory court of Llandaff. 1568–1857; NLW/LL/1678/23).

3 Newman, J., *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire* (Penguin, London, 2000), 105.

4 NLW/LL/1680/2.

5 NLW/LL/1734/24; The National Archives (hereafter TNA) Prob/11/342.

6 Matthews, R., 'Civil War and Interregnum, 1642–60' in Gray, Madeleine and Morgan, Prys (eds), Griffiths, Ralph A. (general ed.), *The Gwent County History Volume. 3: The Making of Monmouthshire, 1536–1780* (University of Wales Press on behalf of the Gwent County History Association, Cardiff, 2009), 84.

7 NLW/LL/1669/179.

Meanwhile, William's inventory talks about 'the Hafod in Sir Trevors barne'.[8] It seems likely that the Rogers were related.[9] Therefore, references to Sir Trevor suggest a well-established family connection between the mercers and a member of the local landed gentry.

Turning to the inventory of Richard Morgan from Chepstow, this lists a £145 debt due from the dowager Marchioness of Worcester.[10] This sum is almost half of Morgan's due debts and is over 21 per cent of the total value of his estate. As well as demonstrating Morgan's business relationship with the Marchioness, the high level of her credit suggests that the mercer was eager to maintain this influential connection at almost any price. Indeed, there could be a degree of reciprocity here, because important families may have bought political support, along with goods, from local tradesmen.

Meanwhile, James Morgan's will records a land deal involving four members of the Milborne family from Wonastow, as well as a lease granted by the 'right honble Henry Lord Herbert'.[11] Such references again indicate that some mercers transacted business with members of the Monmouthshire elite, suggesting that they recognised the value of influential contacts.

Furthermore, some trade tokens also indicate mercers' affiliations with, and possible patronage by, local worthies. For example, the 1670 and 1672 tokens issued by Walter Morgan of Chepstow feature a portcullis – symbol of the Marquis of Worcester.[12] In addition, Walter may have used his tokens to advertise real or desired connections with the Worcester family, given that the dowager Marchioness bought goods from Richard Morgan, another of the town's mercers.[13] Meanwhile, a token issued in 1669 by William Meredith from Caerleon includes three plumes through a coronet – the symbol of the Black Prince.[14] However, there is no incontrovertible proof that these tokens were issued by the mercers featured in this study. Nevertheless, symbols on such tokens may have been used by mercers to signify their personal allegiances. Furthermore, customers receiving these tokens would have taken away a tangible reminder of whose authority held sway locally.

However, not all tokens feature partisan imagery. For example, those of Phillip Morgan from Abergavenny, and William Davis from Chepstow, include the Mercers' arms.[15] This suggests that some mercers did not wish to align themselves with a particular faction. It is possible that this symbol was used as a mark of quality, implying that the issuer's merchandise was guaranteed by the Mercers' Guild. Indeed, a similar thought may have been behind the tokens featuring the symbols of the local gentry, with the inclusion of the family crest offered as a form of 'royal' warrant.

Having considered mercers' explicit, and putative, connections with significant Monmouthshire families, the manner by which these relationships may have been established and fostered will now be explored. Initially, the social aspirations of mercers will be briefly considered. Discussion will then focus on the role of conspicuous consumption in the development of linking social capital.

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8 NLW/LL/1668/126.

9 There is a common signature in the wills of Charles and William: that of Charles Harris. Given the dates of the Rogers's wills, it is probable that Charles Rogers was the son of William: Charles Rogers is a legatee in William's will and both men lived in Usk.

10 NLW/LL/1678/23.

11 TNA/Prob/11/362.

12 Boon, G.C., *Welsh Tokens of the Seventeenth Century* (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, 1973), 101.

13 NLW/LL/1678/23.

14 Boon, *Welsh Tokens*, 90. Trade token: 'WILLIAM MEREDITH 1669 A CAERLYON FARTHING' From: Caerleon Net, *17th Century Farthing Tokens*, www.caerleon.net/archive/miscellany/farthings.htm [accessed 13/3/12].

15 Boon, *Welsh Tokens*, 82, 99.

If some Monmouthshire mercers had explicit connections with leading local families, it is also evident that others allied themselves with those whom they considered important. For example, executors and overseers named by John Jenkins are described as 'gents'.[16] Meanwhile, the will of Adam Addams mentions a land deal involving John Jones 'Esquire'.[17] This epithet was a designation sometimes adopted by successful retired businessmen who saw themselves as gentlemen.[18] Therefore, such references indicate the wish of some mercers to be associated with men of substance.

Furthermore, the title 'mercer' was assumed by shopkeepers who saw themselves as 'leading retailing tradesmen of high social status and economic importance.'[19] It should be remembered that all the men in this study styled themselves (or were styled by others, such as legal executors) as mercers. Therefore, it seems that social aspirations were the foundations for the linking social capital of these men. Indeed, such self-aggrandising ideas may have been fuelled by the possibility of joining the ranks of the gentry, as in the case of the Williams family, who were mercers from Caerleon.[20]

If the mercers in this study had social aspirations, they may have developed these by attracting distinguished customers to their premises. Such clientele could have included 'the wives and daughters of polite families' who visited shops as part of a 'synchronised pattern of the day'.[21] Indeed, early modern shopping was seen as a pleasurable pastime, being underpinned by the concept of 'polite consumption'.[22]

Furthermore, Glennie and Thrift suggest that urban shops 'were places to which people went to be sold to.'[23] This would have provided mercers with opportunities to entertain potential customers with the offer of a chair and, perhaps, a cup of tea whilst they browsed at leisure.[24] Such interactions would also have fostered trust, vital for the granting of credit. In short, shops were places 'for social as much as commercial interaction' which were 'carefully attuned to the status, aspirations, and tastes of shoppers.'[25]

As probate inventories show, his shop was usually an integral part of a mercer's home.[26] Furthermore, Cox suggests that rooms adjoining the shop 'were undoubtedly only entered by esteemed customers'.[27] Therefore, it would have been important to give an impression of high fashion and good taste to any customers of quality invited into this 'private' space. Indeed, this cultivation of custom was important for both shopkeeper and customer. As Stobart notes '[t]he

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16 TNA wills proved at the prerogative court of Canterbury, 1384–1858; TNA/Prob/11/691.

17 TNA/Prob/11/571.

18 Langford, P., *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727–1783* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2005), 65.

19 Cox, N., *The Complete Tradesman: A study in retailing, 1550–1820* (Ashgate Publishing Limited, Farnham, 2000), 59, n.69.

20 Jones, J., 'The Patterns of Everyday Life', in Gray, Madeleine and Morgan, Prys (eds), Griffiths, Ralph A. (general ed.), *The Gwent County History Volume. 3: The Making of Monmouthshire, 1536–1780* (University of Wales Press on behalf of the Gwent County History Association, Cardiff, 2009), 177.

21 Berry, H., 'Polite Consumption: Shopping in eighteenth-century England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 12 (2002), 380.

22 Berry, 'Polite Consumption', 375.

23 Glennie, P.D. and Thrift, N.J., 'Consumers, identities, and consumption spaces in early-modern England', *Environment and Planning A*, 28 (1996), 34.

24 Berry, 'Polite Consumption', 386.

25 Wallis, P., 'Consumption, retailing, and medicine in early-modern London', *Economic History Review*, 61, 1 (2008), 48.

26 For example, that of William Morris refers to 'the Chamber over the shop' (NLW/LL/1694/36).

27 Cox, *Complete Tradesmen*, 135.

former benefited from a regular stream of orders, while the latter were assured of attentive service', as well as valuable information about consumer goods.[28]

However, titled gentry may not have visited shops themselves – instead agents could have acted as their representatives.[29] For example, bills survive from the accounts of Sir Thomas Aubrey of Llantrithyd, in Glamorganshire, which refer to items 'Bought for my master June 1627', suggesting that Welsh gentry shopped via a third party.[30] Similarly, a linen inventory from Tredegar House lists five pairs of sheets bought by 'Mrs. Goodwin' on 3 May 1698.[31] The use of staff for shopping could explain why some Monmouthshire mercers appear to have had simply furnished houses: the inventory of William Meredith lists only one bed, a table, chair and some stools.[32] Indeed, mercers may have been prepared to take samples to their wealthy customers' homes to avoid the need for the latter to visit local shops.[33]

Nevertheless, some mercers' probate inventories suggest that they reserved a room in their home in which to entertain customers. For example, the contents of the hall, listed in William Godwin's inventory, included a couch, nine chairs and three tables, as well as a fire grate for warmth.[34] The presence of these items, and the absence of any beds, suggest that this room was used solely for entertaining. Therefore, it was probably accessible to both family and strangers, and thus performed a 'frontstage' role.[35] Furthermore, Godwin's estate has one of the highest values in this study. This suggests that his business success was due to his promotion of the sociability of shopping to wealthy customers. The reciprocal nature of social capital is also suggested: the mercer would have affirmed the social standing of 'the elegant and the refined', by entertaining them away from 'the great unwashed'.[36]

Meanwhile, the hall was sometimes called the parlour, after it lost its role as a room used for cooking.[37] The latter term is found in three mercers' inventories, including the most valuable in this study – that of John Morgan.[38] In his heated parlour were seven chairs, six stools, two tables and a carpet. Similarly, the parlours of Richard Morgan and James Harris were heated and contained chairs and/or stools; whilst that of Richard Morgan also had a table, carpet and cushions.[39] Such a room may have been decorated with pictures, as seen in the hall of William Godwin and Richard Morgan's parlour.[40] These furnishings would have provided comfortable surroundings in which to entertain.

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28 Stobart, J., 'Gentlemen and Shopkeepers: Supplying the country house in eighteenth-century England', *Economic History Review*, 64, 3 (2011), 893.

29 Cox, *Complete Tradesman*, 127.

30 Bowen, L. (ed.), *Family and Society in Early Stuart Glamorgan: The household accounts of Sir Thomas Aubrey of Llantrithyd, c.1565–1641* (South Wales Record Society, Cardiff, 2006), 75.

31 Unless otherwise stated, all subsequent references to the furnishings of Tredegar House are taken from transcribed, un-catalogued inventories held at the House in loose leaf files.

32 NLW/LL/1694/112.

33 Cox, *Complete Tradesman*, 129.

34 NLW/LL/1734/61.

35 Brown, F.E., 'Continuity and Change in the Urban House: Developments in seventeenth-century London', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 28, 3 (1986), 580; Overton, M., J. Whittle, D. Dean, A. Hann. *Production and Consumption in English Households 1600–1750* (Routledge, Abingdon, 2004), 135.

36 Cox, *Complete Tradesman*, 120.

37 Barley, M., 'A Glossary of Names for Rooms in Houses in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in Foster, I. Ll., and Alcock, L. (eds), *Culture and Environment: Essays in honour of Sir Cyril Fox*, edited by (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1963), 490–1.

38 NLW/LL/1686/49.

39 NLW/LL/1678/23; NLW/LL/1692/185.

40 NLW/LL/1734/61; NLW/LL/1678/23.

Furthermore, the estates of these mercers are in the top third of estate values which indicates the benefits derived from offering hospitality to important customers.

The creation of a room purely for entertaining is not evident in the inventories of mercers from the Cardiff area. Where contents are listed, the hall or parlour contains a bed, indicating the rooms were used for sleeping and, therefore, were very private spaces.[41] However, the inventory of Shropshire mercer Benjamin Wright mentions both a hall and a parlour, neither of which accommodated beds.[42] Both rooms were also comfortably furnished with a number of chairs, and, in the case of the parlour, cushions and a source of heat. This solitary example echoes those from Monmouthshire, where specific spaces have been designated for entertaining. Such an approach is indicative of attempts by mercers to generate linking social capital through the offer of hospitality. Furthermore, whilst it is difficult to draw conclusions from such a small sample, it seems that Cardiff mercers were 'behind the times', compared with their Monmouthshire and Shropshire counterparts.

However, allocating a 'value' to a room, based on its contents, seems to undermine its apparent importance.[43] For example, the value of a parlour in this study can be considerably lower than other rooms in the same property: Richard Morgan's parlour was valued at £5, compared with £9 5s for his 'Great Chamber'.[44] Such a difference in valuation suggests that this mercer saw his parlour as less important. However, Morgan's parlour did not contain beds, which were highly valued items in the early-modern period.[45] Therefore, the absence of these would have significantly affected any valuation.

If some mercers allocated a room for entertaining, certain possessions in these rooms suggest that they aimed to impress guests who were *au fait* with the latest trends. For example, ownership of the new style of small table would have demonstrated an awareness of fashionable furniture, and the money to acquire it.[46] In this regard, a 'tea table' is listed in the hall of William Godwin.[47] Meanwhile, John Morgan's parlour contained both an 'ovall table' and 'little square table'.[48] Given their specific location, these tables could have been used when mercers took tea with customers.[49]

Indeed, Cox suggests that 'to offer hospitality in the form of tea ... seems to have been a necessary part of a successful tradesman's sales strategy.'[50] By choosing to own such items as tea tables, some Monmouthshire mercers appear to have been emulating contemporary symbols of gentility by engaging in the 'performative' ritual of tea drinking, perhaps to attract the custom of the local gentry.[51] Cox feels that this explains why significantly more hot drink utensils appear

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41 Bowen, P. (ed.), *Shopkeepers and Tradesmen in Cardiff and the Vale 1633–1857* (Peter Bowen, Cardiff, 2004) 95, 97.

42 Trinder, B. and Cox, J. (eds), *Yeomen and Colliers in Telford: Probate Inventories for Dawley, Lilleshall, Wellington and Wrockwardine, 1660–1750* (Phillimore & Co. Ltd, London, 1980), 318–9.

43 See Blair St. George, R., 'Afterthoughts on *Material Life in America, 1600–1860*', *Winterthur Portfolio*, 32, 1 (1997), 22 for a detailed description of this approach.

44 NLW/LL/1678/23.

45 Weatherill, L., *Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture in Britain 1660–1760* (Routledge, Abingdon, 1996), 160.

46 Overton et al, *Production and Consumption*, 90, 94, 174; French, H.R., *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England 1600–1750* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007), 151.

47 NLW/LL/1734/61.

48 NLW/LL/1686/49.

49 Wilson, R.J., '"The mystical character of commodities": the consumer society in 18th-century England', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 42, 1 (2008), 150.

50 Cox, *Complete Tradesman*, 138.

51 French, *Middle Sort*, 148, 151.

in tradesmen's inventories.[52] However, the only evidence of the ownership of these items by Monmouthshire mercers is in the inventory of William Godwin, which lists a tea pot, six china dishes and saucers.[53]

If mercers engaged in aspects of polite consumption as part of their business practice, some may have decorated their homes as exemplars of contemporary taste, perhaps through colour co-ordinated rooms.[54] French found evidence of this colour co-ordination predominantly in towns where new decorative trends were often established.[55] This is seen in large houses of the time, such as Tredegar House in Newport. The 1688 House inventory lists, for example, the 'Black Chamber' and the 'Yellow Chamber'.[56] If such trends were evident in mercers' homes, this would suggest a desire to make the gentry, or their representatives, feel 'at home' by entertaining them in familiar, fashionable settings. Therefore, it might be expected that similar room names would appear in mercers' inventories. This trend is evident in the inventory of Benjamin Wright, from Shropshire, which lists a 'White Chamber'.[57]

However, the use of colour descriptors for rooms is not found in documents in this study. Nevertheless, Richard Morgan's inventory refers to a 'Painted Chamber', whilst that of Edward Earle lists only green and red rugs in the garret.[58] Such references hint at the significance of colour in interior decoration. For example, green and red were the most popular colours for bed hangings in London from 1660–75.[59] Therefore, the presence of similarly coloured rugs in Earle's house indicates his awareness of contemporary fashion. However, these colours were superseded by blue from 1690–1705.[60] Furthermore, the garret was generally only used for storage.[61] Therefore, the humble location of green and red rugs in 1696 suggests that Earle was well aware that these colours were no longer in vogue.

If certain references in mercers' inventories imply that they sought to impress visitors by their life-styles, it is also possible that some examples of conspicuous consumption were purely for mercers' personal benefit. Indeed, Lorna Weatherill suggests that, in terms of the latest trends, tradesmen generally owned more consumer goods than the gentry.[62] Based on texts which have discussed early modern consumer behaviour, items representing high levels of conspicuous consumption included window curtains and silverware.[63] Whilst it is not apparent whether these items were purchased, or inherited, by the deceased, their recording in probate documents indicates their contemporary value.

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52 Cox, *Complete Tradesman*, 138.
53 NLW/LL/1734/61.
54 French, *Middle Sort*, 179.
55 French, *Middle Sort*, 180.
56 Reproduced in Apted, M.R., 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House, Newport, in the 17th an 18th Centuries', *Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 3, 2 (1972–3), 147–9.
57 Trinder and Cox, *Yeomen*, 320.
58 NLW/LL/1678/23; NLW/LL/1696/153.
59 Mitchell, D.M., '"My purple will be too sad for that melancholy room": Furnishings for interiors in London and Paris, 1660–1735', *Textile History*, 40, 1 (2009), 16.
60 Mitchell, '"My purple"', 18.
61 Vickery, A., 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle? Thresholds, boundaries and privacies in the eighteenth-century London house,' *Past and Present*, 199 (2008), 160.
62 Weatherill, L., 'Consumer Behaviour, Textiles and Dress in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries,' *Textile History* 22, 2 (1991), 306.
63 For example, Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 7–8, 28–30; Brewer, J. and Porter, R. (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (Routledge, London, 1997), 218–25.

From the thirteen inventories in this study, four (approximately 30 per cent) mention window curtains (rather than curtains for beds).[64] This figure is more than twice that found by Weatherill in her study.[65] Meanwhile, out of seven inventories for Cardiff mercers, two (approximately 28 per cent) include window curtains.[66] This suggests that Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire mercers spent similar amounts on home furnishings. However, the locations of their shops in urban settings may have made curtains a necessity, from a privacy perspective, rather than an extravagance.

References to window curtains appear in the inventories of Monmouthshire mercers Edward Earle, William Godwin, James Harris and William Kemeys.[67] No location for the curtains is given in the inventories of Earle and Kemeys. However, the curtains in the other two inventories are in highly valued rooms – in the case of Godwin in the 'Room over the Shop' and for Harris in his 'Great Chamber'. Furthermore, both estates had high inventory values. Given, as noted above, that these two mercers set a room aside for entertaining, the location of window curtains suggests that they used their business success to fund personal comfort in their private quarters.

Turning to undeniably luxury items: silverware is mentioned in ten (22 per cent) of Monmouthshire mercers' inventories and/or wills. Indeed, the inclusion of specific bequests of silver suggests that these items were significant to the mercers concerned. However, such silverware was generally of a practical type. The most extensive list is in the will of John Jones which includes a silver cane, two porringers, various spoons, two cups, two tankards, a salver, silver salt, tobacco box, stopler and silver tumbler.[68] Meanwhile, James Harries left six tankards, cups, sixteen spoons, two sugar boxes, two salt cellars and a 'pottinger'.[69] As found by Anthony Sale, most references are to spoons, possibly because these were frequently given to mark christenings and weddings.[70]

In the early-modern period silver was often a traditional form of investment.[71] Therefore, ownership could be a marker of wealth. However, Sale suggests that silver ownership in Gloucestershire was no such indicator, with wealthy people often owning little silver.[72] Nevertheless, the inventory for the Caerleon mercer, William Godwin, which includes silver, has one of the highest valuations in the study.[73] It lists eighteen spoons, as well as other silverware with a total value of approximately £23. Therefore, contrary to Sales's findings, it appears that some Monmouthshire mercers engaged in luxury consumption, perhaps because of their comfortable financial circumstances.

Sale also found that silver was most often listed in private rooms, suggesting that it was 'prized more for private use than for public display.'[74] Nevertheless, he acknowledges that it may have played its part in impressing visitors.[75] Indeed, Godwin's silverware is recorded in the 'Room

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64 Listed at the end of this article in Table 1.

65 Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 8.

66 These could be counted as one example because the two inventories were for a husband and wife who died only a year apart: Bowen, *Shopkeepers*, 101, 105.

67 NLW/LL/1696/153; NLW/LL/1734/61; NLW/LL/1692/185; NLW/LL/1707/32.

68 TNA/Prob/11/681.

69 TNA/Prob/11/370.

70 Sale, A.J.H., 'Ownership and Use of Silver in Gloucestershire, 1660–1740', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 113 (1995), 126–7.

71 Clifford, H., 'A commerce with things: the value of precious metalwork in early modern England,' in Berg, M. and H. Clifford (eds), *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer culture in Europe 1650–1850* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999), 151.

72 Sale, 'Ownership', 125–6.

73 NLW/LL/1734/61.

74 Sale, 'Ownership', 126.

75 *Ibid*., 127.

over the Shop', along with his china and tea-pot. However, this room, warmed by a fire, also contained two beds, as well as thirteen chairs, suggesting the entertaining of relatives, rather than customers. Meanwhile, the silver tankards, bowls, salt cellar, porringers and spoons, recorded in the 1687 inventory of Lewis Sheares, a Cardiff mercer, were all located in the kitchen.[76] However, little silverware is listed in the inventories for Shropshire mercers.[77] This suggests that mercers in south Wales were more inclined to buy luxury goods than their northerly counterparts.

The levels of conspicuous consumption, indicated by the ownership of window curtains and silverware, suggest that Monmouthshire mercers were not solely concerned with impressing potential customers. Rather, they sought high levels of personal comfort and pleasure from their possessions. However, the contents of some of their shops indicate that these public spaces were fitted out to attract the discerning, affluent customer. Indeed, Defoe commented that the furnishing of shops, which could take about two-thirds of a trader's financial resources, might include 'painting and gilding, fine shelves shutters, boxes'.[78] A Defoe-like shop interior was described in the 1746 inventory of a London goldsmith's shop.[79] Meanwhile, the 1784 inventory of a Paris mercer's shop listed mirror glass, gilt mahogany cabinets, griffin-shaped lanterns and silvered glass globes.[80]

However, an examination of six Monmouthshire mercers' inventories which mention shop fittings does not reveal anything quite so grand. The most extensive list of fittings is for William Godwin's shop; included here were presses, counters, boxes and a candlestick, as well as a writing desk and chair.[81] Furthermore, there seems to be some correlation between shop fittings and business success, given that Godwin's inventory has the third highest actual valuation in this study. Indeed, his shop interior may have been similar to that illustrated on an early eighteenth-century trade card for Benjamin Cole, which hints at the possibility of exclusive hospitality through the half-open door at the rear of the shop.[82]

The valuations of shop fittings in this study range from £9 for William Godwin, to 7s for Thomas Richards, the latter being the value given to two cases of shop drawers, and four pairs of brass scales.[83] As could be expected, the lowest value inventories – those of Thomas Richards and Charles Rogers – include the least shop fittings.[84] This finding supports the view that investment in the latter helped mercers to achieve business success.

Meanwhile, the inventories of Edward Earle, Richard Morgan and Charles Rogers list candlesticks.[85] This suggests that these mercers recognised the value of light to illuminate their stock and attract passing custom. However, no chairs (other than that associated with Godwin's desk)

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76 Bowen, *Shopkeepers*, 95.

77 For example, the inventory of Tryphosa Barnes lists only 2 silver spoons (Trinder and Cox, *Yeomen*, 358).

78 Defoe, D., *The Complete English Tradesman* (Alan Sutton Publishing, Gloucester, 1987), 180.

79 Walsh, C., 'Shops, Shopping, and the Art of Decision Making in Eighteenth-Century England' in Styles, J., et al (eds.) *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700–1830* (Yale University Press, London, 2006), 154.

80 Sargentson, C., 'The manufacture and marketing of luxury goods: the *marchands merciers* of late 17th- and 18th-century Paris,' in Fox, R. and Turner, A. (eds) *Luxury trades and consumerism in ancien régime Paris: studies in the history of the skilled workforce* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 1998), 122.

81 NLW/LL/1734/61.

82 Trade card of Benjamin Cole, c.1700 from: Davis, D., A *History of Shopping* (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, London, 1966), 36, Figure 3(b).

83 NLW/LL/1734/61; NLW/LL/1711/133.

84 NLW/LL/1711/133; NLW/LL/1669/179.

85 NLW/LL/1696/153; NLW/LL/1678/23; NLW/LL/1669/179.

'to flatter and detain customers' are recorded in mercers' shop inventories.[86] This seeming absence contrasts with the eight chairs and fifteen stools listed in the shop of a late seventeenth-century Wrexham apothecary.[87] However, it is possible that chairs belonging to mercers had been moved to another part of the house to aid appraisers.[88]

The counters recorded in the shops of Godwin, Earle and James Harris would have been used to display goods for inspection by the customer.[89] In the interim, the goods could have been kept in the boxes mentioned in four shop inventories.[90] These boxes were probably trimmed and used to organise small stock items.[91] In addition, drawers are listed in two inventories.[92] These offered a 'formal and deferential' means of presentation which enhanced the shopping experience.[93] This suggests that some Monmouthshire mercers took pains to display their wares in a manner likely to appeal to discerning customers. Such organisation of stock implied a regularity of supply, and the possibility of re-supply, indicative of good business contacts.[94]

Few of the mercers from the Cardiff area have inventories listing shop fittings. Where available, they are comparable to those from Monmouthshire. For example, that of Henry Hoar includes three great chests, three little chests and two nests of boxes, valued at £1 5s.[95] Meanwhile, the most extensive shop inventory for a Shropshire mercer is for Joshua Johnson, with fittings valued at £6 16s 6d.[96] These include one counter with three boards on the side, six drawers under the counter, one joint box, five drawers, two counters in the shop, two nests of drawers, one press and eleven wooden boxes. Johnson's total inventory value is £768, the highest in the Shropshire sample. This indicates a similar linkage between shop display and business success evident for Monmouthshire mercers like William Godwin.

Turning from methods of display to the goods actually displayed, an examination of the product lines offered by Monmouthshire mercers suggests that they had wealthy clientele. These may have included the Somerset family originally based at Raglan and later from Monmouth, and the Morgans of Newport.[97] Both families could have been valued customers, given that they engaged in major house building in the last third of the seventeenth century. The former commissioned the Great Castle House in Monmouth, and the latter greatly extended Tredegar House.[98]

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86 Walsh, C., 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London', *Journal of Design History*, 8, 3 (1995), 167.

87 Withey, A., '"Persons that live remote from London": Apothecaries and the medical marketplace in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Wales', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 85 (2011), 236.

88 Orlin, L.C., 'Fictions of the Early Modern English Probate Inventory' in Turner, H.S. (ed.), *The Culture of Capital: Property, cities, and knowledge in early modern England* (Routledge, London, 2002), 60.

89 NLW/LL/1734/61; NLW/LL/1696/153; NLW/LL/1692/185. Hann, A. and Stobart, J., 'Sites of Consumption: The display of goods in provincial shops in eighteenth-century England', *Cultural and Social History*, 2 (2005), 172.

90 For example, Richard Morgan (NLW/LL/1678/23).

91 Walsh, 'Shop Design', 164.

92 For example, Thomas Richards (NLW/LL/1711/133).

93 Walsh, 'Shop Design', 164.

94 *Ibid*.

95 Bowen, *Shopkeepers*, 92–3.

96 Trinder and Cox, *Yeomen*, 306.

97 Newman, J., 'Buildings in the Landscape' in Gray, Madeleine and Morgan, Prys (eds), Griffiths, Ralph A. (general ed.), *The Gwent County History Volume. 3: The Making of Monmouthshire, 1536–1780* (University of Wales Press on behalf of the Gwent County History Association, Cardiff, 2009), 339–41.

98 Jenkins, G.H., *The Foundations of Modern Wales 1642–1780* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987), 101.

Whilst there are no inventories in this study for mercers from Monmouth, an extensive one for Edward Earle of Newport survives.[99] Given its proximity to Tredegar House, his business may have been visited by the Morgans, the wealthiest family in south-east Wales.[100] Indeed, Christine Stevens has shown that Welsh gentry patronised local towns: Thomas Myddleton of Chirk Castle obtained goods from Shrewsbury.[101] Meanwhile, Stobart has also found that English gentry sourced items near their homes: the Leigh family of Stoneleigh in Warwickshire shopped in Coventry for a range of luxury textiles.[102]

In relation to the furnishing of Tredegar House, some inventories from the house survive from the late seventeenth century. It is interesting to compare these listings with items stocked by Earle. For example, in 1698 the 'Best Chamber' at Tredegar House had damask window curtains, as well as green and gold silk damask bed curtains lined with silk. Such furnishings suggest awareness, amongst Monmouthshire gentry, of the popularity of silk damask bed hangings in London in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.[103] What is more, this fashion may have been catered for by Earle, whose 1696 inventory included damask remnants, 'silk stuffe' and 'flowered silk'.

Meanwhile, chairs in the 'Blue-flowered Velvet Chamber' at Tredegar House had silver and silk fringe.[104] Similar trimmings are listed the mercer's inventory. Earle also stocked a range of different types of calico, a fabric used for window curtains in the Tredegar House Drawing Room present in 1692. On a more mundane level the mercer sold napkins, and the 1698 linen inventory for Tredegar House also lists such items.

If these fabrics and trimmings were supplied by Edward Earle, this marks out the Newport mercer as a purveyor of fashionable textiles. In this, he may have been responding to requests from the Morgan family to supply the latest items. On the other hand, he could have had London contacts who kept him up-to-date with the capital's fashions. Thus, being aware of the latest trends, he was able to offer such textiles to his Welsh customers as early modern 'must haves'.

Similarly, the inventory from the shop of James Harris (died 1692) includes a range of fabrics, such as expensive plain and flowered silk, damask, as well as gold and silver lace and thread.[105] Harris may have attracted custom from influential families in the surrounding area, given that his shop was in Usk, with its central location. For example, the mercer stocked two types of sarsenet – a fabric used in the 'King's Room' and 'Passing Room' at Tredegar House as drapes for tester beds listed in the 1692 inventory. Meanwhile, paragon, also offered by Harris, was used for curtains and upholstery in the 'Passing Room' in Tredegar House.

Frustratingly, there is no proof that any of these fabrics were bought by the Morgan family from local mercers. Indeed, such purchases may have been so routine that it was not thought necessary to note their sources. However, a reference in the Tredegar House inventories records the purchase of one and a half dozen diaper napkins in Bristol on 6 November 1700. This suggests that the Morgans obtained some items fairly locally. Indeed, they may have concurred with the view that

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99 NLW/LL/1696/153. This is the source for subsequent references to Earle's inventory.

100 Jenkins, *Foundations*, 98.

101 Stevens, C., 'Packages lately come from London: English silks worn by Welsh gentry', *Riggisberger Berichte*, 8 (2000), 75. I am grateful to Elen Phillips of the St Fagans National History Museum for bringing this article to my attention.

102 Stobart, J., 'Gentlemen and Shopkeepers: Supplying the country house in eighteenth-century England', *Economic History Review*, 64, 3 (2011), 892.

103 Mitchell, 'My purple', 9, Table 3.

104 Apted, 'Social Conditions', 147.

105 NLW/LL/1692/185.

Bristol was the 'metropolis of the West' because of its extensive commercial links, including with south Wales.[106]

If the Morgans, and other wealthy families, purchased some household textiles locally, it is also possible that they bought clothing fabric from Monmouthshire mercers. At this time, clothes were often made by a tailor from fabric supplied by the customer.[107] Clothing which has survived from Tredegar House includes a coat made from yellow lace pattern silk brocade with floral and leaf motifs and woven gold ribbon trim (Figure 1).[108] An English white silk taffeta coat, with gold lace pattern and gold thread covered buttons also survives from the Morgan household, together with a light blue satin damask court mantua, heavily embroidered with silver thread (Figure 2).[109]

Fig. 1: Man's silk coat, *circa* 1725.
Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Accession No. 23.189.8.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.

106 Chalkin, C., *The Rise of the English Town 1650–1850* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001), 7.
107 Vincent, S., *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England* (Berg, Oxford, 2003),104.
108 Stevens, 'Packages', 80.
109 *Ibid*.,79–80.

Fig. 2: Damask court mantua and petticoat, 1720s.
Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Accession No. 23.189.1.
Copyright: Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.

The trimmings used on these items may be the gold and silver lace and thread sold by Edward Earle. Even if this is not the case, given that silver fringe and lace cost 20d a yard, the mercer was selling goods which could only have been afforded by people of substance. Meanwhile, other items from Earle's shop which may have been of interest to important families include the gold and silver breast buttons. These could have been used for servants' livery, given that there were 46 servants at Tredegar House in 1680. The staff included two butlers and a groom of the chambers.[110] These men would probably have been provided with ornate uniform to demonstrate their employers' wealth and status, as in the case of those employed by the Leighs of Stoneleigh.[111]

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110 Apted, 'Social Conditions', 130.
111 Stobart, 'Gentlemen', 898.

In conclusion, this study has shed light on the potentially influential relationships of Monmouthshire mercers. However, given the limited nature of the evidence, it is difficult to quantify the precise effect of these relationships on mercers' commercial success. Nevertheless, Edward Earle of Newport had the second highest probate inventory value – and he may have supplied goods to the Morgan family of Tredegar House.[112] Furthermore, Richard Morgan, the Chepstow mercer closely associated with the Worcesters, also had a high inventory value.[113] This financial achievement was realised despite, or (if linking social capital theory holds good) perhaps because of, connections with an influential family – and one of its member's sizeable credit record.

Early-modern Welsh mercers may have accrued linking social capital by tempting influential customers with the chance to purchase fashionable goods in comfortable and stylish surroundings. This approach suggests a move away from the sale of basic essentials in a lacklustre setting, towards an enticing and sophisticated shopping experience, fostered both by aspiration and the opportunity for luxury consumption. Thus, it appears that at least one mercer's shop – that of Edward Earle – could be seen as a nexus between Monmouthshire's elite and luxury products. Indeed, the whole county may have been at the cutting edge of fashion if such merchandise was sold by other Monmouthshire mercers.

Finally, it could be said that it was not only the 'English-speaking Welsh gentry' who had 'close affinities with English life'.[114] Rather, some early-modern Monmouthshire mercers appear to have been attuned to the latest London trends. Furthermore, they were astute businessmen, eager to offer affluent, knowledgeable clients the opportunity to acquire luxury goods without setting foot outside Wales.

Mercer	**Town**	**Probate inventory value (down to nearest whole £)**
Morgan, John	Chepstow	£1990
Earle, Edward	Newport	£794
Godwin, William	Caerleon	£745
Morgan, Richard	Chepstow	£660
Harris, James	Usk	£446
Morris, William	Chepstow	£319
James, Phillip	Abergavenny	£313
Richards, Thomas	Usk	£110
Evanes, Rice	Abergavenny	£76
Kemeys, William	Chepstow	£65
Rogers, William	Usk	£48
Rogers, Charles	Usk	£46
Meredith, William	Caerleon	£15

Table 1: Inventories of Monmouthshire mercers proved 1668–1738.

[112] See Table 1.
[113] See Table 1.
[114] Thomas, K. *The Ends of Life: Roads to fulfilment in early modern England* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009), 3.

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I must thank Dr. Madeleine Gray, University of South Wales for all her help and advice and, particularly, for introducing me to the probate inventory of the Caerleon mercer, William Godwin. I would also like to thank Dr. Richard Allen, University of South Wales for his wise words. Lastly, I have to thank my husband, Tim Forshaw, for his support and encouragement.

THE MONMOUTH PARISH ACCOUNTS, 1673–1746

By David H. Williams
(Assistant Curate of St Mary's, Monmouth, 1969–1970)

In the possession of the parish of Monmouth is a tightly leather-bound volume of some four hundred folios (not all used) measuring forty centimetres in length, seventeen centimetres in breadth, and almost five centimetres in depth. The binding does not appear to be original, as some pages of this 'parish book', as it was known in its day, have their written edges deeply inwardly bound. A few late-seventeenth century pages appear to have been professionally restored. An archivist's hand is also evident in the pencilled pagination placed at the foot of each folio. The authorship is, of course, diverse, the work of many hands over three-quarters of a century.

The content is basically a series of churchwardens' accounts – whose duties in those days extended beyond church affairs. They were presented annually at the Easter Vestry meeting either separately or as joint accounts by the two wardens elected or appointed each year. The volume is of the greatest interest, giving many insights into Monmouth life at the time, not least in detailing the building of the town's Georgian church. There is a considerable variety of activities contained within the volume – such as the levying of the church rate, the rewards given to those who killed pests, and the collection of monies to help those in need.

CHURCH AFFAIRS

The Clergy

Vicar of Monmouth, and seemingly resident in the town, by 1677 and down to probably 1726, was the Reverend Herbert Pye, and the accounts mention 'his servant maid'.[1] He rarely failed to attend a parish meeting, signing off the wardens' accounts with others, and yearly received a fee from the wardens (26s 8d in 1677 and 1684) for making the copy of the registers they needed to present at the annual episcopal or archidiaconal visitation. He sometimes also received a further £1 for keeping the registers (i.e. entering them up after births, marriages and burials). A discordant note was struck in 1705 when the parish meeting felt he was not entitled to this, and ordered the payment to be discontinued. To be reimbursed for copying the register was one thing; for keeping it in the first place was probably felt to be part of his normal clerical duties. The vicar was not present at the meeting, although otherwise he was a regular attender, often signing the list of attendees ahead of any others, save perhaps the mayor.

Members of his family, if not locally born and bred, were certainly living in Monmouth during his incumbency. A brother, Samuel, was successively churchwarden (1683/84), bailiff (1694/95), mayor (1697) and postmaster (1702).[2] He provided some of the altar wine in 1701/1702 (on reimbursement), and a parish meeting was held in his house in 1703. He died and was buried in the churchyard in 1704.

A George Pye was resident in his own house in Monmouth by 1673. A Thomas Pye, seemingly a tradesman on his own account, provided hair[3] when work was being done on both Monmouth

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1 Pye received his B.A. degree after studying at Hart Hall, Oxford, and he was made deacon at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, on 20 September 1674: Church of England Clergy Database.

2 Kissack, K. E., *The Making of a County Town* (London, 1975), 53.

3 Horse hair. Five bushels of horse hair were purchased for 3s 4d. in 1710 and a further 3s 6d. was spent on horse hair in 1711.

churches in 1711; by 1719 at latest he had an apprentice working for him. In 1719, he was a churchwarden. A 'Mrs Pye' regularly washed or mended the surplice and, in 1703, provided ale (on repayment) for the bellringers. She may have been the vicar's wife, or else her sister-in-law, Hannah, who made her will in 1715.[4] Hannah, by now Samuel's widow, in 1705, did once at least provide the Communion wine. A Mrs Frances Pye, Hannah's sister, perhaps the wife of Thomas, made a new surplice in 1718.

As Herbert Pye grew older, 'matts' were provided for him in both the churches (1705), and his life was not without its problems. In 1705 he petitioned for help from the new Queen Anne Bounty as, he said, 'the vicarage of Monmouth is the poorest of any Corporation or County Town in her Majesties Dominions'.[5] Then, in 1710, he asked the bishop of Hereford to intervene in a dispute between himself and the mayor and town council regarding the use by the corporation of the vestry.[6] At two parish meetings in 1722 Herbert was represented by the curate, the Revd. John Ollard; he did attend a parish meeting on 7 April 1724, but was buried – presumably in the church – on 11 March 1726.[7] His incumbency had lasted almost fifty years. Ollard, a graduate of University College, Oxford, and son of John Ollard of the parish of St James, Westminster, had succeeded Herbert by December of that year. Ollard died in late June/early July 1732, and was followed by the Reverend Morgan Bullock. Bullock, the son of Edmund Bullock of Chepstow, also an Oxford graduate and formerly curate of Staunton, was about 33 years old when he entered upon the incumbency.[8]

The Liturgy

The 1662 Book of Common Prayer laid down that 'the Bread and Wine for the Communion shall be provided by the Curate [i.e. the Incumbent] and the Churchwardens at the charges of the Parish'. This expenditure was therefore an annual and essential item in the yearly wardens' accounts. The frequency with which bread and wine for the sacrament were purchased suggest that for most of the late-seventeenth century there was a quarterly celebration of the Eucharist with a few additional celebrations, as on Good Friday and New Year's Day. In 1682, there were at least eight communion services, and towards the close of the century there appears to have been an increased frequency of Holy Communion: sacramental wine purchased in 1692/93 cost but £1, but in 1697/98 no less than £2 14s 0d. By 1718, there was at least a monthly Eucharist, and while in Herbert Pye's last two years of life (for perhaps the curate, Ollard, was still in deacon's orders) there is little mention of the purchase of wine. By 1730, monthly communion, at the least, was again the norm.

In August 1682 there was an additional celebration of Holy Communion 'because the lord marquis was in town',[9] and that same year and again in 1687, a Eucharist appears to have been

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4 The National Archives, PROB/11/546/69. Herbert, perhaps because of his age, declined to act as executor of Hannah's will, so this duty was entrusted to her son, Samuel, a surgeon (National Library of Wales, James Coleman MS D.D. 1421). Samuel, in 1726 and until his death in 1760, was a Bristol surgeon: TNA, C11/67/34; PROB11/857/106.

5 National Library of Wales, Plas-yn-Cefn deed 2645. Herbert said that the two churches were both worth £23-6-8 p.a., and that he paid out yearly 20s 4d. in tenths, 10s to the 'auditor for Debentures', and 6d. per pound to the Receiver (of the Duchy of Lancaster).

6 *Ibid*. Deed 2666.

7 In 1717 to 1719 Herbert Pye was involved in litigation with a William Rea regarding The Priory Estate: TNA, E134/4Geo1/East 12, 5 Geo1/Mich9.

8 Bullock was baptised in Chepstow on 25 September 1699, and gained his B.A. whilst at University College, Oxford: Church of England Clergy Database.

9 The marquess of Worcester who, in December that year, was created duke of Beaufort. His Monmouth residence was Great Castle House, although he had just begun to build another residence at Troy House.

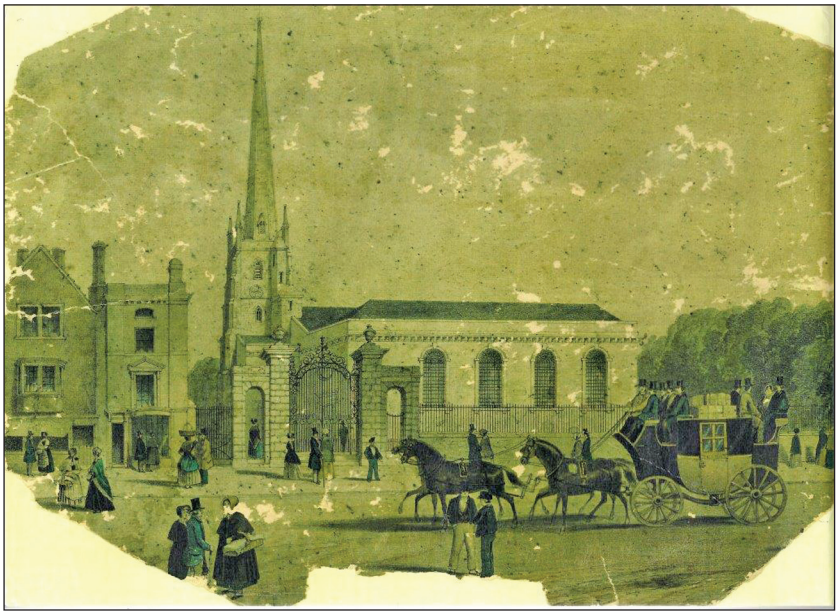

Fig. 1: Monmouth Parish Church circa 1865, by E. Heath. Copied from an image presented to Monmouth Parish Church by Jack Roberts, once St Mary's organist, and reproduced with the kind permission of Fr David McGladdery, Vicar of Monmouth.

celebrated on the occasion of the inauguration of a new mayor. In 1683 additional bread and wine were purchased for 'ye Second Sunday after Whitsun' – this might also have coincided with mayor-making. In July 1718 the amount spent on wine was four times the monthly average, but no reason is afforded. Where the churchwardens presented separate individual accounts, very commonly one was responsible for the purchase of the wine, the other for buying in the bread. In 1700 William Hopkins bought the wine, Henry Williams purchased the bread. In 1706 John Bulbrick accounted for the wine, but Richard Hipkiss for the bread.

Mostly the brand of wine is not specified, but on various occasions 'tainte' (a deep red Spanish wine), claret and port are all mentioned. In a few years, while an average bottle (throughout much of this period) cost 2s there is note of an additional charge of 2d for the bottle itself. The bread which mostly cost 2d per occasion of use, is only once (in 1674) referred to as 'penny loaves'. At all other times when its nature is indicated, and especially in the 1730s, it was 'manchet' – the highest quality that could be had. This, too, accorded with the Prayer Book rubric: 'it shall suffice that the Bread be such as is usual to be eaten, but the best and purest Wheat Bread that conveniently may be gotten.'

The regular washing of the priest's surplice, as also altar and other communion linen is recorded. The surplice was washed at least quarterly against the major festivals, and frequently more often. In 1699 and 1704 it was especially laundered in preparation for the Assize Service. In 1688 it was specially washed after having been 'oyled by the new rails',[10] and again in 1720 for 'fetching out ye staines'. There are frequent mentions of the surplice being mended, while in 1727 a collar

[10] ? 'soiled', or stained by oil used to finish off the rails: either way the effect was the same. It is a pointer to the new communion rails obviously just placed in the church.

was added to it. There were two surplices in the church in 1720/21 and 1726, and again from 1733 to 1735, suggesting the presence of a curate in the parish. New surplices were made in 1692 and 1710, each necessitating the purchase of eight ells of fine holland,[11] for £3 4s 0d and £2 12s 0d respectively. In 1692, the new surplice was made by Mrs Pye who received 10s for her work, and in 1710 by Mrs Knight who was paid 6s. Throughout the 1690s, Mrs Knight, 'widow Knight', was the launderer. In 1716 comes reference to 'the Hood' being mended: presumably Herbert Pye's degree hood.

Other adjuncts to worship included prayer books: twelve large ones were purchased in 1703 and brought from Bristol, and a further large one for the vicar in 1713. At this time many people could not read. In 1677 a Mr Fortune reported the wardens to the ecclesiastical authorities as the church was lacking a *Book of Homilies* (two such collections of sermons having been published a century before). One was duly purchased, and cost with carriage ten shillings; the fees of the registrar and apparitor in dealing with the matter cost the parish a further six guineas. Forms of prayer were regularly bought on special occasions, like days of fast and thanksgiving. A fast was, for example, proclaimed for 10 June 1702 'imploring a blessing upon Her Majesty [Queen Anne] and allies engaged in the war against France and Spain'. On 12 November that year, the parish observed a day of thanksgiving for British successes at Vigo and against the French.

Other fasts proclaimed in Monmouth church included one on 12 January 1704 'on account of the Great Storm' and on 8 December 1721 'to avert the plague'. Such days were to be days of 'a general fast and humiliation'. Thanksgivings were also offered (on 18 July 1705) for the duke of Marlborough's success in leading his troops across the Lines of Brabant. Prayers, too, were prepared for the accession of a sovereign (as for George I, 'the Elector of Brunswick', in 1714), and the annual observance of that day thereafter. A touching mention is made in 1677 of the church's hour-glass being set in a gilded frame: was it to make sure that the new Vicar, Herbert Pye, did not preach for too long?

Burials still took place within the church; certainly in the late seventeenth century. In 1685, 6s 6d was received for the interment of John Owen's father in the chancel, and 6s 6d for Mrs Gough's burial, also in the chancel. Two poor persons were buried in church at a cost of 13s 4d in 1677, and 6s 8d was received when a grave was opened in the church for Edmund Booth's funeral. The church is not mentioned when, on the mayor's direction, 'ye man of the weir' was interred in 1673, nor when – again on the mayor's orders – a shroud cloth was purchased (6s 7d) 'for ye maid as was drowned'.

The Church Bells

The evidence regarding the bells is a little confusing, but it appears that there were five bells in the church tower with a sixth being added in 1677/78. In 1685/1686 the bells appear to have been taken to the Gloucester Bell Foundry for recasting. The next year (1687), one Watt Phillips stole lead from the churchyard. There is constant mention of bells being 'mended' or readjusted, and of bell ropes being bought. In 1688 one churchwarden accounted for six new bell ropes weighing 44 lbs. and costing 16s 6d; the next year, another warden expended £1 17s 4d on a further six bell ropes weighing 56 lbs. In that year it was noted that 'ye great bell was drawn up', only to be taken down and re-hung again in 1692. The bell system may not have been entirely satisfactory given the amount of time and effort expended upon it in those years. Eventually, Abraham Rudhall came from the Gloucester Bell Foundry on a second visit. The upshot was that the six bells were taken there, broken down and recast into eight bells in 1706/1707.

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[11] An 'ell' was a measure of length, 45 inches in England. 'Holland' was a fine linen cloth originating from the Dutch province of Holland.

Presumably, as the Prayer Book prescribed, a bell was rung before divine service each Sunday. Several ringers were employed – and provided with ale and candles (in winter), to ring out a peal of bells on occasions such as the Assize Service, Christmas and New Year, All Hallows-tide (1 November) and again on 5 November (Guy Fawkes Day). Strangely enough, no mention is made of the bells being rung on Easter Day, but as that was a Sunday it may have formed part of the ringers' regular duty. The bells were always rung on royal occasions such as accession anniversaries and coronation days, and also in early February 1685 'when there was hope of the late King's recovery', but Charles II, who had been taken suddenly ill on 2 February, died on the 6th. The news of his illness must have reached Monmouth quite speedily.

The bells were also rung on other occasions of local and national rejoicing, as when the duke of Beaufort came to Monmouth. The bells pealed in 1685 when 'when my Lord came from London', and again 'when my Lord came from the election at Gloucester'. The bells also rang out that year on 2 April, being the first birthday of 'the young Lord' – Henry Somerset, who later became the second duke. Other occasions when a peal was rung included 8 June 1705, to mark the election of Sir Hopton Williams as one of the Members of Parliament for the county, and 3 May 1719 when 'the Bishop [of Hereford] was in town'. The bells were rung in good faith one day in the summer of 1742 because news had reached Monmouth that Admiral Vernon had taken 'the Forts of Carthagena'. The jubilation was short-lived because the British forces were in fact repulsed in that attack on Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

The Church Fabric

The accounts regularly mention repairs of one kind or another being necessary, and the impression given is that the fabric and furnishings were not always in the best of condition. Apart from the hanging of the bells, two events of note were the acquisition in 1683 of a new clock brought from Bristol, and the erection in 1717 of a sundial, 'well coloured and gilded'. The accounts make mention of the special seats reserved for the mayor, the bailiffs, the constable and the parish clerk. In 1708 the brackets which held the borough maces were gilded. Two chapels are noted: the Mayor's Chapel and the Milborne Chapel.

In 1676 a plug was bought for the font, in 1685 a new bier was acquired, and in 1688 the pulpit cushion was mended. In 1687 the steeple was pointed, and the weather cock taken down and gilded before being replaced – it was re-gilded again in 1709. In 1706, 2d was spent in 'fastening ye rails before Madam Curres' (? her tomb or her house). In 1708 it was decided to place a wire lattice over the east window 'to prevent it being broken with stones or otherwise'. That year, a new gallery which had been erected, seemingly without permission, by Edward Knowles and which inconvenienced the Revd. Thomas Basset, headmaster of the School, was ordered to be altered. In 1712, the tablet bearing the arms of Queen Anne was 'new beautified', and it was planned to insert new windows, which meant the dismantling of the tablets bearing the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed. New boards bearing these were to be prepared and placed in a different position. .

The churchyard was not neglected – there are frequent references to it being mowed and weeded. In 1704, three elm and fourteen yew trees were purchased for planting; there is also later mention of holm and fir trees. In 1714 thorns were placed around the trees to protect them, perhaps because of potential damage by animals, Indeed, two years later, the town crier was employed to give notice that 'pigs were not allowed in the churchyard'. In 1684 a new path ('causeway') leading to the church was made using stone, gravel, earth and cinders. In 1711 new gravel paths were laid in the churchyard.

There was one permanent lay member of staff – the sexton. From the start of the accounts down to 1703 this was William Worrall. His basic salary was paid for 'keeping the clock and the chimes', but must have involved more than that, and was increased from £2 yearly to £2 10s 0d by the early 1690s. In addition to this, he was paid separately for odd jobs done, so that his take home pay was always greater: an additional 6s 6d in 1688. Worral retired or died by November 1704, when Stephen Baker was appointed sexton in his place, subject to satisfactory performance of his duties. By 1710 his annual salary had been increased to £4, but at a parish meeting on 8 November 1714 he was dismissed, thirty-one of those present voting for the termination of his services, with only twelve persons supporting his continuation. Charles Baker – it is not apparent whether he was a relative, replaced him, and was still in office as sexton, on the same salary of £4 yearly, in the early 1730s. He was succeeded by Henry Baker in November 1735, and then by William Sinderby in 1743.

The Georgian Church

By 1730 it was evident that the fabric of the parish church was in a very poor condition, and it was resolved at a parish meeting held on New Year's Eve that year, to seek 'an estimate of the expense of repairing or rebuilding, in order to the petitioning for a Brief'.[12] Another parish meeting, a week later, determined to apply for such a 'brief'. In the event it was to be a few years before work started, the task having been entrusted to the firm of Francis Smith, architect and master builder, of Warwick. This must have been one of the last commissions of his life for he died in 1738, his brother, William, taking over from him. Other assignments entrusted to Smith had included work at Derby and Hereford cathedrals. Work was certainly underway by 1736. In May that year,[13] for unknown reason 'the Workmen Imploy'd under Mr Francis Smith have for a Week past been put off their work at the request of the Parishioners', and a parish meeting ordered that Mr Smith's costs in this respect by defrayed. Was the reason dissatisfaction, or a local event interfering with progress?

The rebuilding of the nave cost £1,840 – in today's values at least £220,000, and much of this cost was borne by the duke of Beaufort and his brother, the Honourable Charles Noel Somerset, but there were additional costs for 'extra work in building the staircase, and work under the tower', (£90), and for 'the work done about the altar piece' (£64). The parish did all it could to raise funds: £857 was received from direct subscriptions (though there is a list of those who promised but had not paid), £370 was realised from the 'brief' appeal, and £296 from the sale of 'old materials', like iron, timber and lead. To assist the situation, the church rate in 1738 and 1741 was levied at twelve pence in the pound, rather than the usual sixpence. The financial aspects took a few years to resolve, and it was not until 4 May 1743 that a parish meeting was able to vote a motion that 'the thanks of the Parish be given to his Grace a[nd] L[or]d. Noel for their generous Contributions a[nd] for their care a[nd] trouble in the management of the Building'.

The materials listed for the 'extra work' are fully itemised as, for instance, '9500 of Brick used at 7d. per thousand [£3-6-6]' and '65ft. of Timber ready sawed at 16d. per ft. [£4-6-8]'. The work necessitated 'A day Bill for burying the Bones [7s 6d]'.[14] The altar table and associated work

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12 The local craftsmen whose advice was sought were Thomas Emery and Henry Baker, masons; Matthew Williams and John Prichard, carpenters; James Powell, senior, and James Powell, junior, plumbers and glaziers and William Williams and Thomas Jones, 'plaisteres and tylers'. A 'brief' was a royal warrant enabling a nationwide collection to be made to help defray the costs.

13 It is just possible that the reference is to May 1737.

14 In 1736, the town crier was employed to give notice of the removal of gravestones.

was arranged by George and Thomas Eboral; undoubtedly members of the family of William Eboral (died 1795), an eminent Warwick builder. The altar was proposed to have been made of deal, but in the event was of oak, which cost more. The costs included £14 7s 11d for '275ft. 4in. Sap: of blue and white pavement all of Warwickshire Stone in Diamonds', and associated expenses. Unfortunately, a parish meeting heard in 1743 that 'the white paving is already decaying, and the work charged at an extravagant price'.

The same meeting, on 4 May 1743, agreed that 'a Table of the subscribers be put up in some publick place of the Church', but also noted that more work remained to be done: 'our Steple is so ruinous a[nd] in decay that if some speedy Care is not taken it will probably fall down & destroy the whole new Fabrick'. An earlier meeting (8 April 1743) had resolved 'to pull down as much of the spire as to the Churchwardens shall seem necessary'. The work was put in hand, to the design of Nathaniel Wilkinson of Worcester,[15] resulting in a spire rising to two hundred feet above ground level. A later entry in the parish book joyfully states: 'The top of the Steeple built Near 14 yards in length, the pinnacles new made, and the Steeple and Tower Pointed, and the Dial new painted'.[16]

The new church was completed, but there were potential problems in the allocation of seating. A parish meeting in December 1739 agreed that the subscribers of the building works should not on that account have any right to a seat, and that, 'after the several proprietors of seats in the old Church shall be settled and satisfied, the remaining seats and pews shall be sold to the best bidders', the money raised going towards the building costs. It is evident that there were dissatisfied parties, and to resolve certain claims, parish meetings in 1741 instructed the wardens to defend the rights of the church both at the diocesan court of Hereford and, if necessary, at the Court of Arches.[17]

On 6 April 1741, it was decided in these ways 'to establish the right of this parish to the Seat now used by the Singers'. The 'seat' was a gallery, and the reason for possible litigation was, on 24 May, made clear. It was 'to prevent the same from being granted, appropriated and confirmed to a[nd] for the use of the Reverend Andrew Cuthbert, clerk, Lecturer of the Wm. Jones Benefaction, Bainham Barnes and John Thomas, Clerk's, School Master and Usher of the free school in this Towne and their families a[nd] the scholars'. Whether this action was successful is not known; perhaps not, for on 27 June 1742, the parish decided to apply to the diocesan court 'for building a Gallery at the East End of the North Ile [*aisle*] for the use of the Singers, Twenty foot in Length and Six foot Six Inches in Bredth'. Another parish meeting (1 November 1741) had to threaten to prosecute a person (or persons) unknown, who had removed certain partitions dividing seating.

In the course of a journey to Holyhead, and keeping a diary as he did so, the Reverend Jeremiah Milles visited Monmouth in 1742.[18] He was not complimentary about the new St Mary's Church, but rather wrote:

> The church was new built within this five years. It consists of a nave and two isles, which are supported by 5 Dorick pillars on each side, all which there is not a good taste, tho' there appears to be the affectation of it.

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15 Newman, J., *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent / Monmouthshire* (Penguin, 2000), 396; Wikipedia online.

16 *The Times*, 21 Dec 1825, tells of lightning striking the church during a great storm, and melting the wires of the hammer which struck the chimes, but no damage was done to the building or the clock.

17 The principal legal court of the archbishop of Canterbury. One person in 1804 having a seat with 'two kneelings', was Richard Powles, a Monmouth mercer: National Library of Wales, Leonard Twiston Davies papers, deed 2508. On 7 July 1876, the *Western Mail* described a bitter altercation regarding possession of one of the pews.

18 BL, Additional MS 15776, p. 134: 'Travels in England and Wales, 1735–1743'.

Milles wrote further:

> Near the church on ye north-west side of it are ye remains of an old priory most of which was demolished at the building of the church, but the chappel or at least some chappel belonging to it remains pretty entire.

Archdeacon Glynne, visiting the church on Sunday 24 October 1824,[19] was more positive.

> We went to St Mary's Church which has been rebuilt in stone, in the Grecian style, but is still a handsome structure, though not curious in antiquity. The ancient tower crowned by a very lofty and well proportioned spire still remains.

ST THOMAS'S CHURCH, OVERMONNOW

Apart from the normal references to minor repairs, the first substantial note relating to this daughter-church 'beyond Monnow' comes in the building of its pine end[20] in around 1688/1689. The work cost some £25 (perhaps equivalent to £3,000/£4,000 today), and involved the labour of some fifteen men, their pay ranging from 9d to 16d per day. Amongst the materials employed were thirty tons of stone and forty-three foot of glass, the windows having bars placed upon them. William Worrall hung the bell.

Burials took place at St Thomas's, as that of John Pritchard in 1694. Oils and colours were purchased for Mrs Evans in 1703, presumably to decorate the church. The church had its clock, and the clock-keeper by 1702 and until 1731 was one James Powell. The church was lime washed in 1711, and re-tiled in 1722. In 1717 comes mention of the painting of the frame of its sun-dial. In 1727, less happily, the town crier had to be employed to encourage people to come forward if they knew who had broken down the churchyard wall.

This had been built in 1705 by 'gathering stones out of Monnow and digging stones out of ye old Tower', and was further improved in 1709. The men employed in 1705 received 10d per day and were refreshed with ale. The building of the wall first required the payment of Charles Taylor, the constable, to 'summon aged persons to assert what they remembered of the bounds of St Thomas Church'. As the summons was by a warrant signed by Thomas Edwards, the mayor, at a parish meeting 'for stating ye accounts of the Overseers of the high Ways', it seems that what land belonged to the church or appertained to the adjacent road was in question.

It has been noted that the nave was 'virtually rebuilt' in 1830/1831 by Matthew Beasen, surveyor,[21] but his name does not appear in the accounts. He was seemingly employed by the duke of Beaufort. Work on the church was done in those years by Thomas Jones, M. Powell and John James, 'the tiler', and there is mention of bricks, lime and tile which were purchased. Lastly, in 1740/41, Thomas Eboral received £5 3s 10½d for his work in 'repairing and seating' the church.

THE CHURCHWARDENS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The office of churchwarden, and, for a time at least, of the church sidesmen, necessitated attendance at the annual diocesan visitation. At that meeting court fees would be paid, churchwardens would be sworn in, and the copies made (usually by the incumbent) of the registers, together with the

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19 NLW, Glynne of Hawarden MS 57, f.83.
20 Gable end.
21 Newman, *Buildings of Wales*, 398.

responses to the questionnaire sent out in advance, would be handed in. Other business, including making presentments against erring parishioners, might also be transacted. More often than not the visitation was held in the cathedral city of Hereford, though in some years at Ross-on-Wye – especially in the early eighteenth century. The parish book rarely states whether the visitation was that conducted by the bishop, or by the archdeacon (as in 1699 and 1717), or by the diocesan chancellor (as in 1725).

The least of the expenses paid by the wardens in connection with the visitation was the fee of the apparitor (8d in 1687), the diocesan court official whose job it was to summon wardens and others to the visitation. The Monmouth wardens were largely townspeople, and therefore they needed to hire horses and purchase fodder for those horses to make the journey to Hereford or Ross. They also claimed for food and drink on the journey. It does not seem that they needed to stay away overnight, as the visitation apparently took place in the late spring.

In 1691 the accounts record 4s spent on court fees for the swearing in of the wardens, dinner for the two wardens and four sidesmen, and hay and oats for the six horses, cost altogether 10 shillings, while beer drunk afterwards meant a further 1s 6d being expended. In 1698 food was taken 'at Dean and Hereford', perhaps indicating the route of the journey. In 1720 'eating, liquor, horse-hire and shoeing', amounted to a cost of £1 4s 8d. In 1730 and 1733 specific mention is made of receipts issued by the Green Dragon coaching inn, not far from the cathedral. The licensee was a Mr Cook.

The Church Rate

An unenviable task of the churchwardens was ensuring the collection of the church rate, following the assessment made at each year's parish meeting. This was normally around sixpence in the pound. For this purpose Monmouth was divided into four wards: one churchwarden would be responsible for Wyebridge ward and Castle Bailey Ward, the other for Monnow Street Ward and for Over-Monnow. At accounting time a number of people might be in arrears or too poor to pay (fifty-nine persons in 1637, down to thirty-seven in 1685). Only occasionally was a defaulter prosecuted at the bishop's court, as was Thomas Gwillim in 1688. The expenses of prosecution far outweighed the money due. A little over £40 was raised in 1712 by the 'estreats', as the rate was known, with £1 13s 6d unpaid that year.

The parish meeting in 1713 resolved that 'six pence in a pound shall be assessed towards the repairing of the Parish Churches for this present year'. In fact, not all the money went to those purposes, as from the church rate came, in a few years, charitable payments of one kind and another, sometimes at the direction of the mayor. It was on the mayor's orders that two shillings helped a 'distressed Minister' in 1688, that five shillings were given to Irish travellers in 1691, and two shillings sixpence to a seaman in 1721. Other such payments included two shillings and sixpence to two distressed men from Suffolk in 1677, one shilling to 'six poor men that had their ship cast away' in 1683, one shilling two pence shared between four 'poor travellers' in 1699, and two shillings to assist 'a poor woman in distress' in 1725.

Another outgoing from the church rate, especially in the eighteenth century, were monetary rewards given to those who brought in animals (or at least their heads) which they had caught, and which were deemed to be pests or at least a nuisance. The rewards varied from one penny (paid for a whoop) to one shilling given for a fox's head. Recent bone finds in the churchyard of St Mary's suggest that such trapped and killed animals were placed on display without the church.[22]

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[22] Information of the Revd. Canon James Coutts, formerly Vicar of Monmouth.

Dead 'bosens/bosons' (badgers) were in the 1720s also valued at one shilling apiece; four pence was the price placed on 'urchins' (hedgehogs), 'fitch-hogs' (pole cats) and weasels. Between 12 June and 5 October 1730, nineteen hedgehogs were brought in for remuneration, and between 27 December 1731 and 17 February 1732, sixty-two 'hoops' or 'whoops'. These were probably bull-finches. For some locals, including youths, this offer of reward will have brought in some small but additional income or pocket money. Only a few 'martins' or 'martens' are on record as being caught; when they were, sixpence was the reward of the finder. The 'martin' was perhaps a wild cat or furry animal of the weasel family.

APPRENTICES

For three years only, 1743 to 1745, the 'parish book' gives 'An Account of what Children hath been put Apprentice by the Parish'. They were twelve in all, and the average paid to their employer by the wardens lay between £2 3s 4d and £3. Amongst the twelve children listed were Katherine Lorimer bound to a Mr Williams, and Edward Lucas placed at the service of Edward Catchmaid. Earlier references to assisting apprentices come in 1704 when money was 'received at the Communion Table' for apprenticing Charles Baker, junior, to Edward Lucas, shoemaker, and the following year £4 17s 2d was laid out for placing William Davies, junior, to William Williams, a tailor.

BRIEFS

The closing section of the accounts denotes the response of the parish of Monmouth to those charitable causes for which royal briefs, authorising nationwide collections, had been issued. The records are clearly incomplete, but there is note of some forty briefs being responded to in Monmouth, by collections made in the parish church between 1676 and 1708. These raised a total of at least fifty pounds, in modern equivalent perhaps in the order of five or six thousand pounds. Many of the collections raised under one pound, like those for the rebuilding of Towyn parish church whose tower collapsed in 1693 (11s. 4¾d raised in 1695), or for the work necessary at Ely cathedral after its north tower collapsed in 1699 (9s. 2¼d contributed in 1701).

A few briefs raised much more in Monmouth. The largest sum found (in 1704) was £5 17s 3½d for 'the Protestants of Orange' – who had been driven out of Orange and had to make their way to Switzerland or Prussia.[23] Another popular cause was 'the Releife of the English Captives under ye servitude of ye Emperor of Tor and Morocco at Mechaness'. The collection for this cause, in 1691, raised £5 6s 0d. The money was gathered to assist a number of European Christians who, during years of piracy, had been seized and made under terrible conditions to undertake building work in the royal capital of Meknes.

CONCLUSION

The accounts in the Monmouth 'parish book' give us a considerable insight into the life of the parish in those times. This is especially important as newspaper references for the period are hard to come by. The parish accounts help also to supplement the researches of the late Keith Kissack, to whom this article is dedicated.[24]

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23 *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1703–4*, 101, 608.

24 Notably his *Monmouth: The Making of A County Town* (London, 1975).

APPENDIX

[*MS page 235*]

Church Wardens Names from the Year:

1673 Thomas Edwards, Francis Stephens.
1674 William Phillips, Robert Marshal.
1675 Edward Jones, Walter Rogers.
1676 William Fortune, Edward Evans.
1677 James Williams, Herbert Jones.
1683 Edward Pritchard, Tho: Belchier.
1684 Samuel Pye.
1685 William Manstone, Reece Watkins.
1686 Walter Fortune.
1687 Richard Hipkis, Henry Barnes.
1688 George Morgan, Addam Adams.
1689 Michael Bohune, Richard Roberts.
1691 Philip Meakings, JohnWoodward.
1692 Edward Cadel, Henry Williams.
1693 William Hopkin, Henry Williams.
1694 John Jones, William Davill.
1695 William Davill, James Mercer.
1696 Christopher Carter, Tho: Williams.
1698 John Fortune, William Macklen.
1699 Walter Rogers, Tho: Bellamy.
1700 William Donn, Tho: Lewis.
1701 Charles Fisher.
1702 Tho: Woodward, Michael Bohune.
1703 Tho: Stephens, Mathew Stephens.
1705 Richd. Powel, Abel Wantner.

[*MS Page 236*]

1706 Richd. Hipkis, John Bullbrick.
1708 Packer Bohune, Phillip Meakins.
1709 John Betham, Henry Barnes.
1710 John Middleton, Moore Green.
1711 Tho: Belchier, Tho. Middleton.
1712 Robert Stephens, Phillip Jarret.
1713 Richard Taylor, Robert Upton.
1714 *Ditto*.
1715 John Smith, William Baker.
1716 George Morgan, Addam Adams.
1717 Edward Knowles, Evan Symonds.
1718 Edward Knowles, John Davies.
1719 Tho: Pye, Timothy Morse.
1720 John Roome, Charles Middleton.
1721 *Ditto*.
1722 John Rudall, William Jones.
1724 Richard Hughes, David Tanner.
1725 William Nickels, Tho: Bellamy
1726 *Ditto*.
1727 John Meakins, John Mason.
1728 Anthony Jones, William Hollins.
1729 *Ditto*.
1730 James Gabriel, Roger Harper.
1731 Wm Macklen, Phillip Leach.
1732 Phillip Davies, Tho: Philpot.

[*MS Page 237*]

1733 Edward Phillips, John Hughes.
1734 Tho: Middleton, TimothyMorse.
1735 William Addams, Tho: Williams
1736 William Rea, William Adams.
1737 James Middleton, Tho:Mason.
1738 William Williams, Tho. Mason.
1739 David Tanner, Samuel Stonehouse.
1740 John Franks, James Powel, glaziet.
1741 Mr William Fortune,
Mr James Woodward.
1742 Joseph Fisher, John Evans, Osbas(t)on.
1743 Phillip Fisher, John Hughes, boatman.
1744 Edward Leach, William George.
1745 Adam Macklen, John Evans, baker.

COMMUNITY AND WORKPLACE: RAILWAY VILLAGES IN SOUTH EAST MONMOUTHSHIRE 1850–1965

By Robert Gant

Introduction

Railway construction in Victorian Britain had a major impact on the growth and internal geographies of industrial towns,[1] the economies and townscapes of provincial market centres,[2] and the evolution and land-use patterns of coastal and spa resorts.[3] It was also responsible for creating a new and distinctive type of settlement, the railway town.[4] At the same time in the countryside, the growing railway network left an imprint on the physical landscape, shaped the distribution of population, and influenced the pattern and density of settlement.[5] This study of community history in south east Monmouthshire connects with such effects and explores the social and economic transformation of three 'railway villages' – Caldicot, Rogiet and Sudbrook – during the period 1850–1965. An overview of phased developments in railway infrastructure and related trends in population growth sets the scene. A consideration of the principal data sources follows. This leads to an evaluation of the concept of the 'railway village' through the related themes of workplace, community, household persistence and social segregation.

Staged developments in railway infrastructure

In 1850 the Great Western Railway Company (GWR) completed the railway line between London and Cardiff. The passenger halts at Rogiet and Portskewett soon featured as nuclei in village development.[6] However, the Victorian census enumerators' books indicate that the railway industry offered few opportunities for local employment.[7] The 1851 census enumeration listed only seven railway employees in Caldicot and two in Portskewett; in 1861 there were five in Caldicot and two in Portskewett followed, in 1871, by four in Caldicot and four in Portskewett. No railway workers can be identified in these three censuses in Rogiet (including the neighbouring parishes of Ifton and Llanfihangel-Rogiet). That situation changed dramatically following the Act of Parliament in June

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1 For illustration, see Dyos, H.J., 'Railways and housing in Victorian London', *Journal of Transport History*, 2 (1955), 11–21; 90–100; Appleton, J.H., 'Railways and the morphology of British towns', in Beckinsale, R.P. and Houston, J.M. (eds), *Urbanisation and its problems* (Oxford, 1968), 92–118; Kellett, J.R., *The impact of railways on Victorian cities* (London, 1969), 83–8.

2 Examples, from south Wales, include: Gant, R., 'Brecon in 1901: a census perspective on the county town', *Brycheiniog*, XLII (2011), 43–70 and Gant, R., 'Market town *and* railway centre: Abergavenny in 1901', *Gwent Local History*, 113 (2013), 34–42.

3 Gilbert, E.W., 'The growth of inland and seaside health resorts in England', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 55 (1939), 16–35; Carter, H., 'A decision-making approach to town plan analysis: a case study of Llandudno', in Carter, H. and Davies, W.K.D. (eds), *Urban essays* (Harlow, 1970), 48–59.

4 Representative studies include: Grinsell, L.V. (ed), *Studies in the history of Swindon* (Swindon, 1950); Chaloner, W., *The social and economic development of Crewe* (Manchester, 1951); Turton, B.J., 'The railway town', *Town Planning Review*, 32 (1961–62), 97–115 and Revill, G., 'Railway Derby: occupational community, paternalism and corporate culture 1850–81', *Urban History*, 28 (2001), 378–404.

5 Refer to: Hawke, G., *Railways and economic growth in England and Wales 1840–1914* (Oxford, 1970); and Langton, J. and Morris, R.J. (eds), *Atlas of industrialising Britain 1780–1914* (London, 1986), 88–93.

6 The railway halt at Caldicot opened in 1932. Strong, P., *A large and growing district: Caldicot in the twentieth century* (Caldicot, 1999), 34.

7 This study used the following census enumeration books: The National Archives, H.O.107/2490; R.G. 9/3975; R.G.10/5292.

1872 that authorized construction of the Severn Tunnel. In March 1873 the first pilot shaft was sunk at Sudbrook. The tunnel labour force peaked at 3,828 in 1884, 1,987 of whom were deployed from the Monmouthshire shore.[8] On 1 September 1886 the first scheduled freight train passed through the tunnel, followed on 1 December by the inaugural passenger train on the Bristol–Cardiff service. Extensive railway marshalling yards were then constructed at Llanfihangel-Rogiet, 2km (1.6 miles) west of the tunnel-mouth, on the margin of the Caldicot Levels.

Volumes of rail traffic increased significantly during World War I and World War II. Large and specialist contingents of personnel were directed to work at Severn Tunnel Junction from the industrial valleys of south Wales, the Great Western Railway depôt at Swindon, the counties of Devon, Cornwall and Gloucestershire, and city of Bristol.[9] E.T. McDermot reports that the number of trains passing through Severn Tunnel Junction increased from 18,009 in 1913 to 24,027 in 1917.[10] 'Admiralty' coal trains from the eastern valleys in the South Wales Coalfield accounted for much of this traffic. These trains carried high energy and smokeless steam coal as bunker fuel for the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy fleets in ports on the south coast of England. Two 'hump marshalling yards' were added in the 1930s to bolster the traffic management capabilities of Severn Tunnel Junction with its 67km (42 miles) of sidings. These new facilities permitted the sorting of coal wagons and other freight by gravity and tiered sets of track-points into heavy trains for onward passage through the tunnel.

At the outbreak of World War II in 1939, 1,050 men were deployed at the engine maintenance sheds, marshalling yards and track maintenance facilities.[11] In the early months of the war, and to compensate for destructive enemy air attacks on coastal shipping in the North Sea, more coal trains were despatched to meet the ever-growing energy needs of London's public utilities.[12] Wartime demands led to the duplication of the existing rail track between Severn Tunnel Junction and Newport, and the construction of additional loops in Pilning at the Gloucestershire end of the tunnel. Immediately after the war between 75 and 100 steam locomotives were deployed from Severn Tunnel Junction, together with a large team of 'banking engines' used to pilot heavy freight trains through the tunnel.[13] Associated engine repair and maintenance workshops employed approximately 350 men, and an equivalent staff was engaged in traffic management and despatch. However, this labour force contracted in the 1960s: the repair and maintenance section was closed in June 1966 and the marshalling yards were decommissioned in October 1987.[14]

These industrial changes transformed the economies and population profiles of the three agricultural parishes.[15] Table 1 summarises the dimensions of local population change following

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8 Walker, T.A., *The Severn Tunnel. Its construction and difficulties* (London, 1891), 144. For workforce totals at the on-site brickworks, see Brown, P.S. and Brown, D. N., 'Operative brickmakers in Victorian brickyards', *The Local Historian*, 38 (2008), 23–34.

9 Gant, R.L., 'All change in the railway communities of south east Gwent', *Gwent Local History*, 77 (1994), 30–6.

10 MacDermot, E.T., *History of the Great Western Railway Vol. 2, 1863–1921* (London, 1964), 190.

11 Interview, in June 1965, with the GWR clerical officer at Severn Tunnel Junction responsible, in 1939, for distributing 'cheese cards' (authorising an additional weekly cheese ration) to 1,005 shift-working railway staff who took meal-breaks away from permanent catering facilities. The 45 centrally-located administrative staff were ineligible for this ration supplement.

12 Bell, R., *History of the British railways during the war 1939–1945* (London, 1946), 138.

13 No stated author, 'Freight train working through the Severn Tunnel', *Railway Magazine*, 74 (1934), 460.

14 Winter, W.C., 'Severn Tunnel Junction marshalling yards 1886 -12th October 1987', *Gwent Local History*, 65 (1988), 13–16.

15 The Editor, 'Spotlight on Chepstow R.D.C.', *Rural District Review*, 25 (1969), 150–4 and Strong, P., *A large and Growing District*, 49–53.

	Caldicot					Portskewett					Rogiet (incl. Ifton and Llanfihangel Rogiet)				
	Male	**Female**	**Total**	**change %**	**Males/ 100 females**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**change %**	**Males/ 100 females**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**change %**	**Males/ 100 females**
1841	328	297	625	–	110	106	91	197	–	116	64	52	116	–	123
1851	338	323	661	5.8	105	100	87	187	–5.1	115	81	55	136	17.2	147
1861	287	292	579	–12.4	98	87	88	175	–6.4	99	47	45	92	–32.4	104
1871	529	433	962	66.1	122	130	114	244	39.4	114	47	44	91	–1.1	107
1881	746	655	1401	45.6	114	291	195	486	99.2	149	65	57	122	34.1	114
1891	629	664	1293	–7.7	95	619	571	1190	144.9	108	117	91	208	70.5	129
1901	619	577	1196	–7.5	107	423	445	868	–27.1	95	122	106	228	9.6	115
1911	784	729	1513	26.5	108	474	484	958	10.4	98	110	101	211	–7.5	109
1921	936	834	1770	17.0	112	562	546	1108	15.7	103	117	102	219	3.8	115
1931	805	794	1599	–9.7	101	549	523	1072	–3.2	105	142	156	298	36.1	91
1951	874	896	1770	10.7	98	602	626	1228	14.6	96	622	575	1197	301.7	108
1961	1673	1678	3351	89.3	100	639	656	1295	5.5	97	603	591	1194	–0.3	102

Source: Population Censuses of England and Wales, 1841–1961.

Table 1. Population characteristics 1841–1961.

tunnel construction and the wartime expansion of the marshalling yards. It shows that males greatly outnumbered females in Portskewett during the era of tunnel construction and, likewise, in Caldicot and Rogiet in the decades following World War I. However, gender balance was restored post-1951 as the local dominance of the railway industry declined.

Information sources

Comparative study and measurement of social changes in the three villages during the period 1850–1965 demands the careful selection and painstaking evaluation of source materials.[16] This endeavour recognises that '…primary data sources are not created to satisfy the curiosity of future historians'.[17] It also acknowledges that national, and not local considerations, have guided the classification and presentation of statistical information in key source materials. This study responds to that challenge by weaving evidence from point-related census enumeration profiles (1841–1901),[18] electoral registers (1915, 1939, 1965) and property rate books (1925) with more continuous streams of information from church and civil registrations of vital events,[19] place- and time-specific administrative records, including school admissions registers and log books, and assorted cartographic materials.[20] In addition, the oral testimonies of long-standing and elderly residents[21] and the author's household survey completed in 1965[22] provided evidence, at first-hand, of the processes of community development that cannot be detected from these primary sources.

The emphasis this study places on church and civil registration records demands further explanation with regard to availability and numbers of records. For the period 1850–1965, parish incumbents granted access to marriage and baptism registers secured in church safes. Likewise, but subject to a stringent protocol for data abstraction, in June 1965 the District Registrar authorized (supervised) access to registers of civil marriages and births retained in his vaults. The Civil Registration Act 1836 had ensured an equivalent content in civil and church marriage registers.[23] Since 1837, numbered marriage records have specified the full name and occupation of the bride and bridegroom (and, likewise, those of their respective fathers), age at marriage, and parish of usual abode. For the period 1861–1965, a total of 2,214 marriage records (28 per cent of which were civil

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[16] Baker, A.R.H., Hamshere, J.D. and Langton, J., *Geographical interpretations of historical sources* (Newton Abbot, 1970), Chapter 1; Blaikie, N., *Designing social research* (Cambridge, 2010), 21–5.

[17] Drake, M. and Finnegan, R. (eds), *Sources and methods for family and community historians: a handbook* (Cambridge, 1994), 18.

[18] Mills, D. and Schürer, K. (eds), *Local communities in the late Victorian census enumerators' books* (Oxford, 1996); Higgs, E., *Making sense of the census. The manuscript returns for England and Wales 1801–1901* (London, 2005).

[19] For a sample page-layout for marriage registration, see Drake, M., *An Introduction to parish register demography* (Milton Keynes, 1982), 59 and, for baptism registration, Drake, M. and Finnegan, R. (eds), *Sources and methods for family and community historians: a handbook*, 73.

[20] Oliver, R., *Ordnance Survey maps. A concise guide for historians* (London, 1993) and Beech, C. and Mitchell, R., *Maps for family and local history* (London, 2004).

[21] Thompson, P., *The voice of the past* (Oxford, 1978); Gant, R.L., 'Old people, recollections and fieldwork practice', *Scottish Association of Geography Teachers Journal*, 20 (1991), 40–5; Dex, S., *Life and work history analyses: qualitative and quantitative developments* (London, 1991).

[22] During the summer in 1965, the author interviewed a stratified random sample of 20 per cent of the households in Caldicot (sample size = 342 households), Rogiet (75) and Portskewett (73, including 26 from Sudbrook).

[23] See Drake, M. and Finnegan, R. (eds), *Sources and methods for family and community historians: a handbook*, Fig. 5.1, for a tabulated comparison of the variables recorded in civil registers of births and marriages.

records) were analysed. It is significant, however, that civil marriages accounted for an increasing proportion of all marriages, as follows: 1866–1885 (10 per cent civil marriages); 1886–1905 (21 per cent); 1906–1925 (18 per cent); 1926–1945 (28 per cent); and 1946–1965 (41 per cent).

Church baptism registers and civil registers of birth add an important dimension to community study by revealing date-related information on the address and occupation of the infant's father. However, declining totals and proportions of children baptised can be attributed to parental indifference at a time of falling church attendance and the growth of non-conformity.[24] In contrast, coverage of civil registrations of birth for the three parishes had become more comprehensive yielding a total of 5,539 events. There were periods, however, when five-yearly totals of baptisms exceeded those of civil registrations. Explanations for those situations in Caldicot 1861–1875, 1886–1895, 1896–1920 and 1956–1960 include: the practice of newly-inducted priests baptising at one ceremony several siblings from the same family; the diligence of an incumbent in the 1860s who had identified several families (with unbaptised children) migrating to employment at Caldicot Wireworks; the arrival at Caldicot Pill in the 1880s of several large families involved in the construction of the Severn Tunnel; and, in subsequent periods, the sustained build-up of the railway workforce in the expanding village.

EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF THE RAILWAY COMMUNITY

Reflections on community study

Community studies in rural Britain have a long and chequered history.[25] Though popular and informative, this genre of sociological writing has been criticised for its narrative style, subjectivity and choice of geographically-remote communities.[26] Consequently, many social scientists still maintain that 'community' remains an ill-defined and confusing concept.[27] Notwithstanding these censures, the community studies approach has been widely used in local historical studies. Day, for instance, argues that: 'Precisely because it is so elastic and various in its meanings, the idea of community continues to grip people's imaginations, and even grow in significance as it takes on new meanings.'[28] In parallel, other investigators have welcomed the progress made by social scientists in determining the formative roles played by physical proximity; imaginations of place-based sentiment and symbolism; practices of 'othering'; and recognition of 'difference' in the social construction of place and identity.[29]

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[24] The Births and Deaths Registration Act 1874 made registration of birth compulsory with the onus for registration placed on parents or the occupier of the house wherein the birth had occurred. This Act strengthened the registration process which from 1837 had depended on the Registrar collecting such information. Drake, M. and Finnegan, R. (eds), *Sources and methods for family and community historians: a handbook*, 72–3.

[25] Twenty-one approaches taken to community study are examined in Day, G., *Community and everyday life* (Abingdon, 2006), 26–7. Comparable coverage is given in Bell, C. and Newby, H., *The sociology of community* (London, 1974), xlvi – li.

[26] Criticisms of the community study method are presented in Stacey, M., 'The myth of community studies', *British Journal of Sociology*, 20 (1969), 134–47; Bell, C. and Newby, H., *Community studies* (London, 1971), 13, 16–17 and Macfarlane, A., *Reconstructing historical communities* (Cambridge, 1977), 14–16.

[27] Hillery, G.A., 'Definitions of community: areas of agreement', *Rural Sociology*, 20 (1955), 111–23 and König, R., (Translated by E. Fitzgerald), *The community* (London, 1968), 25–6.

[28] Day, G., *Community and everyday life*, 1.

[29] Rose, G., 'Place and identity: a sense of place' in Massey, D. and Jess, P., *A Place in the World?* (Oxford, 1995), 87–106.

From the perspective of the local historian, this study examines and defines changes in the social fabric of the three Monmouthshire villages within the framework of community study.[30] It adopts Day's working definition of community as: 'a place, or setting, displaying certain social characteristics that can be identified and described, but community is also something that is felt, and which has an emotional or affective impact. Often the two aspects are brought together…'[31] For operational reasons, and the quality of available evidence, this account focuses on the measurable properties of community and over-lapping characteristics of links between workplace and home; residential persistence; kinship networks and bonds; marriage patterns; defined common interests; and residential segregation to re-construct the sense of (placed) belonging, identity and social bonding in railway communities.[32]

Vital registration statistics: trends and proportions

Developments in the railway industry transformed the agricultural villages of Caldicot and Rogiet and created Sudbrook, a new village, in the parish of Portskewett. Marriage registers and civil registrations of birth yield important information on numerical trends and aspects of change in these village communities. During the period 1861–1965, railway employees accounted for 24 per cent of all marriages and 33 per cent of registered births. Figure 1 demonstrates a persistent, overall, increase in the quinquennial totals for marriages from 20 (1861–1865) to 234 (1961–1965). In each parish, however, the trend in railwaymen's marriages reflected local circumstances. At Caldicot, during both world wars, speculative builders and Chepstow Rural District Council had jointly met the pressing housing demands of young railwaymen (with secure employment prospects) who had been deployed to Severn Tunnel Junction. In Portskewett, following a surge in marriages during the construction of the Severn Tunnel and its immediate aftermath, the proportion of railwaymen's marriages remained fairly steady, sustained by employment at the Severn Tunnel Pumping Station, permanent way operations and activities in the marshalling yards at Severn Tunnel Junction. The small number of marriages celebrated in Rogiet before 1900 exaggerates the relatively high proportions recorded for railwaymen. However, the formation of the Severn Tunnel Garden Village Society in 1924 and postwar provision of council housing were geared to housing demands from an increased workforce. Meanwhile, the opening in 1938 of the GWR railway hostel for single workers, many of whom subsequently married local brides, contributed significantly to the growing proportion of railwaymen's marriages .

Figure 2, based on the numbers and proportions of births registered by railwaymen, mirrors the trends set for marriages. The quinquennial totals of registered births increased from 140 (1861–1865) to a spike of 436 (1881–1885); these totals exceeded 300 until 1911–1915, from whence they declined to around 250 until 1926–1930 before reducing further to a plateau of approximately 220 events. In common with marriages, the numerical registration of births correlates with the inward migration of railway workers and phased provision of local housing. At Caldicot, during World War I and World War II, railwaymen registered in excess of 50 per cent of the local births. In Rogiet, the dominance of the railway industry was even more pronounced: between 1921–1925 and

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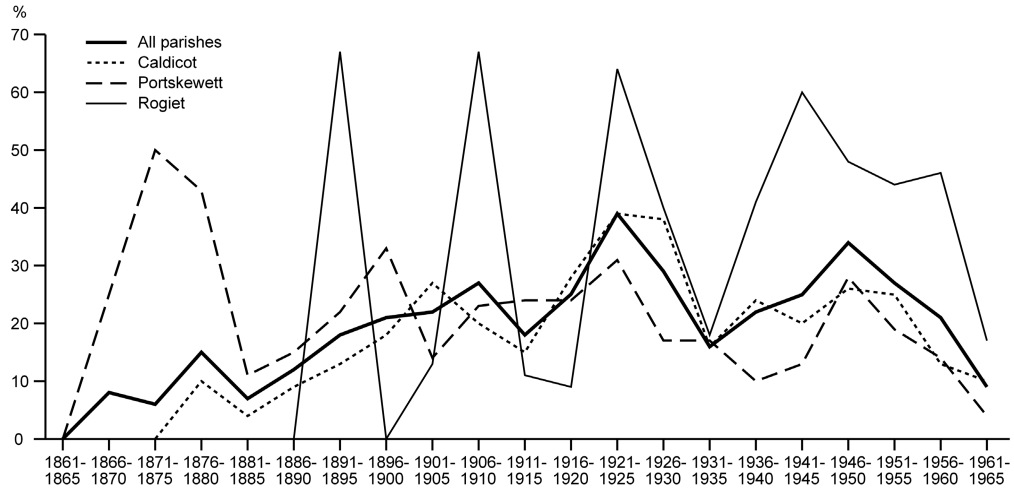
30 Finnegan, R., 'Community: what it is and how we can investigate it?' in Pryce, W.T.R., *From family history to community history* (Cambridge, 1994), 209–14; Mills, D., 'Defining community: a critical review of 'community' in family and community history', *Family and Community History*, 7 (2004), 5–12.

31 Day, G., *Community and everyday life*, 31.

32 Dennis, R. and Daniels, S., 'Community and the social geography of Victorian cities', in Drake, M. (ed), *Time, family and community: perspectives on family and community history* (Oxford, 1994), 210–24.



Total Marriages

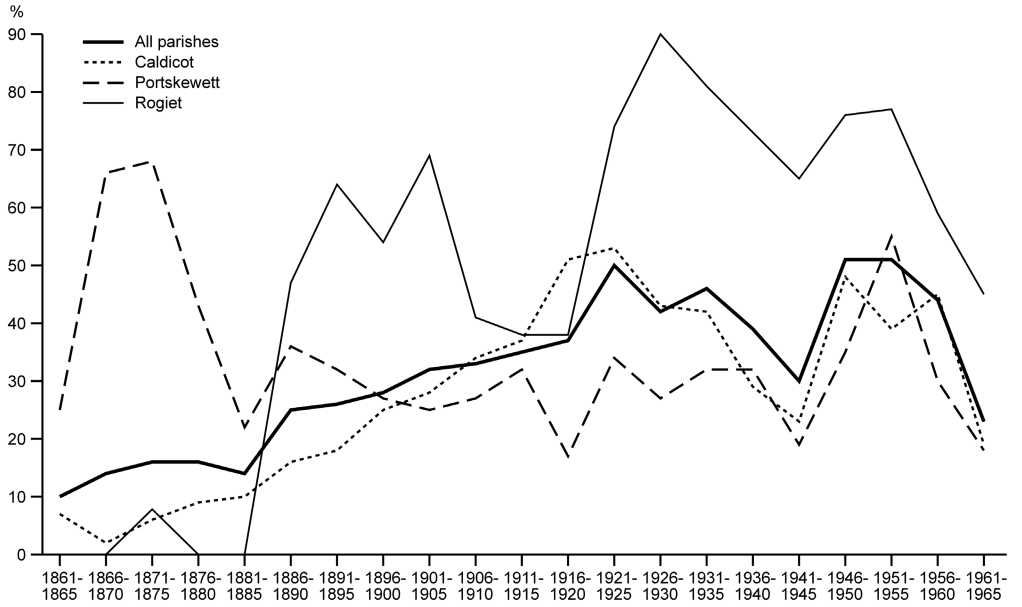
All parishes	20	37	36	33	99	51	78	62	81	96	68	101	109	99	97	151	194	197	184	187	234
Caldicot	10	25	30	21	48	23	48	38	51	49	34	57	59	42	44	63	84	69	84	89	119
Portskewett	5	12	4	7	47	27	27	21	22	35	25	33	36	42	42	59	75	68	59	57	74
Rogiet	5	0	2	5	4	1	3	3	8	12	9	11	14	15	11	29	35	60	41	41	41

Source: Church Marriage Registers and Civil Marriage Registers, Chepstow Registration District, for Caldicot, Portskewett and Rogiet.

Fig. 1: Marriages of railwaymen as a percentage of total marriages 1861–1965.

1955–1960, railwaymen in the parish registered over 65 per cent of the newborn children. Likewise, in Portskewett parish, railwaymen's children accounted for 60 per cent of registrations during the era of Tunnel construction, falling thereafter to around 30 per cent, before peaking again at 50 per cent during World War II. Witnesses recalled that railwaymen's children formed distinctive cohorts in the classes at each village school.

Railwaymen interviewed in 1965 declared that living close to fellow workers had deepened a sense of community. Marriage bonds between railway families had also strengthened feelings of 'belonging' and 'togetherness'. Figure 3 exemplifies trends in the marriage connections of 486 railway bridegrooms in the period 1861–1965: overall, 65 per cent had followed their fathers into the railway industry; 70 per cent had married the daughter of a railway worker; and in 35 per cent of cases the fathers of both the bridegroom and bride were GWR employees. Railway families, as an occupational group, are under-represented in these statistics. During World War I (1914–1919) 12 local grooms serving in the armed forces had married a bride whose father was in railway employment. Furthermore, during World War II (1939–1945), 36 servicemen had railway connections: four were the sons of railwaymen; 20 had married into a family headed by a railwayman and, in 12 cases, both the fathers of the bridegroom and bride were railway workers. It is significant, moreover, that post 1945 the majority of fathers identified as railway employees in the marriage registers had themselves been recruited as single men to work at Severn Tunnel Junction and had married a bride from a local family. Unfortunately, there is insufficient detail

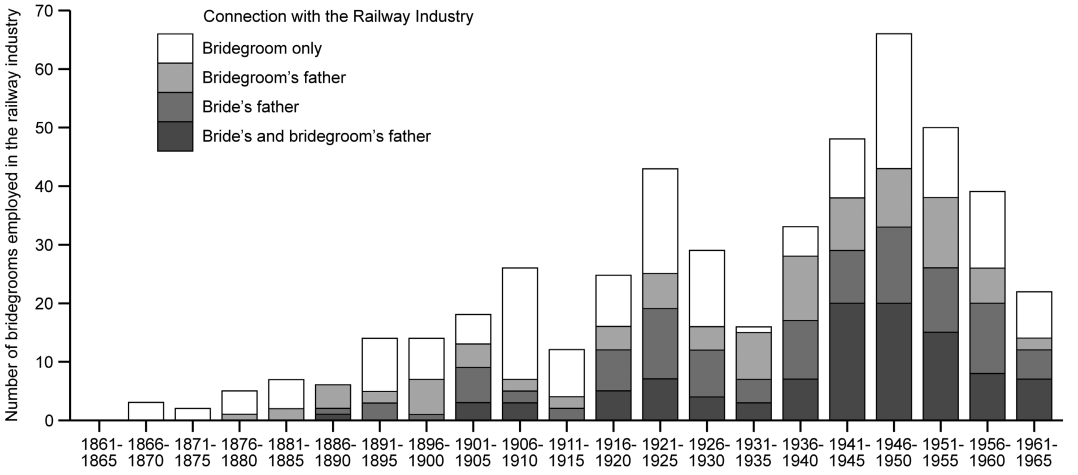


Total registrations of birth

	1861-1865	1866-1870	1871-1875	1876-1880	1881-1885	1886-1890	1891-1895	1896-1900	1901-1905	1906-1910	1911-1915	1916-1920	1921-1925	1926-1930	1931-1935	1936-1940	1941-1945	1946-1950	1951-1955	1956-1960	1961-1965
All parishes	140	190	189	190	436	340	417	308	329	356	285	274	272	258	203	219	283	249	176	207	218
Caldicot	90	126	145	148	297	205	260	178	158	197	164	146	141	122	88	82	133	101	92	132	147
Portskewett	32	35	31	42	139	116	118	106	135	125	97	96	92	105	73	92	90	81	49	43	38
Rogiet	18	29	13	0	0	19	39	34	36	34	24	32	39	31	42	45	60	67	35	32	33

Source: Church Baptism Registers and Civil Registration of Birth.

Fig. 2: Railwaymen's children: registrations of birth as a percentage of all registrations 1861–1965.



Source: Church Marriage Registers for Caldicot, Portskewett and Rogiet; Civil Marriage Registers for Shirenewton and Chepstow Registration Districts.

Fig. 3: Continuity in employment in the railway industry 1861–1965.

on occupational grades in the marriage registers to support a focused investigation into inter-generational social mobility in railway families.[33]

Migration and marriage horizons

Inward-migration of railway staff has corresponded to the staged growth of railway infrastructure. Marriage contact fields,[34] created from the register entries for parish of usual abode, indicate that at the time of marriage 67 per cent of all the railway bridegrooms had resided in the same parish as the bride; 9 per cent originated in neighbouring parishes; 11 per cent had lived elsewhere in Monmouthshire and 13 per cent came from farther afield. Significantly, the proportion of railwaymen from more distant origins had increased from 12 per cent 1886–1905 to 24 per cent 1946–1965. Recruitment from the mining villages and towns in the heart of the South Wales Coalfield and the major coastal centres, Swansea, Cardiff and Newport, contributed a steady stream of railway workers. In addition, smaller numbers of workers had originated in Bristol and counties in the South West, industrial villages in the Forest of Dean and the London region. Labour direction from within the GWR operating region remained important throughout World War II. Thereafter, in each parish, the proportion of locally-resident bridegrooms increased; many had fathers already employed in the railway industry.

Evidence from local marriage registers, however, captures only one stream in the total volume of inward-migration stimulated by railway employment. In Sudbrook, for instance, during the period of tunnel construction and early years of shipbuilding, large numbers of unmarried lodgers were, *force majeure*, accommodated in purpose-built terraced housing. Many moved away from the village without leaving a census record or entry in the church or civil registers. Likewise, in Rogiet where, during the period 1946–1965, the vicar had faithfully entered full details of signatories' addresses in the register, only 17 of the 85 bridegrooms were labelled as residents at the Railway Hostel which had been built to house 'second home locomotive crews' and, more significantly, unmarried operatives. Other residents at this facility who had been drafted to work at, or from, Severn Tunnel Junction are not recorded; they nevertheless contributed to the overall volume of work-induced migration and contributed to a measure of 'turbulence' in the railway workforce.

DIFFERENCES IN RAILWAY COMMUNITIES

Since 1880 each of the three railway villages examined has gradually developed a strong sense of community and distinctive identity. Interviews with residents in 1965 confirmed the strength of these bonds. Meanwhile, outsiders pointed to several characteristics that set these railway villages apart from agricultural settlements in the region. Distinguishing features included: the powerful role of the GWR as an industrial employer and social catalyst; a shared (and mainly) shift-working life-style that fosters mutual dependence; vibrant networks of social and neighbourly interaction; and collective engagement in railway-orientated social activities. Although the three villages share these characteristics, each has followed its own trajectory in becoming a place-based community. Three case studies are now introduced to illustrate, in greater depth, diversity in the core concept of community. Firstly, Caldicot show-cases the spatial segregation of railway households from those in other employment sectors. Secondly, Rogiet exemplifies the role of the Severn Tunnel Garden

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[33] See the cautions presented by Drake, M. and Finnegan, R. (eds), *Sources and methods for family and community historians: a handbook*, 72.

[34] Millard, J., 'A new approach to the study of marriage horizons', in Drake, M.(ed), *Population studies from parish registers* (Milton Keynes, 1982), 142–63.

Village Society in reinforcing a strong sense of work-based identity. Finally, at Subrook, measured changes in the labour market are analysed to demonstrate the resilience of a work-based railway community to the wider processes of industrial change in the period 1872–1926.

Caldicot: residential segregation of railway households 1915 and 1939

Social scientists have used family life-course analysis to interpret patterns of residential segregation in housing markets.[35] This method was applied to the growing stock of housing in Caldicot to determine levels of segregation between railway and non-railway households. Two panels of informants were convened to garner evidence: each had three well-informed and long-established members who had been active in railway trade unions and local social organisations. In turn, each panel member studied a photocopy of the electoral registers compiled, respectively, in 1915 and 1939, and marked the addresses of households headed by railwaymen. The results were cross-checked and the few inconsistencies arising from lapses of memory corrected.

Distribution maps of railway households in Caldicot were drawn using this evidence. Figure 4 indicates that in 1915 38 per cent of the village housing stock was occupied by railwaymen who worked either at Severn Tunnel Junction or the Tunnel Pumping Station at Sudbrook. This proportion had increased to 43 per cent of a larger housing stock in 1939. In 1915 almost 70 per cent of railway households were clustered in the West End. Here they occupied 90 per cent of the housing built during the period 1895–1910. The remainder were scattered throughout the sprawling village, with a small group near the Severn shore at Caldicot Pill.[36] Panel members claimed that, relative to other workers, railwaymen benefited from superior wage rates and higher status accommodation. Bagwell confirms that view: he reports that at the outbreak of World War I in 1914 a porter was paid weekly 15 shillings, a permanent way worker 20 shillings, guard 40 shillings, and express driver 48 shillings.[37] Table 2**,** based on rateable valuation as a surrogate measure of housing quality, confirms that in 1925 railway employees were over-represented in the higher bands of house valuation. In addition, Table 3 uses the evidence for 1915 on occupation grades (and, by implication, relative wage rates) to spotlight the concentration of locomotive drivers and express guards in the West End; it also draws attention to the disproportionate spread of lower-paid operatives elsewhere in the village.

The core distribution of railway households identified in1915 re-appears in the residential pattern recreated for 1939. In the inter-war years, better-paid railwaymen (many of whom married young) had purchased from speculative builders 74 per cent of the semi-detached houses built along Chepstow Road, at Ferney Cross and in the West End. Unfortunately, comprehensive data are not available on occupational grades for railway employees in 1939. Field survey in 1965, however, confirmed that locomotive drivers and goods guards were still strongly represented amongst railway employees in the West End, with lesser numbers in new properties along the Chepstow Road and at Ferney Cross.

Grounded in fieldwork, this exercise in oral history has awakened fresh insights into patterns of social segregation and the grade-status characteristics of the railway workforce. It invites consideration of the importance of geographical scale in determining the physical bounds of community. Equally as important, it highlights the role of household persistence in providing the foundations for, and strengthening the bonds of, a place-based railway community underpinned by resilient networks of family and neighbourly relations.

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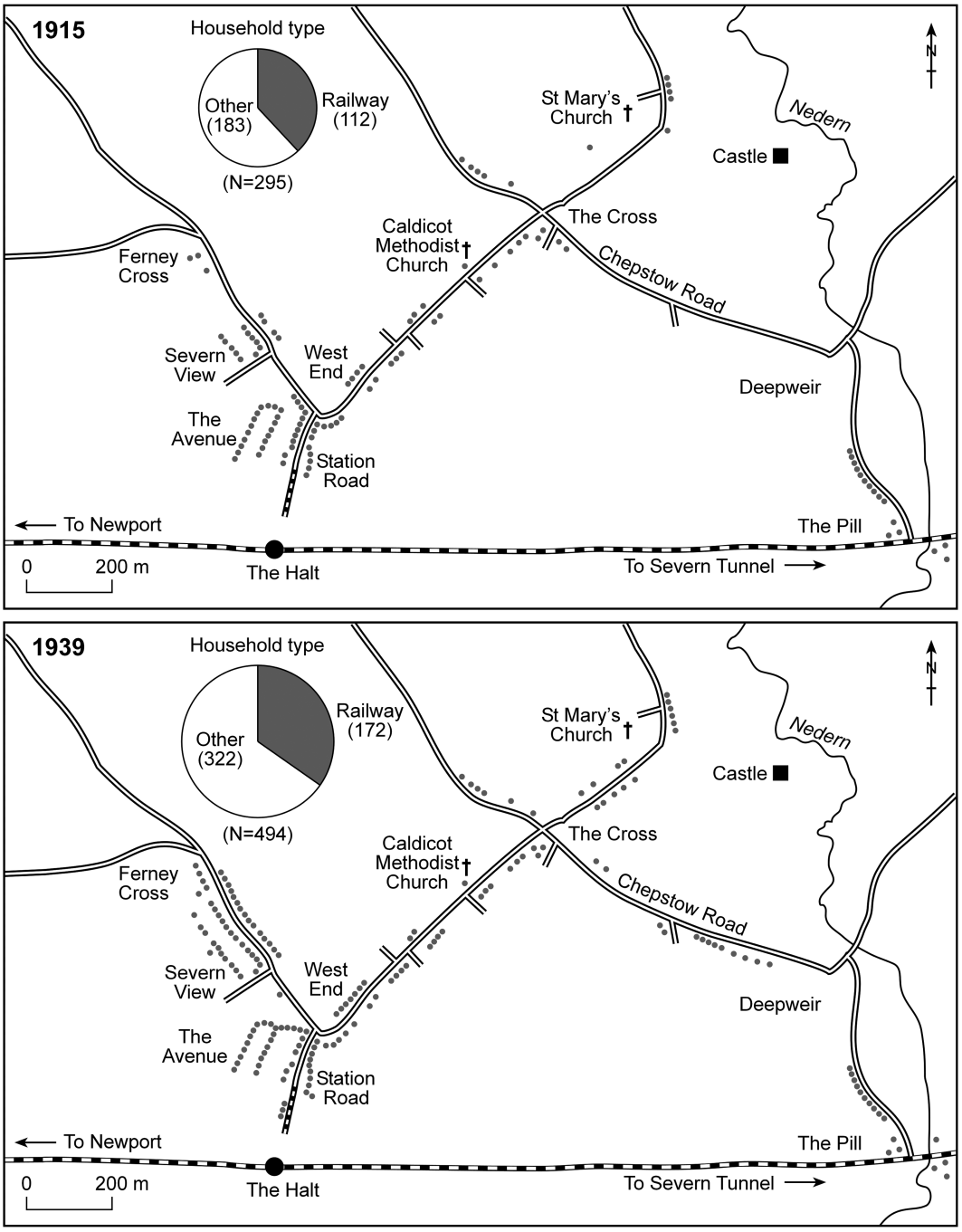
35 Knox, P. and Pinch, S., *Urban social geography* (Harlow, 2010), 252–70.
36 Gant, R.L., 'Caldicot 1840–1978: a study in village development', *Gwent Local History*, 44 (1978), 7–13.
37 Bagwell, P.S., *The history of the National Union of Railwaymen* (London, 1963), 349.



Source: Retrospective interviews focused on Electoral Registers 1915 and 1939.

Fig. 4: Caldicot: railwaymen's households 1915 and 1939.

Household economy	Rateable valuation 1925			Total
	<£5	£5–£9	>£9	
Railway employee	4	66	56	126
Other employment	82	40	19	141
Overall	**86**	**106**	**75**	**267**

[Chi-square = 81.8; d.f. 2; p <0.001]

Source: Rateable valuation registers, Chepstow Rating District, 1925.

Table 2. Caldicot: gross rateable valuation of housing stock 1925

Grade	Residential area in village		
	West End	Elsewhere	Total
Engine driver	26	3	29
Permanentway staff	4	12	16
Goods guard	9	6	15
Pumping Station	7	7	14
Traffic organisation:			
manual	7	2	9
supervisory	3	1	4
Signalman	9	3	12
Engineer/fitter	7	2	9
Other capacities	3	1	4
Overall	**75**	**37**	**112**

[Chi-square = 4.23; d.f. 1; p <0.05]. Test conducted for two categories: railway guards/locomotive drivers; and other railway grades.

Table 3. Caldicot 1915:occupation grades and addresses of railway staff.

Rogiet: community anchored in the Severn Tunnel Garden Village Society

Gilroy argues that: 'We live in a world where identity matters. It matters both as a concept theoretically and as a contested fact of contemporary political life'.[38] Rogiet clearly exemplifies these requirements: within the broader structures of railway employment and related phases in housing provision, there is convincing evidence that human agency had worked to build and strengthen a sense of shared (place-based) identity and social cohesion.[39]

[38] Gilroy, P., 'Diaspora and the detours of identity', in Woodward, K. (ed), *Identity and difference* (London, 2003), 301.

[39] Woodward, K., *Social sciences*: t*he big issues* (London, 2003), 20–2.

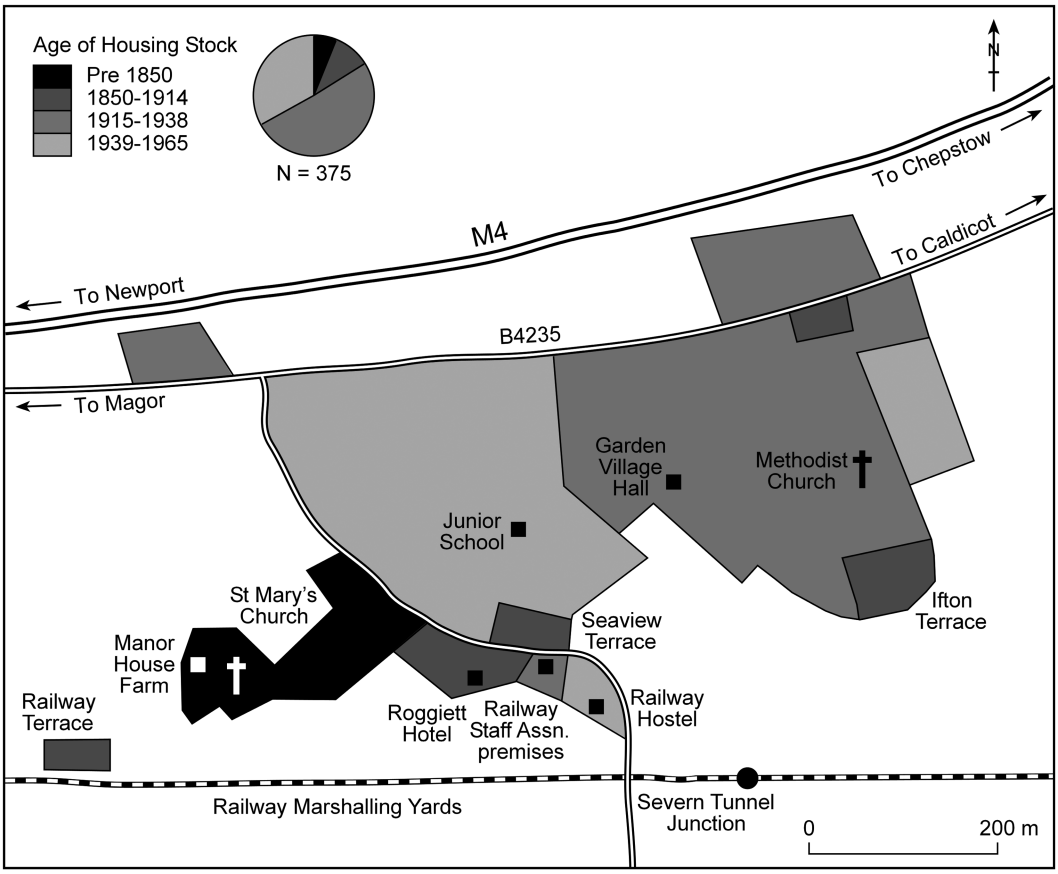


Fig. 5: Rogiet: phases in growth.

In the final stage of tunnel construction '…the western end of the Tunnel was lengthened by 276 yards to provide material for making sidings at the new station near Rogiet, afterwards designated as Severn Tunnel Junction'.[40] The new station acted as a catalyst for village growth. Three short, redbrick, slate-roofed terraces – Ifton Terrace, Railway Terrace and Seaview Terrace – were soon added. Lord Tredegar then financed the construction of the Roggiett Hotel close to the cattle market and the village school was sited near St. Mary's church (Figure 5). In 1891 the post office was opened in the terrace adjoining the Roggiett Hotel. These early stages in village development are reflected in an increased population from 122 in 1881 to 228 in 1901.

There was restricted growth, subsequently, until the inter-war period when the village housing stock increased threefold to a total in 1939 of 275 units. In unison, local speculative builders and Chepstow Rural District Council provided almost half this total. The balance was commissioned in four stages by the Severn Tunnel Garden Village Society constituted in 1924. Membership was restricted to railwaymen and an elected committee of nine was appointed to administer the end-stock

[40] MacDermot, E.T. (Revised by C.R. Clinker), *History of the Great Western Railway Vol. II, 1863–1921*, 190.

of 94 semi-detached houses. The final planned phase in development in 1937 included a community hall. The population of Rogiet had increased from 219 in 1921 to 298 in 1931.

Although the newly-built railway hostel had accommodated a steady throughput of unmarried railwaymen and 'double homers' during World War II, the pressure on local housing soon became acute. In 1943 the British Transport Commission built 50 temporary, concrete, bungalows adjoining the Garden Village. In 1955, Chepstow Rural District Council replaced these, on-site, with permanent housing and, subsequently, built a further 50 semi-detached houses, the majority of which were first tenanted by railwaymen. Between the armistice in 1945 and 1965, a small housing estate on the site of the derelict cattle market and three small clusters of senior citizens' bungalows were added to the plan. These housing increments are reflected in peaks of marriages and registered births (See Figures 1 and 2). Thereafter, the population had increased to 1,197 in 1951; and 1,347 in 1971.

The 1965 survey identified a distinctive and demographically-ageing population in Rogiet. Only 25 per cent of the 375 households (most of whom lived in local authority houses) had children of school-age or younger; 45 per cent of houses accommodated only two persons, and a further 8 per cent one person. Advanced age structure and related issues of under-occupancy in the housing stock can be explained by the 'persistence' of railway employees who had benefited from a structured career and secure housing tenure. In 1965, one quarter of households had occupied their homes for at least thirty years. The special protection afforded by the Severn Tunnel Garden Village Society engendered stability and a sense of cohesion, notwithstanding under-occupation of the housing stock at a time of acute demand from second-generation railway families. In 1965, official records confirmed that railway pensioners occupied 26 of these properties, and the widows of railwaymen, a further 22.[41]

Rogiet had become a classic railway village. The 1965 survey confirmed that 40 per cent of the household heads had retired from railway service; whilst 80 per cent of the balance still worked for British Rail. Decades of co-existence and (mainly) 'round the clock' shift-based employment had fostered a resilient sense of community. These bonds were strongly reinforced by kinship. One quarter of household heads interviewed in1965 had married siblings living elsewhere in the village. In addition, many reported the existence of married offspring living in the nearby villages of Caldicot, Portskewett and Undy. Community life was further rivetted onto this scene by active participation in formally-organised social activities. These included a full (daytime) social programme sponsored by the retired section of the Railway Staff Association; membership of the local allotment garden association; church- and chapel-based organisations appealing mainly to women and family activities scheduled in the Community Hall.

Sudbrook: household 'persistence' and the re-structured village economy

Physical isolation and a common workplace have engendered a strong sense of community in Sudbrook, a planned Victorian village situated on the Severn shore, 1.0km (0.6 miles) from the parish settlement of Portskewett. Construction work on the Severn Tunnel spanned the period 1872–1886. T.A. Walker, the Severn Tunnel engineer, built the coastal village comprising 130 houses and community buildings to accommodate specialist tunnel miners, surface tradesmen and unskilled labourers. From the perspective of community formation, it is important to note that some houses had been purposefully designed to accommodate groups of unmarried and unaccompanied tunnel workers. As early as December 1880, T.A.Walker records that: 'On the first plot of leased land six large houses had been built, which were each capable of holding two married couples and about

[41] Interview with the Secretary of The Garden Village Society, June 1965.

twelve lodgers. Six smaller houses to accommodate a married couple and six or eight lodgers had been erected, as well as small houses for a married couple and two or three lodgers or children...'[42] At censustide in 1881, only the cottages in Camp Road and Old Row were inhabited.[43] The remaining terraces were occupied soon afterwards. At the peak of tunnel construction, later in 1881, a post office was opened next to the village stores and 'The Severn Tunnel Works' became, officially, the village of Sudbrook. The primary school which opened in the same year further reinforced community identity and social cohesion. Then, in 1882, a large mission hall and fully-staffed hospital opened. Finally, in 1895, T.A.Walker's widow opened in the redundant hospital an orphanage for the children of labouring men employed on public works.[44]

Evidence abstracted from church records, civil registrations of marriage and birth and the village school admission registers confirms the inward migration of tunnel workers from nearby parishes, the mining districts in south Wales, Devon, Cornwall and other parts of England.[45] The Tunnel was completed in 1886 and the workforce dispersed. The prospect of unemployment faced many Sudbrook families and their unmarried lodgers. Fortunately, the GWR diverted some tunnel builders to permanent way gangs, tunnel maintenance duties and the Tunnel Pumping Station; in parallel, blacksmiths, boiler-smiths and fitters transferred to the newly-commissioned Sudbrook Shipyard built close to the Tunnel Pumping Station. Here, as G.E. Farr reports, slip-ways extended into the narrow deepwater channel and derelict workshops on the foreshore were adapted for marine engineering. Sudbrook Shipyard specialised in building small iron vessels and barges, and a total of nineteen iron-hulled screw steamers had been launched by the time of T.A.Walker's death in 1891.[46]

Information drawn from the 1891 census underscores the importance of the shipyard in the local labour market: 217 (57 per cent) men from the village worked in various capacities in shipbuilding; a further 63 (17 per cent) were employed in the railway industry (Table 4). This census identifies 23 former pupils (22 boys and 1 girl) from the village school who had remained in employment at Sudbrook The majority (16) of boys were employed in Sudbrook shipyard: five of these served apprenticeships as pattern maker, shipwright, ships-platelayer, brass moulder and shipbuilder, respectively. A further three worked in the railway industry, two as grocers' assistants and one as a rural carrier; the young girl was employed in domestic service.

Notwithstanding the challenge of maintaining a full order book for ship construction and nautical engineering, the 1901 census highlights 59 (28 per cent) local men working at the shipyard and 47 (23 per cent) railway employees.[47] At this census point house repopulation captures features of the village community and its social transformation.[48] It also images: the level of household persistence since the previous census in 1891; variations in household size; the residential clustering of households from key employment sectors; the numerical significance of female heads

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42 Walker, T.A., *The Severn Tunnel: its construction and difficulties*, 56.

43 Brooke, D., *The railway navvy: that despicable race of men* (Newton Abbot, 1983), 45.

44 Gant, R.L., 'Portskewett 1881: a community profile', *Gwent Local History*, 55 (1983), 9–16.

45 Statistical analysis is presented in: Gant, R.L., 'School records, family migration and community history: insights from Sudbrook and the construction of the Severn Tunnel', *Family and Community History*, 11 (2008), 27–44.

46 Farr, G.E., *Chepstow ships* (Chepstow, 1954), 24.

47 Gant, R.L., 'Continuity and change in Portskewett: an interpretation of the 1901 census returns', *Gwent Local History*, 101 (2006), 41–54.

48 The technique of house repopulation is explained by Higgs, E., *Making sense of the census revisited*, 141–2.

Category of employment	Male head and son(s)			Lodger			Total		
	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901
Tunnel construction	26	0	0	50	0	0	76	0	0
Tunnel Pumping Station	0	41	30	8	0	0	8	41	30
Railway operations/ maintenance	18	14	16	0	8	1	18	22	17
Sudbrook shipyard	0	151	46	0	66	13	0	217	59
Other occupations	48	85	93	31	15	9	79	100	102
Total economically-active males	92	291	185	89	89	23	181	380	208
Railway employment as % of total	47.8	18.9	24.9	65.2	9.0	4.3	56.4	16.6	22.6
Shipyard employment as % of total	0.0	51.9	24.9	0.0	74.2	56.5	0.0	57.1	28.4

Source: Census enumerators' books 1881–1901.

Table 4. Census-derived employment totals in Sudbrook 1891–1901.

of household and the proportion of vacant properties in the housing stock at a time of economic uncertainty (Fig. 6). Furthermore, school admission registers provide an indicative measure of household persistence, a critical measure of community stability and, importantly, out-migration from the village. In the period 1881–1895, for example, 173 families registered at least one child at the village school; however, only 28 of these young people can be identified from the 1891 census enumeration.[49] Unfortunately, this analysis tells only part of the migration story: nothing is known from the records about the geographical movements of families without co-residing children and the cohorts of unmarried men who had lodged locally for short periods of time whilst working on tunnel construction or, subsequently, at Sudbrook shipyard.

Irrespective of turnover in the local population, the shipyard and railway remained the twin economic pillars of community support. Retrospective interviews with three retired railwaymen, based on the electoral register for 1915, confirm that the 142 gainfully employed men aged over 21 years included 46 (32 per cent) shipyard workers and 38 (27 per cent) railwaymen working at the Tunnel Pumping Station or at Severn Tunnel Junction.[50] The remainder were employed in local services, trades and agriculture. Social bonds reinforced workplace associations and continuities. In the period 1889–1926, for example, marriage registers indicate that 16 men had followed their fathers in shipbuilding trades; furthermore, 20 bridegrooms had been recruited directly to the shipyard. In the same period, 56 marriages are recorded for more youthful railwaymen. From a perspective of secure employment and positioning in local housing markets, it is relevant to note that the average age at first marriage for railwaymen was 24 years; this contrasts with 27 years for shipyard workers and 28 years for bridegrooms engaged in agriculture, skilled trades and the local

[49] Gant, R.L., 'School records, family migration and community history', Table III.
[50] Gant, R.L., 'Sudbrook: a planned Victorian village', *The Village*, 27 (1972), 64–7.

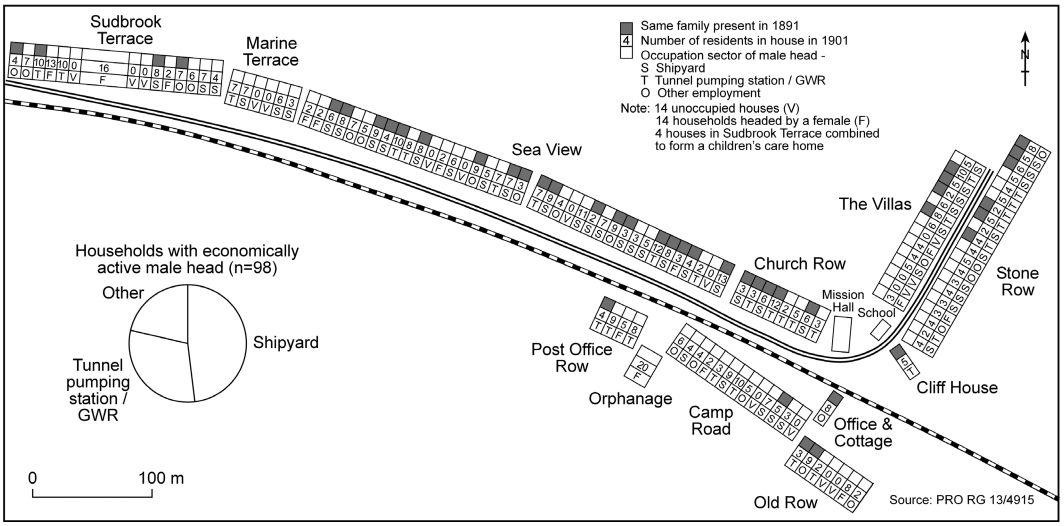

Fig. 6: Sudbrook: house repopulation 1901.

professions. Registration entries confirm that the fathers of 15 railway bridegrooms, 12 brides, and in six cases the fathers of both marriage partners had worked for the Great Western Railway.[51]

CONCLUSION

From the standpoint of the local historian, this micro-level study of the character of three railway villages in south east Monmouthshire has focused on the related themes of community, workplace and change. It engages with the contested literature on community studies and illuminates multiple dimensions of the community concept. Even more importantly, within the framework of a railway-dominated economy, the study triangulates evidence from the written historical record, in-depth personal interviews and findings from a representative household survey to interpret dimensions of change and diversity in the social profiles of Caldicot, Rogiet and Sudbrook. Even more importantly, it confirms that although these villages had shared common workplace characteristics, each had developed into a place-based community with its own identity and physical presence.

[51] In the church marriage registers, the incumbents at St Mary's Church, Portskewett, invariably differentiated between the villages of Sudbrook and Portskewett. The District Registrar, however, correctly entered Portskewett as the parish of registration.

REVIEWS

Knight, Jeremy, *South Wales from the Romans to the Normans: Christianity, Literacy & Lordship*; 191 pp.; 66 black and white figures; 29 colour plates; published (2013) by Amberley (Stroud); ISBN 978-1-4445-60447-3; £19.99.

The Early Medieval period – what we once more romantically referred to as the 'Dark Ages' – need not be as 'dark' in south-east Wales as in other areas due to the wealth of documentary and epigraphic evidence available to expand our knowledge of this crucial period. The problem for the general reader has always been the lack of a readily comprehensible and user-friendly guide through the briars and pitfalls of sources such as the early charters in the *Book of Llandaff* or the inscribed stones. The labyrinthine structure of Wendy Davies's *The Llandaff Charters* has, for instance, made it almost impossible for the local researcher to establish the date and reliability (or otherwise) of these potentially vital sources. Jeremy Knight's new book *South Wales from the Romans to the Normans, Christianity, Literacy & Lordship* at last provides an eminently readable guide to the period and its sources for the general reader.

The book sets out to trace the emergence of literate and Christian Wales from the debris of the late Roman provinces. It does this by focusing on south-east Wales to outline the process from late Roman times through to the Norman transformations of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The influence of the Church during this period is crucial and is dealt with in great depth and with erudition. In all these aims, the book succeeds admirably.

The first four chapters ('A Province Fertile in Tyrants', 'From Venta to Guenta: The Sub-Roman South-East', 'Villas, Estates and Churches' and 'Magnates as Patrons: High-Status Secular and Ecclesiastical Sites') deal mainly with the evidence for the transition from Roman rule to the emergence of the early Welsh kingdoms of Morgannwg, Glywysing and Gwent. The first chapter outlines the late Roman background and the effect on Britain of the internal struggles for imperial power ('410 and All That') including the first evidence for Christianity in south-east Wales. The author then turns to the archaeological evidence – metalwork, post-Roman cemeteries, late Roman villas and estates are all discussed in some detail. There is also a timely re-examination of the development of post-Roman Caerwent and the 'royal' sites like Dinas Powys and Ynys Bwlc (Llangorse crannog), followed by a synthesis of the material culture of the fifth to ninth centuries and the emergence of a distinctly Welsh landscape pattern in terms of *llys* and *cwmwd*.

The next five chapters ('Gwent 700–1100: A Pattern of Churches', 'Saint in a Landscape: In Search of Cadog of Llancarfan', 'Coast: Saints, Sandhills and Seaways', 'Aspects of the Pre-Norman Church' and 'The Lives of the Saints') deal with the rapid spread of Christianity and the influence of the Church on the landscape, politics and cultural life of south-east Wales. Of particular value in chapter four are discussions on eighth to ninth century Gwent (pp. 78–81) and 'Cambro-Norse Caerwent 850–1066' (pp. 81–3). The next chapter ('Saint in a Landscape: In Search of Cadog of Llancarfan') is more local in its interest, focusing entirely on one site in the Vale of Glamorgan. However, the next chapter has wider scope (from Pembrokeshire to Gwent) and is a useful update on the concept of 'Saints and Seaways' first put forward by E. G. Bowen in the 1970s.

Chapter 8 ('Aspects of the Pre-Norman Church') sets out to answer basic questions about the early Celtic saints and their monasteries. When did the saints live? What were their relationships with contemporary rulers and the wider Church? How were their monasteries organised and what did they look like? Were the monasteries responsible for the pastoral care of the rural population? There follows a useful discussion of the Welsh evidence for mortuary chapels (*eglwys y bedd*)

dedicated to the early saints and separate from later conventual or parochial churches or chapels and other places of honour set aside for the bodies of the saints within churches. Later sections deal with dedications, pastoral care and the organisation of parishes and the more basic cycles of birth, marriage and death. A discussion of *merthyr* sites follows, making it clear that Welsh *merthyr*, Cornish *merther* and Breton *merzher* refer to the grave of someone reputed to be of special sanctity rather than that of a martyr in the sense of one killed for their faith. On present evidence, the author shows, *merthyr* sites largely date to between the sixth to tenth centuries. Chapter 9 ('The Lives of the Saints') traces the development of hagiography and again offers valuable guidance to the general reader on how to approach these often lurid and fantastical tales. Of particular interest is a section on 'The Hagiographer as Field Archaeologist' that contains an account of the earliest recorded archaeological excavations – in search of relics. 'It was no good omen for the future of British archaeology' notes Knight, 'that the excavators misdated their finds through reliance on unreliable documentary sources'! (p. 129)

The final chapter ('The Anglo-Norman Impact') traces the impact of the coming of the Normans on the Church in south-east Wales and in particular the growth of the Benedictine monasteries, the interaction of the native ecclesiastical establishment with the newcomers and the development of a formal parish structure across the region.

The book is well edited and largely free from typographical errors, though there is some inconsistency in the use of Welsh terms, e.g. *dawnburyd* should read *dawnbwyd* (p. 74); the plural of *llys* is *llysoedd* (p. 75); *eglwysiau y beddau* should be *eglwysi'r beddau* (p. 106). The book would also have been better served by a much expanded index. These are minor points, however. Jeremy Knight is that increasingly rare creature – an archaeologist who can write lucid, elegant English. The meaningless jargon and infuriating 'archaeo-speak' that blight so much modern archaeological discourse is entirely, blessedly, absent from this book. It is a joy to read and a congenial guide to this vital period in the history of south-east Wales.

Frank Olding

Williams, Chris and Croll, Andy, eds., *The Gwent County History,* Vol. 5, *The Twentieth Century*; Cardiff: University of Wales Press on behalf of the Gwent County History Association, 2013; ISBN 978-0-7083-2648-0; hardback, 252mm x 196mm; 400 pp. £65.00.

Following the previous four volumes of the *Gwent County History*, which traced the evolution of this corner of south-east Wales from the Bronze Age to the era of heavy industry, this fifth and final volume in the series brings the story up to the near-present. Possibly the changes undergone by Monmouthshire / Gwent in the twentieth century were swifter and more dramatic than in the previous centuries, and indeed many of the chapters herein come to the conclusion that conditions in the county at the end of the century were radically different to those at the beginning. The book's eighteen chapters thus have a lot of explaining to do, and it is pleasing to note that the job as a whole is well done, so that the reader is left enlightened as to the factors which shaped the history of the county during this period which brought, in turn, benefits and adversity to the inhabitants.

The first two chapters, by Peter Strong, are rather different in character to the others in that they study discrete periods, viz. the two World Wars, and both chapters succeed in showing the impact of the wars upon the wider population of the county, as well as those who were called to serve. It is interesting to read that the 'first victory' of the Great War for British forces was gained

in Newport on 4 August 1914, when local policemen impounded the German liner *Belgia*: however, this reviewer would have preferred a little more subtlety when describing the 'carnival atmosphere' that is said to have been displayed at recruiting events. The chapter on the Second World War continues to illuminate how the fabric of life was affected in Gwent by faraway events: as Peter Strong acknowledges, the story of Monmouthshire in the war is essentially the same as that of the rest of Britain, but he succeeds in demonstrating some of the distinctive features of this county's experience of the war.

Subsequent chapters trace the county's economic and industrial history through the century. The narrative arc of Trevor Boyns' chapter on the coal industry and John Elliot and Colin Deneen's contribution on the metal industries are rather similar, the boom being followed by an inevitable bust. The analysis in these chapters (and indeed in others throughout the volume) is backed up by a wealth of statistics that will be of use for any students interested in a quantitative study of Gwent's economy. These two chapters and the two that follow (by Ben Curtis on manufacturing, communications and commerce and by Ian Pincombe on the rural economy) are very strong on the structural factors that influenced the success, or otherwise, of the activities in question. Curtis' summary, about how the county's economic structure became less distinctive during the course of the century as Britain's economy became more homogeneous, rings true for all of these chapters: as he suggests, this 'was the price of progress'. Pincombe's contribution has a tendency towards the polemical – though this reviewer finds nothing wrong with an author showing his colours. His characterisation of those in power who cared nothing for the agricultural tradition as 'a rapacious corporate-state leviathan' is supported by the evidence produced.

The progression of 'Monmouthshire' (plus the associated county borough of Newport) into the present-day split of five unitary authorities, (including one which is half-Glamorgan, half-Gwent) is traced by Robert McCloy. One does not get the impression that those who ordered the multiple re-organisations had much of a clue what they were doing. An interesting sub-text of this chapter is how the iron hand of central government sought to control what was happening at a local level – a notion which is supported by the analysis in some later chapters (notably Alun Burge's).

W. T. R. Pryce's analysis of statistical evidence to paint a picture of the changes in population and language seen in the county is again full of valuable information, although the statistics can only go a certain way towards enlightening us. Pryce notes that the information supplied by respondents about Welsh-language fluency in 2001 could be 'erroneous' – certainly the suggestion that over a third of Gwent's schoolchildren could speak the language in 2001 is enough to alert us that the data is problematic.

Both the chapters by Rachel Lock-Lewis on 'Sex, Marriage and the Family' and Martin Johnes on 'Popular Leisure' cover topics that cannot draw upon 'official' records to illuminate the subject, and thus these chapters take in evidence from a wide variety of sources. Lock-Lewis relies upon oral history for much of her evidence, and so there are questions of how representative the individuals' experiences were. Johnes covers an enormous range of activities, most of which were not unique to Gwent, and so the question arises of how distinctive the county's experience of popular culture was during the century. Some of the evidence here can be used to answer the question of which way the county's inhabitants faced – towards Wales or towards England (a sub-text, as might be expected, of a number of the chapters in this volume). The indications here are that the culture that Gwent's inhabitants made for themselves aligned itself more with 'Welsh' patterns.

Andy Croll's contribution on 'Poverty, Mass Unemployment and Welfare' is interesting, as it attempts to move away from picking at the mental wounds left behind by the 'Locust Years' of the 1920s and 1930s. Although the details given here of the severity and misery of the poverty endured

in those decades can make the reader shudder, it is also sobering to see how the 'working-class affluence' that followed the Second World War failed to reach many deprived parts of the county. The precipitate decline of organised religion in Gwent is the focus of Jeremy Morris' chapter, leading to a truly revolutionary change in the fabric of communities' lives as they went from having religion at their 'very centre' to 'the collapse of organized Christianity'. The linkage between the deterioration of the old tradition of Nonconformity and the economic ravages of the inter-war years is clear.

The chapter on education by Keith Davies outlines the numerous factors, 'political, ideological economic, social, cultural and linguistic', that shaped the provision of education in Gwent through the century. As Davies notes, many of these influences were seen in other locations beyond this corner of south-east Wales, and yet there are some patterns on display that are unique to the county. The contributions on visual culture (Peter Lord and John Morgan-Guy) and literature (Jane Aaron) both cover a lot of ground, naming a wide variety of individuals who have enriched the arts in Gwent.

There could be the danger in Gerard Charmley's chapter on Parliamentary representation that the political history of the county be reduced to a list of victorious and defeated candidates in General and by-elections, but the author does a fine job of teasing out the broader long-term patterns and forces. However, sometimes one is left wanting some more information on the individual careers of Gwent's representatives in the House of Commons – there is a paucity of detail on whether or not most of these men ever *did* anything for their constituents.

Alun Burge's chapter on 'Labour, Class and Conflict' gives another view of the political history of Gwent, focussing on the rise and evolution of the labour movement in the county, and the eventual side-lining of many of the older campaigns and issues. This is one of the most challenging and eye-opening contributions of the volume. Given the source material, there is the possibility of becoming too emotionally involved in the narrative, but Burge remains level-headed. The reader is left to come to his or her own conclusions about whether a sizeable proportion of the people of Gwent were betrayed by the state, but this reviewer is left pondering the irony that many of the Gwent miners who volunteered in 1914 to put their lives on the line would be witnesses in 1921 and 1926 to the state using military personnel against them. Andy Croll refers in his chapter to the 'sense of disconnection from Whitehall's policy makers' experienced by the poor of the Gwent valleys in the 1920s: the evidence on display here is that the distance between London and the industrial districts was always greater than it seems on the map.

Thus one reaches the final chapter, 'Who talks of my nation?', Chris Williams' exploration of the Janus-like split in Monmouthshire's identity. This topic, naturally, arises in many of the other contributions, but here Williams ties up a number of loose ends with a wide array of evidence and some insightful analysis. As he notes, the legal status of the county was only of secondary importance to the lives of its citizens, but the fact that Monmouthshire/Gwent was and is a border region can give its inhabitants a distinctive outlook on questions of identity and nationality. Indeed, it is a subject worthy of an in-depth and multi-faceted study. One can be glad that that awful phrase 'Wales and Monmouthshire' has been consigned to the dustbin of history. One can also be glad that the lives of the people of Gwent and of their communities during the twentieth century are explored in such a variety of ways in this excellent and enlightening volume.

Gethin Matthews

Morgan, Richard, *The Place-names of Gwent* (Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanwrst, 2005); ISBN 0-8638-1956-7; paperback, 114mm x 182mm; 225 pp.; with 5 maps; £6.50.

Owen, Hywel Wyn and Morgan, Richard, *Dictionary of the Place-names of Wales* (Gomer Press, Llandysul, Ceredigion pub. 2007, rev. 2008); ISBN 978-1-8432-3901-7; hardback, 160mm x 252mm; xxiii + 506 pp. £40.00.

Place-names can be an emotive issue. For this reason reviews appear late or never. Place-name dictionaries are far too valuable a working tool to be published without feedback.

Place-names of Gwent and the *Dictionary of the Place-names of Wales* trace the lexicography of Gwent, the most Anglo-Welsh of all the preserved counties and of all Wales into the twenty-first century.

Place-names of Gwent is both erudite and entertaining. The author, Richard Morgan, is comfortable with working with the wide range of languages used for place-names. A favourite of mine is (*de) Albo Casto* for Whitecastle, a place-name which calls to mind Anglo-Norman military engineers and civil servants, possibly with Welsh inhabitants as figures in the landscape.

This dictionary establishes the two waves of English place-names. Firstly, old and middle English names next to the Bristol Channel and Wye with names such as Goldcliff, Caldicot and Mounton. Secondly, those created during the industrial revolution, with names such as: The British, Victoria, Oakdale and Coalbrookvale. Such names have always been English.

Place-name dictionaries nearly always start with using the place-name and spelling now in use. *Place-names of Gwent* is an exception, as Welsh place-names, now disused, come before Anglo-Welsh place-names which came into use during the industrial revolution and are in bold print, the Anglo-Welsh and English follow in brackets and in conventional print. Examples are Aberbig (Aberbeeg), Crymlyn (Crumlin) and Llanhilled (Llanhilleth), and a few name changes at the time from Welsh to English, such as from Trecelyn to Newbridge.

Name changes on ordnance survey maps were a symptom, rather than cause of name change.

Deeper causes were: improved communications, especially by railway and steamship; formal education in the English language; commercial imperatives such as increased trade to the outside world through England and English control of commercial institutions such as banks. The greatest probable cause of place-name change was extensive immigration to service Monmouthshire's mining and metal industries from the arc of nearby counties from Shropshire to Somerset. Recent research published in *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* Vol. XXIX, 'Strangers and Brothers' written by Colin Thomas, with special reference to Mynyddislwyn supports this, as birthplaces in England of lodgers are shown in census enumerators' books as follows: 1851, 18.8%; 1861, 23.5%; 1871, 37.4%; 1881, 27.4% and 1891, 49.5%.

For major settlements, a different approach is used, the names are both printed in bold, Anglo-Welsh or English before Welsh.

Newport: Casnewydd. By using headwords this way, the ground is prepared for the next dictionary.

This small dictionary is well prepared, has an attractive cover design, excellent maps and has a reasonable sale price of £6.50. It can be used in isolation or with the other place-name dictionaries of Gwent or Wales.

The *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales* by Hywel Wyn Owen, President of the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland and Richard Morgan, archivist at Glamorgan Archives, takes further the arrangement of entries. By using the headwords in bold capitals for both Anglo-Welsh and

English place-names firstly, and Welsh secondly, it ensures equality in conformity with the principle established by the *Welsh Language Act 1993* (Chapter 38.6.8). This approach has been applied to road signs and further extended. This place-name dictionary, published in 2007 and revised in 2008, is in keeping with current Welsh Government thinking set out in, *A living language; a language for living. Welsh Language Strategy 2012–17. Action Plan 2012–13*.

The book is beautifully produced, but has imperfections. It is selective, not all inclusive like *Place-Names of Gwent*, or the *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, by Eilert Ekwall, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1960.

No clear policy has been devised for retaining major place-names and removing minor ones. In Gwent a substantial number of place-names have been omitted including: Mathern, the large nuclear village on the coastal plain containing the former palace of the bishops of Llandaff; Mynyddislwyn, the very extensive ancient parish in the western valleys and worst of all Llanvihangel-Ystern-Llewern, once the home parish of Sir Joseph Bradney, Monmouthshire's county historian. Names of minor settlements kept include Parkhouse and Rhyd-y-Merch, which I have driven through many times, without realising that anything was there!

The normal practice has been established of placing Anglo-Welsh and English place-names before Welsh place-names, examples being Crumlin before Crymlyn and Trelleck before Tryleg. A number of inconsistencies to this rule include placing Llansoe before Llansoy and Pont-y-Pŵl before the name of that most anglicised of towns Pontypool.

There are a few odd inconsistencies. Rhymney is spelt after the Rhymney Ironworks, not the Rhymni river. Bedwellty, which most inhabitants use, is missing: the sole entry is Bedwellte, the Welsh spelling.

A virtue of the book is the series of introductory sections, including a bibliography, which I was pleased to note includes *Place-names of Eastern Gwent* and *Place-names of Western Gwent* by G. Osborne and G Hobbs, 1998 and 2002 respectively.

The authors, Hywel Wyn Owen and Richard Morgan, both of whom have deservedly high reputations in this field, have aimed at the stars and only just missed.

The *Dictionary of the Place Names of Wales* is a handsome and scholarly book, but with its failure to include all place-names and its surviving inconsistencies, is not definitive. The root cause of these faults is parsimony, forcing the authors on one hand to remove place-names and on the other depriving them of the time to check their entries properly. For the promised revision better challenge funding will be needed. This revision should meet the requirements of the current 'Welsh: a living language strategy', whilst recognising the culture of this most Anglo-Welsh community, defined by the motto of Monmouthshire/Gwent County Council, *utrique fidelis* – faithful to both.

David Rimmer

Rippin, Shirley, *The Charcoal Industry of Fforest Coalpit & The Grwyne Fawr Valley*, illustrated by Michael Blackmore (Abergavenny Local History Society); 27 pp including figs; ISBN 978-0-9563-0192-5.

This beautifully conceived and produced landscape study is a very good introduction to the history of charcoal burning around Fforest Coalpit and more generally. It combines archival research, place-name evidence, landscape study, survey and excavation to form a valuable record of the hearth sites and associated tracks that gave Fforest Coalpit its name. The section on '*Siting A Hearth*' is

a valuable guide for would-be hearth prospectors in other Monmouthshire woods, e.g. Wentwood. Perhaps the greatest joy of this publication is its superb illustration and cartography by Michael Blackmore. Precise locations of the two excavated hearth platforms are not given but they (along with the other hearths and features recorded) would form valuable additions to the Gwent Historic Environment Record (HER), curated by Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) in Swansea[1]. The guided walk, information on other places to visit, extensive bibliography and other listed source material serve to further enhance the usefulness of this work to those wishing to develop their knowledge of this geographical area or the subject of historic charcoal manufacture and its use.

Mark Lewis

Edmonds Michael, *War Underground: Memoirs of a Bevin Boy in the South Wales Coalfield* ed. Peter Wakelin (South Wales Record Society, Newport, 2013); ISBN 978-0-9553-3876-2; hardback, 150mm x 215mm; ix + 128 pp.; 8 colour + 13 black and white illus; £14.50 (members), £18.50 (non-members).

As a young man, Michael Edmonds had been expecting to 'do his bit' in the Second World War by serving in the armed forces. As chance would have it, however, when the time came for him to serve he was one of the ten percent of conscripts who, from 1943, were sent not into the armed forces but into the coalmines – one of Ernest Bevin's 'Bevin Boys'.

In 1944 Edmonds was sent from his home on a fruit farm in Dorset to South Wales –'a long way from the country pageant into the whirring centre of industrial activity'– where, after a short period at the training centre at Oakdale, he went to work underground as a 'collier's helper' at Bedwas Colliery, remaining there until 1947. He came to appreciate the positive aspects of working at the coalface:

> 'We Bevin Boys in South Wales were lucky, for those in England I'm told were mostly on haulage work. Most of the fun is in the coalface, a crude sort of game with nature … The wits dwell in the coalface. They charge the air with their jokes…'

This is very much a personal memoir rather than a history. Those who are looking for an account of, for example, wartime industrial relations in the coal industry, or of the experiences of Bevin Boys in general, would do better to look elsewhere. But for frequent clear insights into the nature of South Wales miners and mining, Edmonds provides a real service. Writing as an outsider he is able to take the preconceptions of the outside world which he carried with him and demonstrate how wide of the mark they were. In particular, he demonstrates that a mere dependence on physical strength would achieve little underground. The coalface worker in particular, depended heavily on a wide range of skills and knowledge, giving a feel for the coal and a sense of how the rock above was behaving which could only be built up through years of bitter experience.

Equally, he confirms many of the characteristics of miners which have brought them admiration (and Edmonds clearly admires them greatly) – comradeship, bravery, humour – but without the clichés which so often mar such accounts. Naturally, he uses a wide range of anecdotes to illustrate

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[1] The regional HER can be contacted directly at GGAT or remotely via www.archwilio.org.uk or the Archwilio app.

his points, this reviewer's favourite revealing how a packet of sherbet was used to facilitate an escape from the pit for a day out at Chepstow races! One of the most interesting aspects of the book, which comes out through such anecdotes, is the coverage of the extensive folklore of the miners.

Some readers may wish that Edmonds had cast his net a bit wider. He devotes much space to the technical aspects of mining, a reflection of his own pre-occupation as a newcomer with learning different aspects of the job. He has less to say, however, about their home lives or communities. He tells us that 'he was told' about conversations in the 'Miners Arms' but it is far from clear how often, if at all, he frequented the drinking holes and other centres of social activity which would have allowed him to give a fuller picture of the mining community. Nevertheless, when he does refer to such matters he provides valuable insights.

He has even less to say about women (although there is a valuable account of his conversation with a miner's wife on his first train journey from Newport to Newbridge – a conversation dominated by talk of death, injury and disease).

Edmonds recognises that for him the sacrifice was only temporary. He was able to leave them behind to pursue a successful career as an architect, artist and educator, while for others the hardships and dangers were to continue throughout their working lives:

> 'We might spend a few years there. What of those who give a lifetime to this arduous work risking slow disease or swift mutilation?'

Those amongst us who continue to cherish the look and feel of real books along with their content will be delighted with the high quality of production of this volume. The detail from the ceramic tile mural that Michael Edmonds produced for Llandough Hospital, Cardiff, in 1959, featuring colliers at work, provides a striking dust cover while the illustrations include many more examples of his work. The book contains a very useful introduction by Peter Wakelin who has edited Edmonds's memoirs and added helpful footnotes to Edmonds's original text.

The language is deeply poetic, particularly when he takes time out to contemplate the local landscape, and the whole tone of the memoir is highly contemplative. Edmonds was clearly searching for meaning in his experiences. Some of this he found when a 'clear underground spring bursts free and challenges the dust'. His memoir is indeed a 'clear spring' which clears some dust to improve our knowledge of this important period in the history of the South Wales coalfield.

Peter Strong

OUTINGS AND EVENTS FOR 2013

Saturday 27 April: The Annual General Meeting: Dr Madeleine Gray gave an interesting talk on 'Memory and Mortality: The Medieval Tombstones of Monmouthshire'. Dr Gray, Reader in Humanities & Social Sciences at the University of South Wales, is creating an analytical database of medieval Welsh tomb carvings and Monmouthshire has some of the UK's most spectacular examples of medieval effigy tombs, particularly those at Abergavenny. She also discussed the collection at Tintern Abbey, which suggested that local people were still loyal to their monastery in the difficult years of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. These commemorated the 'middling sort of people'– minor landowners, craftspeople, the urban elite. Often hidden by carpet or reused as building stone, they are a fascinating field for the history detective. Some of the slabs have complex inscriptions such as prayers or fragments of liturgy indicating the amount of thought families put into their commemoration. Dr Gray's database was supposed to end at 1540 but her interest in tomb carvings has moved into the seventeenth century. Monmouthshire was a centre of recusant activity after the Reformation and some of the county's leading Catholics appear to have been sufficiently open about their faith to display the emblem of the Jesuits on their tombs.

Saturday 2 May: A study day 'The Stained Glass of Gloucester Cathedral': Eighteen members travelled to Gloucester Cathedral for the study day. After tea and coffee the lectures began and were of a very high standard. In the morning we looked at the medieval glass in the cathedral which contained more white than the contrasting brightly coloured Victorian glass which we studied in the afternoon. Lunch was in the Parliament room which allowed us to sit at circular tables, each one hosted by one of our guides. After the study day ended, we spent an hour in the sun walking around Gloucester.

Saturday 8 June: Day trip to Crickhowell Castle and Tretower Court and Tretower Castle: We met in Crickhowell in the morning. Keith Underwood was ill on the day but had provided notes. Anne Dunton and Ann Llewellin kindly led the day in Keith's absence. People were left to their own devices to view Crickhowell Castle which was rebuilt in stone in 1272. Subsequently, Owain Glyndwr's forces left it in ruins. Later in the century it was granted to Sir William Herbert, who became Earl of Pembroke. The keep was uninhabitable by the mid-16th century. Members then had lunch and drove to Tretower Castle and Tretower Court. Tretower Castle was a motte and bailey castle. In the mid-12th century a shell keep was created replacing the early timber defences. The third major phase involved the construction of the great tower, and the addition of walls to the castle bailey. The castle may have been abandoned as a residence by the early 14th century. Tretower Court is a medieval fortified manor house which reflects the changes in fashion and taste of the wealthy landowners in Wales between 1300 and 1700. Mrs Val Williams gave us a tour of the reconstructed medieval gardens which was most entertaining. We split into two groups and took it in turns to view the gardens and Tretower Court and Castle.

Saturday 6 July 2013: An invitation to join Cardiff Archaeological Society on a visit to the newly opened Mary Rose Museum: We were fortunate to be one of the first groups to visit the new Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth. This stunning new museum took an 'inside-out' approach to display Henry VIII's warship hull at the centre of the museum alongside a virtual hull which showed the original artefacts in context. Glass decked galleries run the length of the ship, corresponding to the original deck levels enabling the public to view the ship at close range for the first time since

1545. We also had time to tour the Dock Yard and had a boat trip around the harbour. Even though there were initially problems with the coach, the sun shone and the day was a great success and many thanks to Cardiff Archaeological Society for their superb organisation.

Saturday 13 July: Day trip by coach to Montgomery with Jeremy Knight: On the hottest day of the year, with temperatures soaring to 30 degrees, we were privileged to be led by our new President, Jeremy Knight, who had directed the excavation of Montgomery Castle in the 1970s. In the morning we visited the parish church of St. Nicholas which was built in the late 13th century. Highlights are the rood screen and a series of misericords which were removed from Chirbury Priory at the time of the Dissolution. Effigies of Sir Richard Herbert (d. 1596) and his wife Magdalen lie side by side. However, she survived him, remarried, and did not die until 1627 and is buried in London. After lunch we climbed the steep lane to the castle. Powis Castle and Welshpool were just visible in the distance. Jeremy Knight explained the strategic importance of the site and narrated the history of the construction of a royal castle between 1223 and 1229, by Hubert de Burgh, King Henry III's Justiciar. After the defeat of Llywelyn the Last in 1283 there was no longer need for a royal castle on this site, and ownership passed to the Mortimers and later to the Herberts. In 1620 Lord Herbert of Cherbury built a fashionable brick house inside the castle. During the Civil War the castle was held by him for the King and besieged by the Parliamentarians. Lord Herbert surrendered to them and the house was demolished. After explaining the layout of the castle Jeremy discussed the 1970 excavations. Artefacts found there included a tiny fragment of North African pottery, a silver coin dated precisely to the period when the castle was built, and some pieces of obsolete 16thcentury Dutch armour. We then visited the museum which contained artefacts from the castle and other exhibits relating to the history of the town and district. The original plan to stop in Ludlow was abandoned due to the excessive heat, but the visit remains one of the MAA's most memorable.

Wednesday 14 August: Early medieval site of Dinas Powys, with Dr Alan Lane from Cardiff University followed by a visit to Llandough Churchyard with Jeremy Knight: Dr Alan Lane kindly agreed to show us Dinas Powys hillfort which is a key site in south Wales. It is an example of a court or *Llys* and was the seat of minor Welsh kings of the 5th–7th centuries. Leslie Alcock excavated the site in the 1950s but more recently it has been excavated by Dr Alan Lane and Dr Andy Seaman. Finds include large amounts of pottery-wine amphorae and fine table wares from Greece, Turkey, Syria and France plus evidence for fine metalworking. This was quite unexpected for a period thought to be one of isolation after the end of Roman rule, but which has since been illuminated by archaeology. There are substantial complicated earthworks on the site. The first part of the site at the top of this path encompasses Tyn y Coed enclosure (Alcock's 'Southern Banks'). Then we walked along a flat path to the main hillfort site – Alcock's Dinas Powys fort. After lunch in Dinas Powys we assembled at Llandough Churchyard where Jeremy Knight stood in the pouring rain and talked about the site and the tenth-century pillar cross. The Church of St Dochwy was rebuilt in 1865 and stands on an elevated site near Dinas Powys. A Roman Villa was found close to the churchyard. The church site was probably the site of St Dochwy's monastery and is a textbook example of the relationship between a high status secular site such as Dinas Powys and an ecclesiastical site such as Llandough. The tenth-century pillar cross in the churchyard is identical to the cross found at Llandaff and so relates to the rise of Llandaff as a monastery and the eclipse of St Dochwy's monastery. These two sites illustrate the development of society following the decline of Roman control.

Tuesday 3 September: Day visit by coach to Malmesbury and Badminton House: Most members went to the abbey and the museum while some went to the Abbey Gardens which are privately owned. The abbey dominates the town and only a third of the abbey has survived, but in medieval times the building had a spire which was higher than that of Salisbury Cathedral. Malmesbury was founded as a Benedictine monastery around 676 AD by the scholar-poet Aldhelm. One window shows the flying monk Elmer who *c*.1010 fashioned wings and leapt from the tower and survived with two broken legs. The illuminated manuscript 'The Book of Numbers' is on display and the tomb of King Athelstan can also be seen. The carvings of the inner arch of the Norman porch deal with the creation and the middle arch with the journey of the patriarchs and kings, whilst the outer arch portrays the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Apostles of the early church look down and Christ is flanked by wonderful flying angels. The Abbey House and Gardens are privately owned and there is a fee for entry. These Abbey Gardens are famous for their beauty, walks and history. At The Old Bell Hotel, many of us had lunch in the sunny garden. The market place with the market cross *c*.1500 stands in the middle of the town and most of us visited the Athelstan Museum. After lunch we moved on to **Badminton House.** The Badminton Estate is home to the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort. The House dates from the 17th century and is set in a deer park which hosts the world famous Badminton Horse Trials. We arrived at the home of David Robert Somerset, 11th Duke of Beaufort and were fortunate as not many group visits are allowed in a year. We were met by John Harris, an architectural scholar and distinguished historian who has written a short illustrated history of the house and the estate. We had been promised a display of documents from the estate archive and a display relating particularly to Raglan Castle was provided. The Somerset connection with Monmouthshire, with Raglan Castle and Troy House, meant this was of great interest to us all. We wish to thank Elaine Milsom, the archivist, for her efforts. The tour began in the Old Kitchen and we were shown into the Old Hall and the downstairs rooms. The paintings were of great interest, especially those relating to Monmouthshire and the Somerset family. At the end of the tour we looked at the North Wing in some detail. We then went back to the old kitchen and were provided with an excellent tea.

Saturday 5 October: A Tour of Newport Museum with curator, Oliver Blackmore: We arrived at Newport Museum and Art Gallery where on the day there was a demonstration taking place concerning the removal of the Chartist Murals. Inside the Museum calm reigned and Curator Oliver Blackmore, also an MAA committee member, took us through the history of Newport and surrounding area via the wonderful and often rare artefacts and geological treasures housed in the collection. Early tools, human remains, the aurochs, the Barland's Farm boat, the Caerwent mosaic, engaged our interest. The climax was a display of some recent small finds from the Newport Ship, which included a pointed leather shoe, an archer's leather wrist guard and a pulley block from the rigging. We extend our grateful thanks to Oliver Blackmore. Some members went upstairs to the Art Gallery to look at the art on display, a small section of a huge and important collection. One of our members, Richard Frame, informed members about the newly formed society the 'Friends of Newport Museum and Art Gallery' (FONMAG).

Thursday 17 October: A Tour of the National Roman Legion Museum Caerleon with curator Dr Mark Lewis: Dr Mark Lewis, chairman of the MAA and also the curator of the Museum, kindly welcomed us and provided a gallery tour. He pointed out that this visit of the MAA to the Museum, could not have been the first, but none of us could remember such a visit taking place in recent times. Mark showed us the museum exhibits which allowed the past to spring to life especially as his

delivery is always lively and interesting. Mark Lewis began the tour by telling the members about the foundation of the collection and the establishment of the Museum by John Edward Lee, a Newport businessman who, in October 1847, formed an association to establish a Museum of Antiquities to encourage archaeological research. This took place at his house, The Priory, at Caerleon. This was the foundation of the present MAA. Mark looked mainly at the inscriptions on the walls of the Museum which told the story of the Roman legionary fortress of the Second Augustan Legion known as Isca and the people who worked and lived around it. The memorials revealed details of Roman families which lived around Caerleon and that, although life was usually short in Roman times, some lived to old age. Chemical analyses of the skeleton of the Roman displayed in a Bath stone coffin, whose face has been forensically digitally reconstructed, indicated that people were born and died in the immediate area of the fortress. This exhibit was of particular interest to the members. The museum manager, Dai Price, a member of the MAA committee, kindly allowed us to serve a glass of white wine following the tour.

Saturday, 23 November: Two Free Lectures: Dr Peter Guest and Dr Mark Lewis. Two notable archaeologists based in south Wales lectured on aspects of archaeological research concerning Roman Caerleon. Over one hundred people turned up, a wonderful testament to the interest that these two superb archaeologists generate. **Dr Mark Lewis,** Curator of National Roman Legion Museum, lectured on the isotope analyses and portrait created from the Roman man's skull and produced using the latest technology. The man's skeleton was discovered in a bath-stone coffin in November 1995. He was a 45 year-old man who had lived about AD 200. In 2010 the museum started working on the redisplay of the coffin in a fashion closer to its original form thanks to funding from the Friends of Amgueddfa Cymru. Isotope analysis carried out on the enamel of one of the skeleton's teeth revealed that the man had spent his childhood in the western side of Gwent at Newport, perhaps in the vicinity of Liswerry or Caerwent. He was buried with a bowl of food and a bottle of perfumed oil. The coffin burial indicates he was of high status and that burial practices were changing. He had two genetic differences from the norm. He had no third set of molars (wisdom teeth) and one of the sutures on his head had not fused. Dr Mark Lewis referred to the need to display human remains ethically, but allow people to view the skeleton in situ.

After tea and cakes, **Dr Peter Guest,** Senior Lecturer at the School of History, Archaeology & Religion at Cardiff University, lectured on the fascinating and on-going research into the finds excavated at Caerleon. The excavations were directed by Drs Peter Guest and Andrew Gardner. From 2007–2008 Peter Guest and his team, which included contributions from Dr Mark Lewis, excavated the site of the legionary fortress at Caerleon including a warehouse on the Priory Field and a newly discovered suburb of monumental buildings known as the southern *canabae* which is a civil settlement attached to a fort. This was part of a project known as, 'Mapping *Isca*: the Roman legionary fortress at Caerleon and its environs'. Peter Guest described the excavations at the Priory Field, which revealed a large store or warehouse identified during geophysical surveys of the Priory Field in 2006. The excavations produced many finds, including a remarkable and rare scatter of armour and other military equipment lying above the latest floor in one of the store rooms. Of great interest was the metalwork which research suggests is part of a chamfron, a leather head cover used to protect horses' heads which were often highly decorated. Dr Guest went on to discuss the excavation of the newly discovered suburb of monumental buildings known as the southern *canabae*. Trenches excavated in 2011 explored several structures within the recently discovered suburb of monumental buildings between Caerleon's amphitheatre and the River Usk. Their size and layout suggests these were public buildings. However, there is no evidence of a large civilian

population and it is possible that the buildings formed Caerleon's *canabae*, *the* official settlement around the fortress. The analysis of the thousands of finds is currently underway. Dr Guest stated that the pottery indicated that the construction of the area took place about the same time that the fortress was built, but that the majority of the buildings seem to have been abandoned by the early third century and rubbish from this period included large quantities of pigs and birds.

Friday 6 December 2013: Social at our Secretary's and Treasurer's home: The social was attended by forty people who soon created a hubbub of noise that was so great that the door-bell could no longer be heard. People seemed to enjoy the food and little was left. Keith Underwood created a crossword which generated a great deal of discussion. We were saddened that Anna Tribe, one of our oldest and most prestigious members, was not well enough to attend. As well as enjoying ourselves we made a profit for funds.

Information provided by Christabel Hutchings, Keith Underwood and John L. Evans

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Ann Benson was for many years first a chemistry teacher and then an academic in the field of learning and assessment and lectured at the universities of Oxford and Bristol. She also pioneered distance learning as the director of the Open University's science education courses. She holds a masters and a doctorate in how assessment affects learning and is the author of many publications. After serving as the consultant for assessment processes with the Cabinet Office, she took early retirement to focus on garden history. She gained an MA in Garden History (University of Bristol) and now combines researching the history of houses and landscapes with lecturing. She has lived in Monmouthshire since 1969.

Bruce Coplestone-Crow was born and brought up in Kettering, Northamptonshire, but has lived for many years in Birmingham, where he was a manager in the health service. He has researched 11th–13th estate history in Herefordshire and neighbouring counties and in South Wales for nearly half a century and has written and published widely on the subject. He was made a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and of the Royal Historical Society in 2007.

Robert Gant is an Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of the Historical Record at Kingston University. Formerly Deputy Head of the School of Earth Sciences and Geography at Kingston University, his research presently focuses on rural demographic change and the historical geography of market towns in south east Wales.

Madeleine Gray is Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of South Wales and one of the editors of the third volume of The Gwent County History, *The Making of Monmouthshire, 1536–1780*. She has a long-standing interest in pilgrimages and saints' cults and in the visual imagery of medieval religion. She chaired the National Museum of Wales advisory committee on the wall paintings at the reconstructed Llandeilo Talybont church. She is currently working on a database of medieval tomb carvings and wills in Wales.

Helen Forshaw is an art history graduate, born and educated in Lancashire. She moved to south-east Wales in 1995 from Staffordshire. From 2006–12 she was a custodian for Cadw at the Fortress Baths in Caerleon, a post which fuelled her interest in Roman archaeology. She obtained her Masters degree in regional history at the University of Wales Newport. The subject of her final dissertation reflects her long-held interest in textiles.

Barry Lewis was born and brought up in Montgomeryshire. He studied modern languages at Cambridge before developing an interest in the medieval Celtic literatures, especially Welsh. He was awarded a PhD in Welsh from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth in 2004. In 2002 he joined the staff of the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth, where he has worked on critical editions of medieval Welsh poetry, including the new online edition of the works of the fifteenth-century poet Guto'r Glyn. He is currently engaged in a project to edit and translate texts in medieval Welsh relating to the cult of saints.

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 *ss Great Britain*. Since 2000, Mark Lewis has been a curator at the National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon, and from 2006–13 was also an archaeological conservator at the National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff. He is currently Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust and Chairman of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association.

Gethin Matthews is the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol lecturer in History at Swansea University, and is married to a native of Cwmbran. He was awarded his PhD by Cardiff University in 2010 for his research on the Welsh in the Gold Rush to British Columbia. He ran the 'Welsh Voices of the Great War Online' project in 2010–11, and is currently editing a Welsh-language volume on Welsh society and culture during WW1, which is to be published by the University of Wales Press next year.

Frank Olding was born in Nantyglo and brought up in Abertillery. He gained a BA in archaeology and Welsh from University College Cardiff in 1983, a diploma in Museum Studies from Leicester University in 1992 and an MA in Landscape Archaeology from the University of Bristol in 2000. Frank was the curator of Abergavenny Museum and Castle from 1989 to 2000 and was an active member of the St Mary's Monuments Restoration Committee. He then spent two years as an Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments with Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. Since 2002, he has worked as the Heritage Officer for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a member of the Gorsedd of Bards.

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. He is a member of the Gwent County History Association Committee and a member of the committee of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association.

Peter Strong was born and raised near Newbury in Berkshire. He taught history at Caldicot Comprehensive School from 1979 until 2013, for most of that time as head of department. He has been secretary of Caldicot and District Local History Society since 1991 and Chair of Gwent Local History Council since 2000. He is also Chair of the Gwent Branch of the Western Front Association.

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 volumes XXV–XXVI (2009–10) and vol. XXVII (2011) through the press. His latest book, *The Tudor Cistercians*, will be published in autumn 2014.