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Front cover: Monnow Bridge, Monmouth.

Graphite on paper, *circa* 1804–1814. Private Collection, with kind permission.

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The century-old timber-framed dwelling shown adjoining the gate was demolished between June and August 1815. John Sell Cotman's etching of 1800 (*Liber Studiorum*, No. 26) and earlier images show the dwelling with a shorter chimney and with no central timber prop. A single timber prop and the taller chimney are shown in Joshua Cristall's graphite drawing of 1803 (Tate Gallery, accession number T09873) and later images. Like Cotman, Cristall shows the building in a state of advanced disrepair. Perhaps the second prop, shown on the cover of this volume, was a final attempt at preservation before the demolition of the structure, placing this image nearer to 1815? Comparison of the growth of greenery obscuring the pier to the left of the scene with earlier views also supports a later date, but one perhaps prior to the (apparently desirable) pier repair work undertaken in August 1814. A sheet may be seen airing on a pole projecting from the dwelling's upper floor window.

See Rowlands, M.L.J. 1994. *Monnow Bridge and Gate*. Stroud: Alan Sutton in association with Monmouth Museum. See also Samuel Prout's watercolour and graphite work 'The Monnow Bridge, Monmouthshire', *c.* 1805–1814, Paul Mellon Collection, Yale Center for British Art, Newhaven, Connecticut, USA, accession number B1975.4.1954.

M. Lewis, Chairman, M.A.A. Editorial Committee.

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THE CHURCH OF JULIUS, AARON, AND ALBAN AT CAERLEON

Andy Seaman

INTRODUCTION

In his fictional account of King Arthur's Whitsuntide crown-wearing at Caerleon Geoffrey of Monmouth (writing *c.* 1136) described how the town was famous for two churches; the first was 'built in honour of the martyr Julius, and graced by a choir of most lovely virgins dedicated to God', and the second was 'founded in the name of the blessed Aaron, the companion of Julius', it was 'served by a monastery of canons, and counted as the third metropolitan see of Britain'.¹ Gerald of Wales was notoriously disparaging of the *Historia Regum Britannie*, but in his *Itinerarium Cambriae* (written *c.* 1191) he also stated that Caerleon had been famous for churches built in honour of Julius and Aaron.²

Both writers were clearly aware of the tradition linking Julius and Aaron, the Roman martyrs of the 'City of the Legions' with Caerleon, but they were writing about a distant pseudohistorical past and neither implied that the churches were extant in the twelfth century. However, the antiquarians William Camden and Francis Godwin, writing either side of the year 1600, not only reiterated the story of Julius and Aaron's churches, but also implied that they had stood until recently.³ Indeed, by the late nineteenth-century the church sites were marked by the Ordnance Survey.⁴ There is no doubting the strength of the association between Julius and Aaron and Caerleon, but examination of the evidence reveals discrepancies about their churches that call for explanation. In this article I will argue that there is little evidence that *separate* churches dedicated to the martyrs existed at or near to Caerleon during the Middle Ages. Moreover, it is suggested that the churches' sites identified on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey owe more to religious tensions following the Reformation than historical reality.

Nevertheless, a single church dedicated to both martyrs, and at some points also St Alban, can be identified in the medieval charter evidence, and a strong case can be made for placing this church at Mount St Albans in the parish of Christchurch to the south of Caerleon. This church must have been in existence before the ninth century and survived until at least the late fifteenth. Its location above a Roman cemetery outside a legionary fortress is evocative of the nascent Christian landscapes of Late Antique Europe, and the cult associated with its two Roman martyrs was probably well established by the time Julius and Aaron were mentioned alongside Alban in the sixth century *De Excidio Britanniae*.⁵ Thus, as notable members of this Association have previously argued, a case

¹ Thorpe, Lewis (trans. and ed.), *Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of Kings of Britain* (Penguin, London, 1966), 226.

² Thorpe, Lewis, (trans. and ed.), *Gerald of Wales, The Journey through Wales and The Description of Wales* (Penguin, London, 1978), 115.

³ Camden, William, *Britannia siue Florentissimorum regnorum, Angliae, Scotiae, Hiberniae, et insularum adiacentium ex intima antiquitate chorographica description* (London, 1587) 419. Godwin, William, *De praesulibus Angliae commentarius omnium episcoporum, necnon et cardinalium eiusdem gentis, nomina, tempora, seriem, atque actiones maximè memorabiles ab vltima antiquitate repetita complexus* (London, 1616), 626.

⁴ 1st edition County Series (1883). St Julius at: ST32418895; St Aaron at: ST34139176.

⁵ Winterbottom, Michael (trans. and ed.), *Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and other works* (Phillimore, Chichester), 19.

can be made for identifying Mount St Albans as the location of the martyrdom of Julius and Aaron.⁶ The site is, therefore, of considerable historical and archaeological interest, and it was for this reason that the author initiated a programme of survey and excavation, the preliminary results of which are presented at the end of this article.

Historians' Accounts of the Churches of Julius and Aaron

In the first edition of his *Britannia* William Camden quoted Gerald of Wales' description of the churches of Julius and Aaron at Caerleon without giving any indication of their location or suggesting that either was extant at the time he was writing.⁷ However, in the much expanded second edition of 1587 and in all subsequent editions and translations he added that the church of St Julius had stood about a mile from the present village of Caerleon, in the manor of St Julians, at the house of Sir William Herbert.⁸ Camden says nothing about the location of St Aaron's church, but in 1616 his friend Bishop Francis Godwin stated that the 'chapels' of Julius and Aaron had been located two miles apart on the east and west sides of Caerleon.⁹ Godwin was a life-long friend of Camden, the two had toured south Wales together in 1590 and their correspondence shows that Godwin kept Camden informed of discoveries at Caerleon and Caerwent.¹⁰ Thus, it is likely that information about the location of St Julius's church in the second edition of the *Britannia* came from Godwin. St Aaron's chapel was described as being situated to the east of Caerleon, but it is not until 1801 when William Coxe stated that it had stood 'at Penrhos, in the vicinity of the town [Caerleon]' that we are given a more precise indication of its location.¹¹ Nevertheless, since Penrhos is to the north-east of Caerleon, it is reasonable to assume that Godwin had Penrhos in mind (see Fig. 1).

In the accounts given by Geoffrey of Monmouth, Gerald of Wales, William Camden, and Francis Godwin the churches/chapels of Julius and Aaron are referred to in the past tense, although Godwin stated that they existed within 'the memory of our fathers'.¹² However, when describing St Julians house in 1801 Coxe noted an 'old barn of small dimensions, which was once part of the chapel of St Julius ... on the south wall are the remains of an arched entrance, which is now half filled up, the east and west windows may be traced, and a small Gothic doorway to the west, still remains in its original state'.¹³ According to Olive Ellis this barn survived until around 1884,¹⁴ and unfortunately the house was demolished in the mid-twentieth century without archaeological investigation. Possible collaborative evidence for the existence of this chapel comes in the form of a 'pilgrim finely cut in jet with gold cross round the neck, found in the Ruins of St Julien's Chapel at Caerleon, Monmouthshire' that was sold at auction in London in 1774,¹⁵ but had these remains been standing during the late-sixteenth century, it is surprising that it was not described as such by Camden or Godwin.

⁶ Boon, George, 'The Early Church in Gwent, I: The Romano-British Church', *Monmouthshire Antiquary* VIII (1992), 11–24. Knight, Jeremy, 'Britain's other martyrs: Julius, Aaron and Alban at Caerleon', in (eds) Henig, M. and Lindley, P. *Alban and St Albans: Roman and Medieval Architecture, Art and Archaeology* (British Archaeological Association, Leeds, 2001), 13–29.

⁷ Camden, *Britannia* (1586 edition), 363.

⁸ Camden, *Britannia* (1587 edition), 511.

⁹ Godwin, *De praesulibus Angliae*, 626.

¹⁰ Boon, George, 'Camden and the *Britannia*', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 136 (1987), 7.

¹¹ Coxe, William, *An Historical Tour in Monmouthshire* (T. Cadell and W. Davies, London, 1801), 95.

¹² Godwin, *De praesulibus Angliae*, 626.

¹³ Coxe, *An historical Tour...*, 103–4.

¹⁴ Ellis, O. M., 'St Julian's Church, Newport', *Gwent Local History* 39 (1975), 37–40.

¹⁵ Evans, G. E., 'Notes', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 77 (2) (1922), 418.

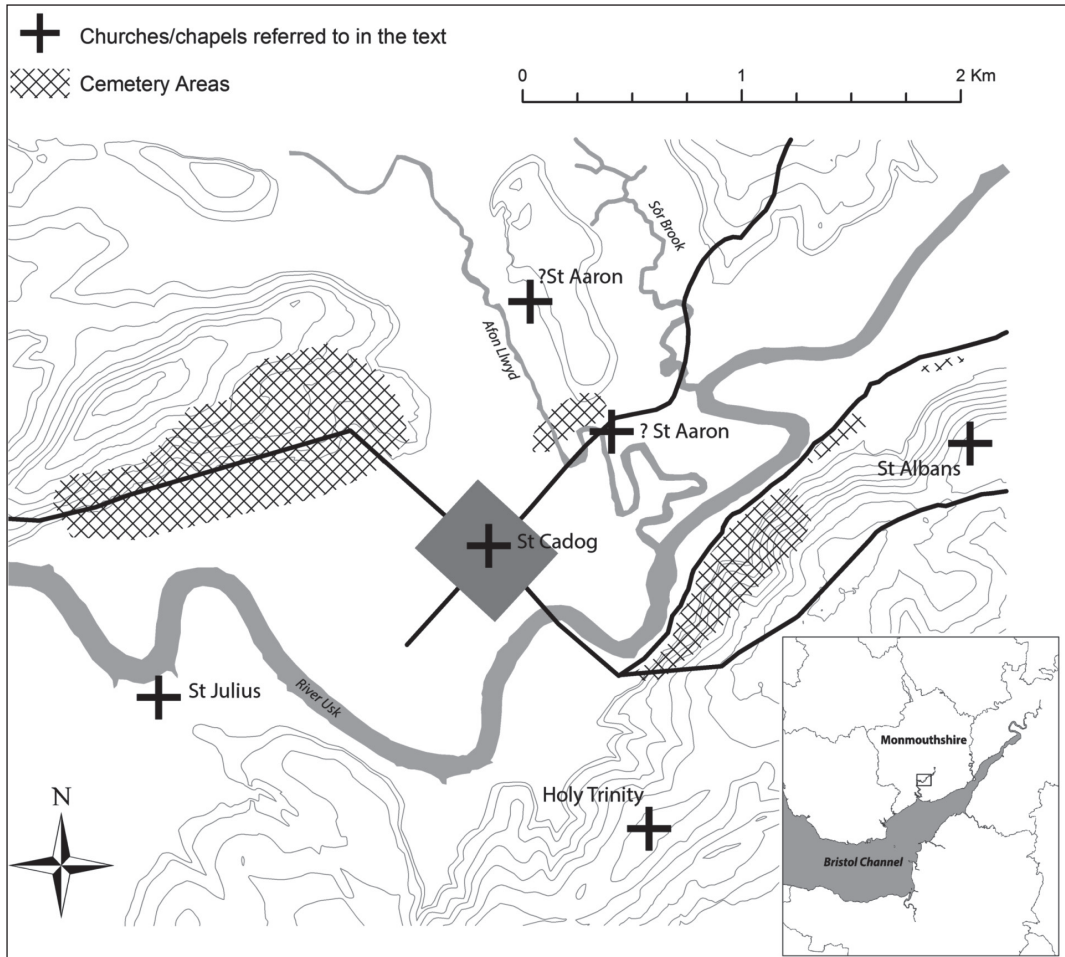


Fig. 1: Caerleon and its environs. *Ordnance Survey (GB), Using: EDINA Digimap Ordnance Survey Service.*

The same is true of the St Aaron's church at Penrhos, but here the evidence for its existence is even weaker. Neither Godwin nor Coxe located the chapel site precisely, but the Ordnance Survey and Sabine Baring-Gould and John Fisher placed it within the defences of a Civil War earthwork (which they mistook for a Roman camp) immediately adjacent to Penrhos Farm.¹⁶ The evidence cited in support of their suggestion was limited however. Baring-Gould and Fisher stated that stone coffins (presumably cist burials) had been found in the vicinity, 'showing that it was a place of Christian interment', but cist burial was not used exclusively by Christians and given the

¹⁶ Baring-Gould, S. and Fisher, J., *The Lives of the British Saints: The Saints of Wales and Cornwall and Such Irish Saints as Have Dedications in Britain, Vol. 1* (Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, London, 1907), 102. Also followed by Bradney, J., *A History of Monmouthshire from the coming of the Normans into Wales down to the present time, Volume IV, The Hundred of Caldicot, Part III* (Mitchell, Hughes and Clarke, London, 1932), 201.

proximity to extramural cemeteries associated with the Roman fortress their discovery need not imply Christian burials or the presence of a church. Ellis stated that the remains of St Aaron's chapel were demolished about 1870, but it was not depicted on the 1839 Tithe Map, and this may be no more than an educated guess based on the fact that it was not standing at the time of the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1875–81.¹⁷ Had the chapel survived so late, it would be surprising that it was not described in the antiquarian literature. Indeed, only a decade later the antiquarian Octavius Morgan placed it around 650m to the south in a 'field near the copper-field' (see Fig. 1), and described how an excavation undertaken by Revd Canon Edwards revealed 'some small pieces of window glass and plaster and foundations of walls and of mortar floor..., but nothing to indicate the nature of the building'.¹⁸ Roman burials were discovered in the vicinity of this field in the late nineteenth century, and more recent archaeological investigation has revealed further burial evidence, but the case for interpreting the building identified by Evans as St Aaron's chapel is weak.¹⁹

The sources considered thus far are consistent in their assertions that there were churches dedicated to Julius and Aaron at Caerleon (although they are variously described as churches and chapels), but contradiction arises over when they existed. The nineteenth and twentieth century sources identify the locations of the chapels, and one provides us with a description of the ruins of the chapel of St Julius. The earlier antiquarian sources, however, follow Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gerald of Wales in describing the churches in the past tense, with there being no suggestion that they were extant. Indeed, whilst we should be wary of using negative evidence, we can also note that John Leland, writing a generation earlier, made no reference to the chapels of Julius and Aaron, referring only to St Cadog's, the medieval parish church that stands within the centre of the fortress.²⁰ The simplest way to reconcile these differences would be to suggest that the chapels described in the later sources were re-foundations of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century date, but this is not what is implied in the sources, and other explanations are possible. Before we consider these it is necessary to examine the primary evidence, principally medieval charters.

Medieval Charter Evidence

Leaving aside Gildas' *De Excidio Britanniae* for the time being, the earliest reference to a church(es) of Julius and Aaron at Caerleon is found in charter 225 of the *Book of Llandaff*. The *Book of Llandaff* was compiled between 1119 and 1134 under the influence of Urban, the first bishop of Llandaff appointed under Norman rule, who was at the time of the book's compilation pursuing a series of disputes over diocesan boundaries and episcopal properties with the bishops of Hereford and St David's.²¹ The charters were compiled as part of Urban's legal campaign and are known to be fraudulent within this twelfth-century context. Nevertheless, Professor Wendy Davies has demonstrated, through careful examination of the charter formulae and witness lists, that there are a considerable number of original records, lying behind layers of later editing and interpolation, which

¹⁷ Ellis, 'St Julian's Church, Newport'.

¹⁸ Morgan, Octavius, *Goldcliff and the ancient Roman inscribed stone found there, 1878: together with other papers* (Newport, 1882), IV. Followed by Wade-Evans, A. W., *Nennius's History of the Britons* (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1938), 131 note 3.

¹⁹ Evans, Edith, 'Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Sites in South-East Wales: Rapid field survey of selected sites', unpublished report, Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (2004), 115–6.

²⁰ Smith, L. T., (trans. and ed.) *The Itinerary in Wales of John Leland in or about the Years 1536–39* (George Bell and Sons, London, 1906), 44.

²¹ Davies, J. R., 'The Book of Llandaff: a twelfth-century perspective', *Anglo-Norman Studies* (1998), 21 & 31–46.

are likely to have been contemporary with the events they describe.²² The narration to charter 225 contains standard interpolations and plot-tokens and is unlikely to be genuine. But once these later additions are removed what remains is an ‘otherwise unquestionable account’ of a genuine grant, which on the basis of its witness list can be dated to the mid-ninth century.²³ The charter records the grant of the *territorium sanctorum martrium iulij et aaron* (estate of the holy martyrs Julius and Aaron) by the brothers Wulferth, Hegoï and Arwystl, to Bishop Nudd.²⁴ The bounds place the estate to south of Caerleon on the far side of the River Usk, and whilst they cannot be reconstructed in great detail, the estate included land in the parishes of Christchurch and Ceremys Inferior.²⁵ There is no direct reference to a church or churches within the text of the charter, but the majority of the estates in the Llandaff charters were associated with a single church and/or settlement, and the term *territorium* was used for a tract of land appurtenant to a church.²⁶ In a twelfth century rubric the property is entitled *merthir ivn et aaron*, where the term *merthir* is singular and used to refer to a church dedicated to *both* Julius and Aaron. David Parsons has suggested that this title may be a construct of twelfth century redactors,²⁷ but the implication that there was a single church dedicated to both martyrs is supported by a series of later charters.

A grant dated to or shortly before 1113 records how Robert Chandos, an Anglo-Norman lord, gave a church at Goldcliff to the monastery of Bec in Normandy for the foundation of a priory. Included in the property that Chandos bestowed upon the priory were two churches: *ecclesiam sanctae Trinitatis iuxta Karlium* and *ecclesiam Iulii et Aron*.²⁸ The former can be identified as Holy Trinity church, the benefice of the parish of Christchurch, whilst the latter, the church of Julius and Aaron, is likely to be the same as the one recorded in Llandaff charter 225. Both churches are later recorded in two confirmations; one of c. 1154–58 by Morgan ap Owen and his brother Iorwerd,²⁹ and the other of 1204 by Archbishop Hubert Walter of Canterbury.³⁰ In all these records we are dealing with a single church dedicated to both Julius and Aaron. Matters are complicated by two other confirmations however, in an 1143 confirmation by the future Henry II the church is named *ecclesiam sanctorum Iulii et Aaron, atque Albani* (the church of Julius and Aaron, and Alban),³¹ and this triplet

²² Davies, Wendy, *The Llandaff Charters* (National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1979). See also Charles-Edwards, T., *Wales and the Britons, 350–1064* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013), 267.

²³ Davies, *Llandaff Charters*, 121.

²⁴ Evans, J. G. (ed.), *The Text of the Book of Llan Dâv* (Oxford, 1893), 225.

²⁵ Coe, J. B. *The Place-Names of the Book of Llandaf*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Wales Aberystwyth, 2001), 591–2, 1005–6.

²⁶ Davies, Wendy, *An Early Welsh Microcosm: Studies in the Llandaff Charters* (Royal Historical Society, London, 1978), 42.

²⁷ See below note 50.

²⁸ Dugdale, William, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (London, 1830), vol. 6, 2, 1022. The grant is known from an inspeximus and confirmation of Edward I of 1290 (see *Calendar of the Charter Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office. Volume 2. Henry III – Edward I. A.D. 1257–1300* (London, HMSO, 1906), 358, no. 1). The year 1113 is mentioned in the confirmation of Henry I preserved by another inspeximus of 1290 (*ibid.*, 361, no. 1), but this date appears to have been the result of a forgery made at Bec (Richard Sharpe in litt. 2015). The first roll is repeated in an inspeximus of Edward II of 1320 (*Calendar of the Charter Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office. Volume 3. Edward I, Edward II. A.D. 1300–1326* (London, HMSO, 1908), vol. 3, 434).

²⁹ *Calendar of the Charter Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office. Volume 2. Henry III – Edward I. A.D. 1257–1300* (London, HMSO, 1906), 358–9, no 2.

³⁰ *CChR 1257–1300 preserved in the Public Record Office. Volume 2. Henry III – Edward I. A.D. 1257–1300* (London, HMSO, 1906), 361, no 13.

³¹ *CChR 1257–1300 preserved in the Public Record Office. Volume 2. Henry III – Edward I. A.D. 1257–1300* (London, HMSO, 1906), 362, no 2.

occurs again in a 1201 confirmation by King John.³² Most commentators have suggested the triplet indicates that the dedication to Alban was accessory,³³ but since an *ecclesie Sancti Albon de Kairlion* is recorded in a deed of 1495 and William Coxe also referred to a chapel dedicated to St Alban that had stood ‘on an eminence to the east of Caerleon’, it is possible that in addition to the church of Julius and Aaron, there was a separate foundation dedicated to Alban.³⁴ We shall return to this issue shortly, but in the meantime we can note that again there are no grounds for identifying separate churches dedicated to Julius and Aaron. Unfortunately, the church(es) is absent from the *Valuation of Norwich* of 1254, *Taxatio Nicholai* of 1291, and *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535.³⁵ This omission can probably be attributed to its low valuation or status as a chapel rather than a full benefice.

Unpicking the Evidence

This review of the evidence has brought to light two contradictions; the secondary sources imply there were separate churches dedicated to Julius and Aaron (and latterly also Alban), but up until the early nineteenth-century these were always referred to in the past tense and the evidence for their existence, outside of the highly dubious Geoffrey of Monmouth, is weak. The charters provide more concrete evidence, but in these we see a single church dedicated to both martyrs, and if there was a separate church it was dedicated to Alban not Julius or Aaron. How are we to account for this? One explanation could be that there had been multiple churches/chapels that were founded and re-founded on separate occasions. This seems unlikely however, and in light of the lack of historical credibility behind the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, scholars have attempted to reconcile the different strands of evidence by suggesting that a single church dedicated to both Julius and Aaron had been located at either St Julians or Penrhos, with the other location being a late back-formulation.³⁶ On the strength of the antiquarian accounts St Julians would have the stronger claim in this regard, the evidence for Penrhos being later, more ambiguous, and on the wrong side of the river Usk according to the boundary clause attached to Llandaff charter 225. Meanwhile, a second church dedicated to St Alban emerged sometime after 1113. The evidence for the latter being the appearance of *ecclesiam sanctorum Iulii et Aaron, atque Albani* in two charter confirmations, Coxe’s reference to St Alban’s chapel, and a deed of 1495 that refers to the overseers of St Alban’s church at Caerleon.

³² CChR 1257–1300 preserved in the Public Record Office. Volume 2. Henry III – Edward I. A.D. 1257–1300 (London, HMSO, 1906), 363, no 8. Also printed in Hardy, Thomas, *Rotuli Chartarum* (London, 1837), vol. 1, part 1, 95.

³³ Levison, W., ‘St Alban and St Albans’, *Antiquity* 16 (1942), 337–59. Knight, Jeremy, ‘Britain’s other martyrs’ idem; *South Wales from the Romans to the Norman: Christianity, Literacy and Lordship* (Amberley Publishing, Stroud, 2013). Seaman, Andy, ‘Julius and Aaron ‘Martyrs of Caerleon’: in search of Wales’ first Christians’, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 164 (2015), 201–20.

³⁴ The deed, National Library of Wales, St Pierre Documents MS. 33, is referred to in Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, 205. Coxe, *An Historical Tour*, 95. Levison, ‘St Alban and St Albans’, 340. Wade-Evans went so far as to argue that this was Alban’s *martyrium* and the site of his execution. Wade-Evans, A. W., ‘The Site of St Alban’s Martyrdom’, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 5 (1905), 256–9.

³⁵ Evans, ‘Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Sites’, 115 and Knight *South Wales*, 27, citing the 1802 edition of the *Taxatio* (Astle, T., Ayscough, S. and Caley, J. (eds), *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae auctoritate P. Nicholai IV, circa A.D. 1291* (Record Commission, London, 1802), note the inclusion of the church of St Aaron (*ecclie de Seint Aron*), which Knight suggests may have been a scribal error for Alban. But since this entry is listed alongside churches at Porthcasseg and St Kingsmark it is much more likely to be an error for St Arvon (which lies between the aforementioned parishes), as it is listed in the more accurate edition in Denton, J. and Taylor, B., ‘The 1291 Valuation of the Ecclesiastical Benefices of Llandaff Diocese’, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 147 (1998), 133–58.

³⁶ Evans, ‘Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Sites’, 114–6. Levison, ‘St Alban and St Albans’, 341.

Jeremy Knight has presented an alternative and more convincing way to reconcile the evidence however. In his interpretation there was only ever one church, during the Middle Ages at least, but its dedication changed from Julius and Aaron, to Julius, Aaron, and Alban, and finally just to Alban.³⁷ If we assume that *ecclesiam sanctorum Iulii et Aaron, atque Albani* referred to a single church, which given the ambiguous phrasing of the Latin is possible, Alban must have been added to the dedication at some point after the mid-ninth century. This need not be surprising since Julius and Aaron were relatively obscure saints who were known through their association with Alban in both Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* and Gildas's *De Excidio Britanniae*. Levison suggests that relics of Alban came to south Wales around 1129 when his shrine at St Albans (Hertfordshire) was opened. He argued that the link came through Bec, the mother-house of Goldcliff, via Abbot Paul (1077–93) of St Albans (Hertfordshire) who was a nephew of Lanfranc of Canterbury, formerly an abbot of Bec.³⁸ Tristan Gray Hulse, however, has drawn attention to the fact that Alban appears in the dedication a short time before the story of Alban was linked to Caerleon through Amphibalus (a resident of Caerleon and the priest whom Alban shielded from capture) in William of St Albans *Life of St Alban and St Amphibalus* (written c. 1167–77) and later Gerald of Wales' *Itinerarium Cambriae* (written c. 1191). Thus, he has suggested that there was a growing tradition linking Alban with Caerleon in the twelfth century, and a transference of relics was not necessary to explain why Alban was added to the dedication.³⁹ If this did occur it allows us to bring the church of St Alban (*ecclesie Sancti Albon de Kairlion*) recorded in the deed of 1495 into the picture, but would imply that after Alban was added he 'proved something of a cuckoo in the nest' and eventually supplanted Julius and Aaron to be left as the sole patron.⁴⁰ There is little firm evidence to support this suggestion, but it is not impossible given that we know that church dedications were not static, and the relative obscurity of Julius and Aaron when compared to Alban could go some way to explaining how they were swept aside.

If this interpretation is correct, then we should be looking for the church of Julius and Aaron (and later Alban) not at St Julians or Penrhos, but at Mount St Albans where Coxe stated that St Alban's chapel had stood.⁴¹ Indeed, when we look at this site in more detail we find further, albeit tentative, support for our hypothesis. Mount St Albans lies within the parish of Christchurch, the benefice of which was granted to Goldcliff alongside the church of Julius and Aaron, and it sits more comfortably within the bounds of the *territorium sanctorum martirum iulij et aaron* than St Julians.⁴² The archaeological evidence from Mount St Albans is also more positive; a lease of 1728 records the field-name *Cae'r Fynwent* ('field of the graveyard'), and in 1801 Coxe stated that 'an adjoining piece of land [to the chapel] is still called the Chapel Yard today'. It is surely not a coincidence that he also noted that in 1785 'several stone coffins were discovered in digging foundations of

³⁷ Knight, Jeremy, 'The earl church in Gwent, II' *Monmouthshire Antiquary* IX (1993), 2–3; 'Britain's other martyrs'; *South Wales from the Romans to the Normans*.

³⁸ Levison, 'St Alban and St Albans', 343.

³⁹ Gray Hulse, Tristan, in litt. (2009).

⁴⁰ Knight, *South Wales*, 27.

⁴¹ ST36139111. Goldcliff Priory had lost the majority of its possessions by the mid-fifteenth century so St Alban's church being in secular hands in 1495 does not present a problem. Burton, Janet, and Stöber, Karen, *Abbeys and Priors of Medieval Wales* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2015), 98.

⁴² Coe, 'Place-names', 591–2; Parsons, David, *Martyrs and Memorials: Merthyr Place-Names and the Church in Early Wales* (University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth, 2013), 87.

a new house'⁴³ (See Fig. 2). This must be a reference to the discovery of cist burials—a form of burial practice known to have been associated with early medieval churches in western Britain. Jeremy Knight has drawn attention to a tenth or early eleventh century sculptured cross slab that was presented to Caerleon Museum shortly before 1862 by the owner of Bulmore Farm (which is less than 500 metres downslope from Mount St Albans). The Bulmore cross has no exact provenance, but all of the other examples of early medieval cross slabs from Monmouthshire were associated with important early medieval churches, and it would be surprising if this were not the case here. Given Bulmore's proximity to Mount St Albans this must be a strong candidate for such a church.⁴⁴ Finally, archaeological excavation undertaken by the author also adds credence to the argument (see below).

Thus, a case can be made for identifying Mount St Albans as the site of a church that was established before the mid-ninth century and stood until at least 1495.⁴⁵ Here we should pause to note that Julius and Aaron are identified as Roman martyrs in the sixth century *De Excidio Britanniae*, and Gildas implies that their *martyrium* at the 'City of the Legions' was an important cult site when he was writing around 530/40.⁴⁶ There has been considerable debate about the identity of the 'City of the Legions', but Caerleon retains the strongest claim.⁴⁷ Mount St Albans is located on a prominent hill overlooking Caerleon. It lies between the Roman roads leading to Usk and Caerwent, and the church would have stood on the edge of an extensive area of cemeteries that extended along the northern side of Chepstow Hill (See Fig. 1). Thus, the location of the church is evocative of the extramural martyria of Late Antique Europe, and a credible case has been made for identifying Mount St Albans as the site of the martyrium of Julius and Aaron.⁴⁸

The place-name *merthir iun et aaron* in the *Book of Llandaff* has long been cited as the vital link between the ninth century and the shine referred to by Gildas, with the *Merthir* element seen as deriving from the Latin *Martyrium*, the term used since the fourth century to designate a church built over the grave of a Christian martyr.⁴⁹ David Parson's detailed re-examination of the place-name evidence has severed this link however, and he makes a strong case for *Merthyr* originally denoting a place of real or presumed early Christian burial. Although as mentioned above, he sees the *merthyr iun et aaron* of Llandaff charter 225 as a scribal association of the twelfth century.⁵⁰ Be this as it may, it remains the case that a church dedicated to Julius and Aaron, two Roman martyrs associated with Caerleon since the early sixth century, appears to have been located on the outskirts of Caerleon's

⁴³ For the lease see Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, 306. For the 'Chapel yard' and burials see Coxe, *An Historical Tour*, 95. The 'new house' is likely to be Mount St Albans house, which stood until the 1970s.

⁴⁴ Knight 'Britain's other Martyrs', 40–1; Redknapp, M. and Lewis J. M. *Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales: Volume One* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2007), 505–8 & 579–80.

⁴⁵ The church is absent from the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1535), which could imply it was abandoned before the Reformation.

⁴⁶ Seaman, 'Julius and Aaron', 205.

⁴⁷ To the list of locations discussed and discounted in Seaman, 'Julius and Aaron', we can now add Leicester. Breeze, Andrew, 'Legionum Urbs and the British Martyrs Aaron and Julius', *Voprosy onomastiki* 13.1 (2016), 30–42.

⁴⁸ Boon, 'Early church'. Knight, 'Britain's Other Martyrs'.

⁴⁹ Williams H., *Gildae, De Excidio Britanniae, Fragmenta, Liber de Paenitentia, Accedit et Lorica Gildae* (London, 1899), 26–7; *Christianity in Early Britain* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1912), 105. For a modification of this interpretation see Sharpe, Richard, 'Martyrs and local saints in Late Antique Britain', in (eds.) Thacker, A. and Sharpe, R. *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002), 75–154.

⁵⁰ Parsons, *Martyrs and Memorials*, 39, 52–3.

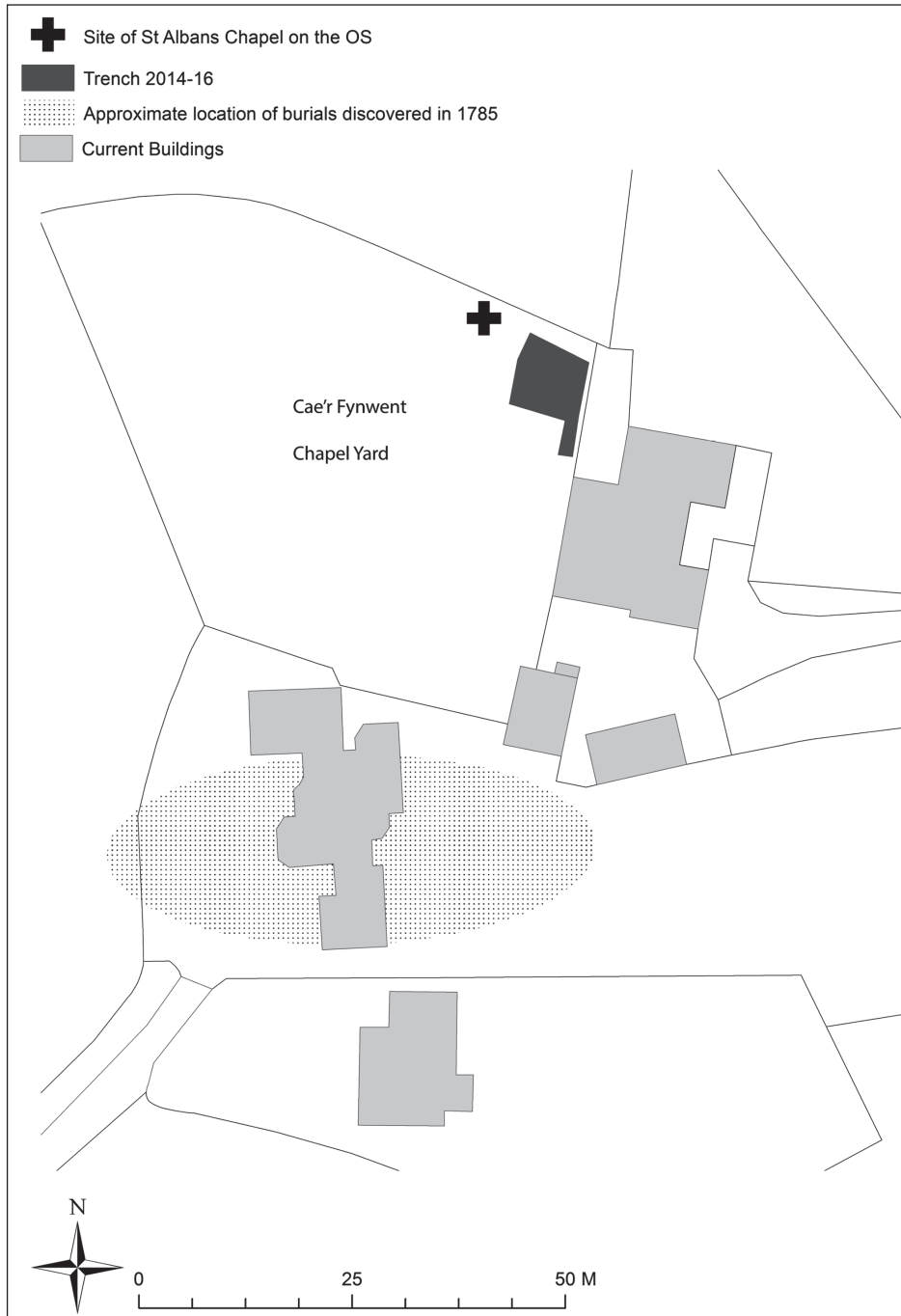


Fig. 2: The 'Chapel Yard' at Mount St Albans, showing the location of Alban's chapel (as marked by the Ordnance Survey), the approximate location of the cist burials discovered in 1785, and the 2014–16 excavation trench. *Ordnance Survey (GB), Using: EDINA Digimap Ordnance Survey Service.*

Roman cemetery in a position that is reminiscent of Late Antique martyria on the Continent. It was for this reason that the author initiated a programme of archaeological fieldwork on the site, the preliminary results of which are considered below. First, however, we must consider a question that arises out of the remaining strands of the evidence – if separate churches dedicated to Julius and Aaron did not exist at Caerleon, why did Camden and Godwin state that they had, and how did these ‘chapels’ come to be located at St Julians and Penrhos? In the following section it will be argued that this situation owed more to the religious convictions of the local gentry following the Reformation than any genuine historical basis.

British Martyrs and the Reformation

Camden was the figurehead of the sixteenth-century ‘historical revolution’, but the extent to which his endeavours, and those of his contemporaries, were tempered by the religious debates of the time should not be understated.⁵¹ Interpretation of scripture was fundamental to the debates and disagreements that followed the Reformation, but both Protestants and Catholics also looked to history, and early British Christian history in particular, to affirm and legitimise their positions.⁵² Catholics looked to Bede’s narrative of the Augustinian conversion to affirm the papalist heritage of British Christianity, but Protestant writers saw Augustine’s mission as an aberration, and sought to demonstrate continuity between pre-Augustinian British Christianity and the new establishment. Thus, Joseph of Arimathea and King Lucius, rather than Augustine of Canterbury, were central to the Protestant cause.⁵³ St Alban, who was indelibly linked to Julius and Aaron in Geoffrey of Monmouth as well as Bede and Gildas, was seen by both Protestants and Catholics as foundational to their accounts of early British Christianity,⁵⁴ and it is not unreasonable to suggest that Julius and Aaron were also drawn into the debate. Indeed, they are mentioned alongside Alban in the 1570 and subsequent editions John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments*,⁵⁵ and in a Protestant exposition of early British church history given in the preface to the 1567 Welsh version of the New Testament Aaron is identified as one of the ‘chiefs of the land of Morgan [Glamorgan]’.⁵⁶

Given the ambiguities that have arisen over the location and indeed existence of the chapels of Julius and Aaron prior to the sixteenth century we must ask ourselves whether it was coincidence that St Julius’s chapel came to be associated with the manor house of the Herberts of St Julians, a strong Protestant family with royal connections, or that in 1600 the site of St Aaron’s church at Penrhos was acquired by the Morgans of Llantarnam who were leading recusant Catholics. Before the Reformation the Herberts and Morgans had been connected by marriage, but they were now on opposite sides of a growing religious divide.⁵⁷ The Morgans were known to have purchased former

⁵¹ Curran, John, *Roman Invasions: The British History, Protestant Anti-Romanism and the Historical Imagination in England 1530–1660* (University of Delaware Press, Delaware, 2002).

⁵² Heal, F., ‘Appropriating History: Catholic and Protestant Polemics and the National Past’, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68, 1–2, (2005), 109–32.

⁵³ Williams, G., ‘Some Protestant views of Early British Church History’, *History* 38, 134 (1953), 219–33. Heal, F., 2005. ‘What can King Lucius do for you? The Reformation and the Early British Church’, *English Historical Review* 120, 487 (2005), 593–614.

⁵⁴ Chapman, Alison, *Patrons and Patron Saints in Early Modern English Literature* (Routledge, London, 2013), 76.

⁵⁵ Foxe, John, *Actes and Monuments* (London, 1570), 3, 124, 161.

⁵⁶ Translated in Evans, A. O., *A Memorandum on the Legality of the Welsh Bible and the Welsh Version of the Book of Common Prayer* (W. Lewis, Cardiff, 1925).

⁵⁷ Kennerley, E., ‘The Herberts of St. Julians’, *Gwent Local History*, 35 (1975), 8–18.

monastic estates in Monmouthshire,⁵⁸ but it is also possible that these families sought to bolster their positions by claiming that the churches of Caerleon's Roman martyrs had once stood on their lands. Indeed, such claims could have been instigated by the discovery of Romano-British remains that were mistaken for a church or chapel. Sir George Herbert appears to have settled at Christchurch in the late fifteenth century, but the earliest reference to the place-name St Julians that this author has found appears in a will of 1566/67, and it is possible that the name and the tradition of the chapel of St Julius is not much older than that.⁵⁹ Perhaps then, the ruins of the chapel of St Julius described by Coxe in 1801 was a private chapel built by the Herberts on what was taken to be the site of the original chapel? The traditions linking Julius and Aaron to Caerleon would have been reinvigorated by the Reformation, but as we have seen, Julius and Aaron had slipped from the dedication of their original church before 1495, and this church, now dedicated to Alban, appears to have been abandoned soon after. Thus, the churches of Julius and Aaron were free to be re-discovered in other locations.

Excavations at Mount St Albans: Preliminary Results

In 2007 the author undertook a programme of geophysical survey within the field that the Ordnance Survey placed the site of St Alban's chapel. This is assumed to be the field described as the 'Chapel yard' by Coxe and named as *Cae'r Fynwent* in the lease of 1728. The cist burials referred to by Coxe must have been discovered below Mount St Albans House, which stood to the immediate south (see Fig. 2). The survey revealed several features of potential archaeological interest, and so a small-scale programme of test-pit excavation was undertaken in 2008. The test-pits showed that the geophysical anomalies were largely geological in origin, but archaeological deposits associated with Roman and medieval pottery were encountered in one test-pit in the north-east corner of the field. Due to time constraints these were exposed in plan and recorded, but not fully excavated.⁶⁰ A change of employment circumstances meant that the author was unable to revisit the site until August 2014, when expansion of the test-pit revealed numerous features associated with pottery of thirteenth- to sixteenth-century date as well as small quantities of Roman material, including pottery and a complete brick. Time constraints meant that again features were exposed, sampled, and recorded in plan, but not fully excavated. However, in August 2016 the trench was expanded again, most of the features were sectioned, and slots were excavated through deposits in two key areas. The latest feature identified was a nineteenth century sawpit and associated drains, but at least three phases of medieval deposits were identified (See Fig. 3). A small quantity of Romano-British pottery was also recovered.

The latest medieval features included post-holes and pits associated with and cut into a substantial stone-lined drain that contained medieval pottery, including glazed jug sherds. The drain was aligned SW-NE and followed the natural slope. It was truncated by later features at both ends. Earlier features examined in the two slots included two sections of swallow ditch, one aligned NE-SW (Ditch 1) and the other SE-NW (Ditch 2). It was not possible to resolve their stratigraphic relationship, but the two ditches appear to lie perpendicular to one another and could define a building or enclosure. Samples of short-life wood charcoal from a secondary fill of Ditch 1 produced radiocarbon dates of 1043–1224 AD and 1206–1277 AD at 2 sigma calibration. This ditch ran on the same alignment as the excavation slot and was truncated by a modern drain at the SW end, so

⁵⁸ Williams, G., *Wales and the Reformation* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1997), 331.

⁵⁹ Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, 295–6 & 299.

⁶⁰ Seaman, Andy, 'Caerleon, Mount St Albans', *Archaeology in Wales* 49 (2009), 123.



Fig. 3: Plan of medieval features investigated in 2016. *Source: The Author.*

it was not possible to determine its full extent in plan. The primary fill of the eastern ditch did not produce any datable material, but medieval jug and jar sherds were recovered from the upper fill that was truncated by the later stone-lined drain. This flat-bottomed ditch was at least 1.3m wide, and cut an earlier post-hole and what appears to be an E-W aligned grave, although the full extent

of this feature was not exposed. The ditch shared the same alignment of the later drain, but was filled with a considerable quantity of loose sandstone rubble. Another probably W-E aligned grave that was truncated by a pit was identified immediately to the north. Bone preservation was poor, but small fragments were recovered through flotation of the fills and have tentatively been identified as human. A possible coffin nail and sherds of medieval pottery were retrieved. Finds included over 250 sherds of medieval pottery, at least four sherds of Roman pottery, as well of several iron objects. The stratigraphically earliest contexts contained very little datable material culture, although an iron nail head or rove was recovered from the post-hole cut by Ditch 2. It is possible that these deposits date to the early medieval period, but radiocarbon dating is needed to confirm this. A full programme of post-excavation analysis is currently underway.

The small scale of the excavations undertaken in 2014–16 prevent all but very tentative interpretation of the features encountered. Nevertheless, the presence of pits, ditches, post-holes, and burials associated with medieval pottery is a significant discovery that gives credence to the antiquarian accounts of there being burials and a church or chapel within the locality. Thus far, no definite structural evidence of such a building has been encountered, but the stone-lined drain must be associated with a substantial structure to the east, and it is possible that the church lies under the present agricultural buildings. Indeed, fragments of ashlar building stone incorporated into the fabric of these buildings may be derived from such a structure. The ditch sections recorded in 2016 could represent robbed wall trenches, but the form, extent and depth of these features and the deposits associated with them have not yet been fully established. No Romano-British features have been identified thus far, but residual finds suggest that earlier features may be present. The fieldwork undertaken between 2008 and 2016 has established that the site has great potential, but a series of important questions remain unanswered. Thus, the author is currently seeking funding to undertake a further, more extensive, campaign of research excavation.

Conclusions

The evidence discussed in this article is complex and contradictory, and could be read in different ways. It has been argued that Geoffrey of Monmouth's description of Caerleon set later generations of historians on a wild goose chase in search of the churches of Julius and Aaron, whilst the location of the original church, which was dedicated to both martyrs and may have stood on the site of their martyrdom, was forgotten. Excavation at Mount St Albans has demonstrated that this site holds significant research potential, but more extensive excavation is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn about the date and interpretation of the medieval features within the 'Chapel yard'.

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OBSERVATIONS ON ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE IN THE DIOCESE OF MONMOUTH

By Malcolm Thurlby

INTRODUCTION

An invitation from Dean Lister Tonge to speak to the Friends of St Woolos Cathedral on 18 April 2016 provided an excellent opportunity to review what I had written about Romanesque architecture and sculpture in the Diocese of Monmouth a little over a decade ago.¹ I was satisfied with most of what I had said. On the patronage and date of the Great Tower of Chepstow Castle, I hold with William Fitz Osbern, Earl of Hereford, 1067–71. Here reference should be added to Ron Baxter's thoughtful analysis of the state of the question especially regarding Rick Turner's attribution to King William I after his visit to Chepstow in 1081.² On the Great Tower I have just one further observation about associations with ancient Rome. On Chepstow Priory, there is more to say about the articulation and vaulting of the church, and the context of the west portal. On St Woolos (Gwynllyw), Newport, there are additional remarks on the design of the Romanesque nave and, more importantly, the west archway which was the topic of an important article by Jeremy Knight and Rita Wood published soon after my book had appeared.³ Inspired by Knight and Wood's references to the miracles of St Gwynllyw and St Cadog, and their biblical analogues, I now propose a revised and expanded interpretation of the archway with particular reference to the themes of the capital sculpture. There follow some new observations on the south doorway at Whitson and the priest's doorway at St Thomas, Over Monnow, especially with regard to the longevity of regional traditions in Romanesque architecture.

Chepstow Castle: The Great Tower

In his comments on the Great Tower of Chepstow Castle, Ron Baxter observed that: 'Until the beginning of the 19th century it was thought to be a Roman building, and its Imperial references may have been obvious to medieval visitors too'.⁴ This prompts me to emphasize the Roman associations for the Great Tower. The diamond-shaped stones on the tympanum of the east doorway recall the *opus reticulatum* masonry technique of Roman architecture (Fig. 1). This pattern is reflected in the painted tympana above the dais at the west end of the first floor of the Great Tower.⁵ The chip-carved

¹ Thurlby, M., *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales* (Logaston Press, Almeley [Herefordshire], 2006), 3–40, 55–56, 84–92, 113–17 & 140–74.

² Baxter, R., 'Chepstow Castle, Chepstow, Monmouthshire', *Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, <http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/3257/>; Turner, R.C., with contributions by Allen, J.R.L., Coldstream, N., Jones-Jenkins, C., Morris, R.K. and Priestley, S.G., 'The Great Tower, Chepstow Castle, Wales' *Antiquaries Journal*, 84 (2004), 223–318; Turner, R., in *Chepstow Castle: Its History and Buildings*, ed. Turner R. and Johnson, A, Logaston Press, Almeley (Herefordshire).

³ Knight, J. K. and Wood, R., 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport: the Romanesque archway', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 155 (2006), 163–85.

⁴ Baxter, 'Chepstow Castle'. In *An Historical Tour of Monmouthshire illustrated with views by Sir R.C. Hoare...and other engravings, by William Coxe*, 2 vols (T. Cadell, Jr. and W. Davies, London, 1801), II, 368, it was observed that some antiquaries 'suppose it to be of Roman workmanship, and to distinguish it by the name of the Roman wall'.

⁵ Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, fig. 16, pl. 1.



Fig. 1. Chepstow Castle, Great Tower, detail of east doorway.
All Photographs by Malcolm Thurlby.

saltire crosses on the lintel, tympanum and two-order arch of the east doorway were also popular with the Romans, as in the Roman altar preserved in the south porch of All Saints, Lanchester (Co. Durham) (Figs 1 and 2). Chip-carving was also a favoured form of decoration in eleventh-century Normandy and therefore the motif spoke strongly of Norman patronage, as opposed to an Anglo-Saxon heritage. Additionally, Roman associations are also represented in the reuse of Roman brick in the hood over the arch and the string course to mark the division between the ground and first storeys, and with the inclusion of powdered Roman brick in the mortar of the tympanum stones.

Chepstow Priory Church

Just as the castle provided a monumental image of the secular authority of the new Norman rulers, so Chepstow Priory marked their religious presence. Such duality was standard practice for the post-Conquest administrators, as illustrated in cities like Durham, Lincoln and Rochester, on a much smaller scale, at Kilpeck (Herefordshire), and formerly at Newport where the castle was adjacent to St Gwynllyw's (Woolos) church. Chepstow Priory was a daughter house of William Fitz Osbern's foundation of Cormeilles Abbey (Eure). The foundation is not documented but it was probably by William Fitz Osbern, or his son, Roger of Breteuil, in commemoration of his father's death in 1071. If Roger was the founder, the event would pre-date his capture and imprisonment by the king and forfeiture of his estates to the crown in 1075. Of the priory church there remains part of the lower courses of the north-west crossing pier and the north and south elevations of the nave shorn of the aisles, plus the west front. The plan of the eastern arm of the church is not known. Jacob Millerd's 1686 map of Chepstow shows the church from the north side with a ruined eastern arm. Not surprisingly, the illustration is sketchy but it appears to show the wall of the former north aisle



Fig. 2. Lanchester (Co. Durham), All Saints, Roman altar in S porch.

of the eastern arm. In 1793 Charles Heath wrote: ‘The circular arches of the nave, supported by square massive pillars, remain entire within the church; but those of the ancient choir and of the cross ile (*sic*), are only to be traced by their foundations on the outside of it’.⁶ This suggests that the ‘ancient choir’, the former presbytery, had piers like those in the nave. Such an arrangement is in contrast to the great churches of the late eleventh century in the south-west midlands, as at Worcester Cathedral and the Benedictine abbey churches of Gloucester and Tewkesbury.⁷ Compound piers are used in the presbytery of Hereford Cathedral, commenced between 1107 and 1114.⁸ At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was observed that the Chepstow Priory church was ‘built in the form of a cathedral’, and that at the east end of the nave there remained ‘one of the lofty arches which supported the [crossing] tower’.⁹ From this information and the remaining lower courses of the north-west crossing pier, the original crossing with round-headed arches that occupied the full height of the elevation may be reconstructed with reference to the crossing of the abbey church of St John the Baptist, Chester.¹⁰

⁶ *Chepstow in Monmouth Shier iconographically described*, 1686 by Jacob Millerd of Bristol; Heath, C., *Monmouthshire: Descriptive Accounts of Persfield and Chepstow...* (Charles Heath, Monmouth, 1793), 32.

⁷ Gem, R.D.H., ‘Bishop Wulfstan II and the Romanesque Cathedral Church of Worcester,’ *Medieval Art and Architecture at Worcester Cathedral: British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions*, I, ed. G. Popper (W.S. Maney and Son Ltd, Leeds, 1978) 15–37; Fernie, E., *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000), 153–65.

⁸ Thurlby, M., ‘Hereford Cathedral: The Romanesque Fabric’, in *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology in Hereford: British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions*, XV, ed. David Whitehead (W.S. Maney and Son Ltd, Leeds, 1995), 15–28.

⁹ *An Historical Tour of Monmouthshire illustrated with views by Sir R.C. Hoare...*, II, 361.

¹⁰ Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, 21, 23–4, figs 25 and 26; Baxter, R., ‘St John the Baptist, Chester, Cheshire’, *Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, <http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/525/>

The plan and elevation of Chepstow nave (Figs 3 and 4), is of Norman derivation; the full-height crossing, three-storey elevation appears in the Benedictine abbey church of Bernay (commenced 1008 x 1017), and ashlar masonry is used as in the abbey churches of Jumièges (commenced 1040) and Saint-Etienne at Caen (commenced c. 1065).¹¹ Yet certain details betray a pre-Conquest heritage which suggests the involvement of Anglo-Saxon masons and possibly that the master mason was English. The elevation of the nave does not match north and south; there are single openings at first-storey level on the north but paired arches on the south (Figs 3 and 4). The east responds of the arcades included paired shafts as part of the former western piers of the crossing.¹² The west responds of the nave arcades have single shafts and block capitals to carry the inner order of the arches.¹³ Both responds are different from the other main arcade piers in which the arches rest on thin chamfered impost. Similarly, variety in pier form finds precedent in the mid eleventh-century crossing and nave of Holy Trinity, Great Paxton (Huntingdonshire).¹⁴ The details are quite different from Chepstow but the principle is the same. Looking forward, this love of variety in pier form is also encountered in the nave of St Gwynllyw's (Woolos), Newport. A pre-Conquest tradition is also evident in the triforium openings on the south elevation of the Chepstow nave. Specifically, the twin shafts between the paired openings and the nook shafts of the outer jambs have neither moulded bases nor capitals but sit directly on rectangular plinths and carry chamfered impost. Pre-Conquest analogues are found on the east jamb of the arch from the north porticus to the nave at St Laurence, Bradford-on-Avon (Wiltshire), the crossing arches of the former minster church at Stow (Lincolnshire) and in the chancel arch at Clayton (Sussex).¹⁵

The articulation of the interior of the south wall of the nave, especially the arcs marked in plaster above the clerestory windows, show that the space was covered by a high stone vault. Here the description of the pre-restoration state of the nave given by George Ormerod is of the greatest importance:

Over the round arches of the nave were and still remain, Triforia, and over them a row of Clerestory windows, all clearly Norman, and the roofs over the side aisles and nave as shown by fragments, had been vaulted with arches of tufa placed between ribs of oolite. The arches were sprung from vaulting shafts, omitted in Hoare's elevation, but ascending from the first string course in front of every pier.¹⁶

It is clear, then, that the nave aisles were rib vaulted and that a high rib vault covered the nave. These would have been four-part vaults as in the aisles of Durham Cathedral, commenced in 1093, and in the high vaults of the Benedictine abbey church of Lessay (Manche), where the eastern arm

¹¹ Musset, L., *Normandie Romane, II, La Haute Normandie*, (Zodiaque, La Pierre-qui Vire, Yonne, 1974), 61–117, pls 25–32; Musset, L., *Normandie Romane, I, La Basse Normandie*, (Zodiaque, La Pierre-qui Vire, Yonne, 1975), 55–61, pls 1–18; Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England*, 91–96. 101–2.

¹² Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, fig. 25.

¹³ Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, fig. 32.

¹⁴ Taylor, H. M. and Taylor, J., *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, 2 vols., (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1965, fig. 238.

¹⁵ For a discussion of the date of Clayton chancel arch, see Thurlby, M., *The Architecture and Sculpture of Deerhurst Priory: The Later 11th, 12th- and Early 13th-Century Work* (The Friends of Deerhurst Church, Deerhurst, 2014), 8.

¹⁶ Ormerod, G., *Strigulensia: Archaeological Memoirs relating to the district adjacent to the confluence of the Severn and the Wye* (T. Richards, London 1861), 82; Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, fig. 26.



Fig. 3. Chepstow Priory, nave interior, S elevation.

was finished by 1098.¹⁷ ‘Arches of tufa and ribs of oolite’ make it clear that the diagonal ribs were of limestone and that tufa was used for the transverse arches. The use of tufa probably follows the Roman precedent of the basilica of the Roman Legionary Fortress at Caerleon where tufa and brick

¹⁷ Bilson, J., ‘Durham Cathedral: the Chronology of its Vaults’, *Archaeological Journal*, LXXIX (1922), 101–60; Thurlby, M., ‘The Building of the Cathedral: The Romanesque and Early Gothic Fabric’, in *Durham Cathedral: A Celebration*, ed. Douglas Pocock (Durham: City of Durham Trust, 2014), 21–53; Thurlby, M., ‘The Abbey Church of Lessay (Manche) and Romanesque Architecture in North-Eastern England’, *Antiquaries Journal*, XCIV (2014), 71–92.



Fig. 4. Chepstow Priory, nave interior, N elevation.

were used in the arches.¹⁸ It is most likely that tufa was also used for the vault webs.¹⁹ It is not a straightforward matter to reconstruct the articulation of the responds of the high vault. ‘The arches were sprung from vaulting shafts’ makes it clear that the transverse arches were carried on shafts. But what of the vault ribs? Were they also carried on shafts or could they have been corbelled out in the

¹⁸ Evans, E.M., in Burnham, B.C. and Davies, J. L (eds), *Roman Frontiers in Wales and the Marches*, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (2010), 164; Zienkiewicz, J.D., *The Legionary Fortress Baths at Caerleon*, 2 vols, I, *The Buildings* (National Museum of Wales and Cadw, 1986), 104.

¹⁹ Zienkiewicz, J.D., *The Legionary Fortress Baths at Caerleon*, I, 104, 130, 156. For further discussion, see Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, 28–9; *idem*, ‘The Use of Tufa Webbing and Wattle Centering in English Vaults down to 1340’, *Villard’s Legacy: Studies in Medieval Technology, Science and Art in Memory of Jean Gimpel*, ed. Marie-Thérèse Zenner (Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, 2004), 157–172.

manner of the nave high vault of Durham Cathedral? And, the phrase ‘ascending from the first string in front of every pier’ indicates that the shafts did not rise from the ground. The first string course was at the springing point of the arches of the main arcade. The plaster of the restoration of the front of the nave piers suggests that originally there would have been a pilaster at this point on which the vault shafts would have started level with the main arcade arch springers. I do not know of a parallel for vault shafts sitting on a pilaster but there is a close analogue in the responds of the crossing arches of Ewenny Priory.²⁰ Here the inner order of the crossing arches is carried on scalloped capitals atop paired shafts which rest on a pilaster (Fig. 5). Applying this arrangement to the Chepstow nave high-vault responds, the transverse arch would have been carried on paired shafts probably with scalloped capitals. The width of the responds of the Ewenny crossing arches range between 4ft 1½in. and 4ft 4in., a scale that could be accommodated on the front of the Chepstow nave piers which measure 6ft 8in or 6ft 9in. The half shafts on the west face of the north-west crossing pier at Chepstow are 1ft 3in. in diameter, while those on the west responds of the main arcade piers are 1ft 4 in. The nook shafts of the north-west crossing pier have a diameter of 10 inches. Hypothetically, it would be possible to accommodate paired half shafts flanked by nook shafts to carry the transverse arches and ribs of the high vault. However, careful examination of the clerestory string course in the south elevation of the Chepstow nave indicates that such a design was not constructed. Specifically, above pier S2 the clerestory string on the west extends well inside the plastered area of the wall; above pier S3 it extends on both east and west (Fig. 6), while above S4 and S5 the string to the west extends into the plastered area. It follows that the diagonal ribs of the high vault could not have been carried on capitals atop shafts attached to a pilaster. Instead, the ribs would have sat directly above the clerestory string or would have been carried on a corbel at this point. Comparison with the eastern bay of the presbytery at Ewenny Priory suggests that the former would have been the case. Here the diagonal ribs at the west of the bay sit directly on the string course (Fig. 7).²¹ Moreover, the transverse ribs in the barrel-vaulted bays of the Ewenny presbytery also rest directly on the string course (Fig. 8). In sum, the pilasters on the front of the nave piers would have carried paired half shafts above the string course level with the springers of the main arcade arches. The half shafts would have been topped with capitals which carried the transverse arches of the high vault in the manner of the responds of the inner order of the crossing arches at Ewenny. The diagonal ribs of the Chepstow vault were not articulated from the ground but sat on the clerestory string course adjacent to the springers of the transverse arches.

The capitals of the soffit of the arch from the nave to the west tower of Chepstow Priory were set with the construction of the tower in 1706 (Fig. 9). They probably come from the eastern crossing arch.²² They are accomplished versions of the volute capital so popular in Normandy in the second half of the eleventh century.²³ The best parallels are on the west front of Lincoln Cathedral, built by Bishop Remigius 1072/5 – 1092, and in the east arcade of the south transept of Ely Cathedral commenced in 1082.²⁴ The foliage of the Ely capitals is painted and the same may have been the case at Chepstow.

²⁰ Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, fig. 121.

²¹ The diagonal ribs of the high vaults in the presbytery, transepts and eastern bays of the nave at Lessay abbey also spring directly from the clerestory string course (Thurlby, M., ‘The Abbey Church of Lessay’).

²² Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, fig. 41.

²³ On volute capitals in Normandy, see Baylé, M., *Les origines et les premiers développements de la sculpture romane en Normandie: Art de Basse-Normandie*, no. 100. (Caen 1991).

²⁴ Baxter, R. ‘Holy and Undivided Trinity, Ely, Cambridgeshire’, *Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, <http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/1238/>



Fig. 5. Ewenny Priory, crossing, interior from NW.



Fig. 6. Chepstow Priory, S nave, detail of clerestory string and arcs of former high vault above pier S3.



Fig. 7. Ewenny Priory, presbytery, interior E bay to N.

The west front of Chepstow Priory church boasts a richly carved doorway.²⁵ The chip-carving on the third and fifth orders belongs to the tradition of the doorway of the great hall of the castle, while the chevron of the second and sixth orders are variants of this motif on the western arch to the nave at St Gwynllyw (Woolos), Newport. The multiple orders of the Chepstow doorway mark an association other than with Normandy. In England, parallels are found in the arches of the west façade of the former Bishop's Chapel at Hereford (1079–95), the west front of Tewkesbury Abbey, and the former west portal of Hereford Cathedral, but the ultimate source is in the Holy Roman Empire as in the western arch of the nave of Speyer Cathedral.

²⁵ Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, fig. 47.



Fig. 8. Ewenny Priory, presbytery, interior to NNW.



Fig. 9. Chepstow Priory, detail of S capital of the arch to the W tower.

Newport, St Gwynllyw (Woolos)

The church of St Gwynllyw (Woolos), Newport, now the cathedral, was given to St Peter's abbey, Gloucester, between 1093 and 1104. Between 1123 and 1156 the grant was disputed by the lords of Newport, the earls of Gloucester. It was settled in favour of St Peter's, Gloucester, between 1156 and 1161 by Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury. Yet an earlier indulgence from Archbishop Theobald, issued between 1139 and 1146, was 'for those who assist the church of St Gundlei of Newport'. As Jeremy Knight and Rita Wood suggest, this may indicate that the building of the church was in progress.²⁶ Robert, earl of Gloucester, 1122–47, was a great builder and founder of St James's Priory, Bristol, where he was buried.

Of the twelfth-century church there survives the five-bay nave with two-order round-headed arches carried on columns and scalloped capitals, and round-headed clerestory windows centred above the main arcade arches. It is significant that the east and west responds of the nave arcades are semi-octagonal in contrast to the cylindrical columns of the arcades. Such variations were much prized in Romanesque architecture, and by patrons of art and architecture throughout the Middle Ages. It may be significant that one of the best examples of this is in the nave of Robert of Gloucester's St James's Priory, Bristol. *Varietas* is also wonderfully expressed in the capitals of St Gwynllyw's nave arcades. The capitals are all of the scalloped type that was popular in late eleventh- and twelfth-century England, not least in the nave, chapter house and abbot's chapel of St Peter's, Gloucester. Not one of the St Gwynllyw's capitals is exactly the same as another; the number of scallops may differ along with details like being outlined or not, or having recessed shields. Similarly, the mouldings of the square abaci above the scallops display an amazing array of subtle differences.

The ultimate origin of the two-storey elevation of St Gwynllyw's nave is in Early Christian basilicas like Santa Sabina, Rome, 422–32. However, a transformation has been wrought with much heavier forms at St Gwynllyw which reflect Anglo-Norman building practice, not least at St Peter's, Gloucester. Here in the presbytery arcades we find cylindrical columns of a greater diameter than those at Newport, something that was necessary in a larger church. The scale of St Gwynllyw comes closer to the north nave arcade of Ewenny Priory, 1116–26, which was a daughter house of St Peter's, Gloucester. Here it should be noted that St Gwynllyw was not a monastic church which makes the inclusion of aisles to the nave most unusual before the later twelfth century. It is a mark of a very ambitious patron which may be generally associated with the near-contemporary St Peter's, Northampton, which was probably built for Simon (II) de Senlis, Earl of Northampton (d. 1153).²⁷

The richly decorated arch between the former *eglwys y bedd* and the nave of St Gwynllyw has attracted much attention from antiquarians and art historians not least in search of meaning in the figured capitals.²⁸ The soffit of the arch is constructed in part with tufa voussoirs probably following Roman precedent of the basilica of the nearby Roman Legionary Fortress at Caerleon as at Chepstow Priory. The two orders of the western face of the arch are carved with chevron, not surprisingly with a different form for each order (Fig. 10). On the inner order the chevron is set laterally and frontally to either side of a thin recessed roll moulding. There are distinct remains of red paint on some of

²⁶ Knight and Wood, 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport', 181.

²⁷ Baxter, R., 'St Peter, Northampton, Northamptonshire', *Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, <http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/248/>

²⁸ On the *eglwys y bedd*, see Morgan, C.O.S., 'St Woolos Church, Newport, Monmouthshire', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, series V, II (1885), 279–91 at 283–85; Knight and Wood, 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport', 180–81.



Fig. 10. Newport, St Gwynllyw, arch from former *eglwys y bedd* to the nave.

the stones, an indication that originally the sculpture would have been fully painted. The exact pattern of the chevron is unusual and although there are parallels in England none is geographically close to Newport. However, turning to the nave triforium of St Peter's, Gloucester, we find the lateral chevron on the string course at the base of the triforium, and frontal chevron in the arches. With the addition of a fine moulding we have the constituents for the creation of the St Gwynllyw pattern. The chevron of the second order is set frontally and comprises three rolls separated by thin fillets. Here there are parallels closer to hand, as on the west central doorway of Leominster Priory and the north nave doorway of St Peter and St Paul, Rock (Worcestershire), both products of the

Herefordshire School of Romanesque of Sculpture.²⁹ The motif also appears on the west doorway of Ardfert Cathedral (Co. Kerry) which is probably the work of masons from Herefordshire or Gloucestershire.³⁰ The hood mould is enriched with single billets as on a string course in the chapter house of Worcester Cathedral and on the hood over the arch of the south doorway of St Andrew, Hampton Bishop (Herefordshire).³¹

The figured capitals which carry the second order of the arch are most unusual. Their basic form, with tightly spiralled volutes at the upper corners and upright leaves projecting from the core of the capital, is derived from a Roman Composite capital. The shafts on which the capitals sit have a pronounced entasis and it is generally believed that they are spoils from nearby Roman Caerleon. Could the capitals have the same provenance? It is tempting to suggest that they do but, if that is the case, then the figures would be a re-carving of what was originally a foliage capital, an idea mooted by Octavius Morgan.³² With this in mind, I should note that I do not know of a single English, Welsh or Norman capital with leaves that look like those at St Gwynllyw.³³

On the subject matter of the figurative work, there have been various suggestions but no agreement. Here it is important to say that multiple readings or interpretations should be sought rather than searching for a single meaning for each scene. This is to apply a principle established by the famous art and architectural historian Richard Krautheimer in a celebrated article entitled 'Introduction to an Iconography of Medieval Architecture'.³⁴ That article was reprinted in a two-volume collection of Krautheimer's papers, and, as with all the papers, Krautheimer added a postscript in which he stated that he stood by what he had said in 1942 but would give more emphasis to what he called the principle of 'multi-think'.³⁵ In other words rather than looking for a single interpretation of a building one should explore multiple readings.

On the subject matter, the Creation, Fall, Flood, Baptism of Christ, and the Trinity through to scenes from the lives of St Gwynllyw and his son St Cadog have been suggested.³⁶ Association with local saints and analogues between aspects of those saints' lives with biblical scenes was introduced in an article by Jeremy Knight and Rita Wood, 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport: the Romanesque archway'.³⁷ Here I adopt their approach and expand it to another episode in the life of St Gwynllyw in association with the Flood.

²⁹ Thurlby, M., *The Herefordshire School of Romanesque Sculpture (with a History of the Anarchy in Herefordshire)* by Bruce Coplestone-Crow (Logaston Press, Almeley [Herefs.], 2013), 162–168, 215–224, figs 256 and 336.

³⁰ O'Keeffe, T., 2003. *Romanesque Ireland: Architecture and Ideology in the Twelfth Century* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2003). Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, 19–20, fig. 24; Thurlby, M., 'Aspects of English Associations for the beginnings of Romanesque architecture in Munster', *Mapping New Territories in Art and Architectural History: Essays in Honour of Roger Stalley* (Turnhout [Belgium]: Brepols, 2018), forthcoming.

³¹ Baxter, R., 'St Andrew, Hampton Bishop, Herefordshire', *Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, <http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/3104/>

³² Morgan, 'St Woolos Church', 286.

³³ See also, Freeman, E.A., 'On Architectural Antiquities in Monmouthshire, No. II', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, New Series, II (1851), 192–203 at 194–5.

³⁴ Krautheimer, R., 'An Introduction to an Iconography of Medieval Architecture', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*. V, (1942), 1–33.

³⁵ Krautheimer, R., *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval and Renaissance Art*, 2 vols (New York University Press, New York, 1969), 115–50 at 150.

³⁶ Carøe, W.D., 'St Gwynllyw's Church', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, LXXXVIII, (1933), 388–92 at 390.

³⁷ Knight and Wood, 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport'.

The left face of the left capital is dominated by a centrally-placed frontal figure whose upper body emerges above a large scored leaf, with arms held up to the side of the head (Fig. 11). To the right is another figure whose head is about half the size of that of his neighbour. His left arm is held up to the side of his head while his right arm is extended down to grab the top of one of the leaves. Knight and Wood observe that '[t]here are various rod-like features around these figures, one of which suggests a tau-shaped crozier of the kind associated with early insular ecclesiastics'.³⁸ There are four drilled holes towards the top of the capital, one to either side of the head of the central figure, and one to the left of both his left and right hands. The raised arms are those of an orant or praying figure popular in Early Christian art. William Conybeare Bruce, who was appointed vicar of St Woolos, Newport, in 1882, read this as one of 'four consecutive scenes of the Noachian Deluge', of which there is here represented 'the descent of the flood, and the drowning of the ungodly'.³⁹ He added in support of this view 'that only the upper portion of the bodies is shown; a condition which would be necessary in depicting the struggles of drowning people, while the arms thrown up in the air are similarly suggestive of that manner of death'. To read this as a representation of The Flood makes sense; outstretched arms occur in the early sixth-century Vienna Genesis albeit not in the frontal pose of our capital.⁴⁰ Closer in time to our sculpture, there is a parallel in a panel created for the frieze on the west front of Lincoln Cathedral by Bishop Alexander, 1123–48 (Fig. 12).⁴¹ The 'rod-like' features may be read as stylized representations of arms or legs or heads of long-necked birds in keeping with medieval representations of the Flood, as in the Psalter of Henry of Blois (British Library, Cotton MS Nero C iv, fol. 3r) and the mosaics of San Marco, Venice.

On the right face of the left capital, Octavius Morgan described 'a figure holding a palm branch ascending, and conducted by the dove over the globe' (Fig. 13).⁴² The orant pose of the figure is like that on the left side of the capital. To the left there is a bird in profile pecking at fruit, and there is a ball or orb below the bird's wing. On the right of the capital, carved immediately next to the central figure, there is what the present author read as 'a richly decorated wing attached to an animal (ox?) head',⁴³ while Knight and Wood describe 'a vertical lenticular shape with three different firmly-incised patterns running lengthwise'.⁴⁴ The decoration comprises a row of semi-circles on the left and opposing diagonals in the other two rows to create a herringbone or chevron-like pattern. Above the leaf at the lower right corner there is an asymmetrical cone-like form from which the 'lentil' and figure seem to issue. An interesting parallel for the central figure is with the representation of Noah emerging from in the ark in the catacomb of Sts Peter and Marcellinus, Rome, in which Noah is in an orant pose while to the upper left of the scene there is a dove. In our capital the dove pecks at a spheroid, an interpretation of a bird pecking at a bunch of grapes, a popular Early Christian motif, as in the ambulatory mosaics of Santa Costanza, Rome, where the grapes are stylized as a roundel. Also, in the narthex of San Marco, Venice, a bird pecking grapes is depicted as part of the Noah sequence. Reference to Noah may also be helpful in deciphering the lentil-like form and the adjacent

³⁸ Knight and Wood, 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport', 169.

³⁹ Bruce, W.C., 'Suggestions as to Interpretation of the Sculpture in the Capitals of the Norman Archway in Woollos Church' in Anon, *History of St Gwynllyw's church, Newport-on-Usk: together with some historical notes on the immediate neighbourhood* (Robert H. Johns, Newport, 1893), 147–49 at 147.

⁴⁰ Wellesz, E., *The Vienna Genesis* (Faber and Faber Limited, London, 1960), pl. I.

⁴¹ Zarnecki, G., *Romanesque Lincoln: The Sculpture of the Cathedral* (Honywood Press, Lincoln Cathedral Library, Lincoln 1988), 49–58.

⁴² Morgan, 'St Woolos Church'.

⁴³ Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, 161.

⁴⁴ Knight and Wood, 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport', 169.



Fig. 11. Newport, St Gwynllyw, L face of the L capital of the nave W archway.

'cone'. The representation of Noah's ark in the Anglo-Saxon Caedmon's Genesis (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11, p. 66) shows the stern of the ark with a row of roundels in an elongated pointed frame above a row of four lines.⁴⁵ The bow of the ark is in the form of a beast head with gaping mouth and protruding tongue. Is it too much to suggest that what we have in our capital is a stylized conflation of these features from the ark? For this to work the facial details of the beast head would have to be detailed in paint for which there is precedent in the beast-head label stops at Deerhurst Priory.⁴⁶

The appropriateness of the theme of the Flood is realized when we refer to this theme in the Life of St Gwynllyw.⁴⁷ Chapter 11 of his Life, 'Of a certain composer of verses on the deeds of St Gwynllyw', records:

a very great overflowing of the sea with raging violence covered the plains, and overwhelmed all the inhabitants and the buildings; horses with oxen, and oxen with horses were swimming, in the water; mothers held their children in their hands, the waves seized them, and they could not proceed further. How great was the distress and misery; those who were then living became dead carcasses;

⁴⁵ <http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=bodleian&manuscript=msjunius11>

⁴⁶ Gem, R. and Howe, E., with Bryant, R., 'The Ninth-Century Polychrome Decoration at St Mary's Church, Deerhurst', *Antiquaries Journal*, LXXXVIII (2008), 109–164; Bryant, R., *Making much of what remains: Reconstructing Deerhurst's Anglo-Saxon paint and sculpture*, Deerhurst Lecture 2014 (The Friends of Deerhurst Priory, Deerhurst, 2015), 2–4, figs 3 and 4.

⁴⁷ https://www.celticchristianity.infinitesoulutions.com/books/Vita_Saint_Gwynllyw.pdf



Fig. 12. Lincoln Cathedral, Ringers Chapel, Flood.



Fig. 13. Newport, St Gwynllyw, R face of the L capital of the nave W archway.

no person living came to the wood, between the church of the holy Gwynllyw, and the Severn, but the aforesaid composer, through the favour of the most holy Gwynllyw; for when he saw the great flood approaching, he remained between the sea coasts and the Severn, and dreading to be overwhelmed, began to compose the fourth part of his verses. When he commenced, the country was covered with waves; afterwards he got on a higher beam, and the swelling wave again followed him the third time on the roof of the house, but he ceased not to describe his laudable acts. These things having taken place, the British poet escaped, and propping the house, but the other houses were overwhelmed and demolished by the waves.

Turning to the right capital of the archway, there is a hand held horizontally at the top left of the left face below which there a human head (Fig. 14). In the centre there is a bird with large crescent-shaped wings seen from above. There is a hemisphere below each wing and a further, larger hemisphere below the end of the right wing above which and to the side of the bird's wing is what appears to be a fish again seen from above and swimming upstream. The scene has been equated with the Creation, Trinity, Flood and Baptism. Morgan wrote that this 'seems to be a representation of the Creation and the Trinity, the creating Father being represented by an open hand, the impersonation of the Son by a human face, the Holy Ghost by a dove, beneath which is an orb to represent the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters'.⁴⁸ Conybeare Bruce saw 'Noah taking the dove back into the Ark after its first flight. The face is that of Noah and only his hand appears in an attitude not of expulsion but of



Fig. 14. Newport, St Gwynllyw, L face of the R capital of the nave W archway.

⁴⁸ Morgan, 'St Woolos Church, Newport, Monmouthshire', 286.



Fig. 15. Newport, St Gwynllyw, R face of the R capital of the nave W archway.

reception, ready to grasp the dove which is hovering as if ready to alight. The fact that the globe, the symbol of the submerged earth, is on the further side of the dove in this scene shows that it has come from over it back to the Ark'.⁴⁹

For the Trinity there is the hand of God, the Holy Ghost and the Son of God represented by the head on the left. It is unusual that the dove flies up rather than down. Identification of the fish has been challenged by Knight and Wood because of the absence of fins.⁵⁰ Yet the degree of realism in the sculpture is not sufficiently precise to expect the inclusion of such details. The upward-swimming fish is paralleled on a corbel on the north side of the nave of Kilpeck.⁵¹ It is difficult to include a fish in the Trinity unless it is read as a second representation of Christ using the Early Christian symbol. Identification with Baptism depends on reading the two hemispheres below the bird's wings as ampoules of oil as held by the Holy Ghost in the scene of the Baptism of Christ in the Benedictional of St Æthelwold (London, British Library, MS Add. 49598, fol. 25) produced at Winchester between 971 and 983.⁵² The hand of God also fits the scene albeit held horizontally rather than pointing down from Heaven. Fishes are represented in the scene of the Baptism of Christ on the font at St Michael,

⁴⁹ Bruce, 'Suggestions', 148.

⁵⁰ Knight and Wood, 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport', 174.

⁵¹ Thurlby, *The Herefordshire School of Romanesque Sculpture*, fig. 181.

⁵² Deshman, R., *The Benedictional of St Æthelwold* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1995), 44–45, pl. 19.

Castle Frome (Herefordshire).⁵³ As with the Trinity, the flight of the dove up rather than down is unusual. For the Flood, the bird would be a dove or raven.

The right face of the right capital has a standing figure just left of centre shown frontally with a large head and puny body seemingly balanced on a thin pedestal (Fig. 15). The arms are held in an orant pose and in his right hand the figure holds a rod. To the right is a second figure with a similarly scaled head but even tinier body in a crescent-shaped pose. At the upper right there is an incised figure 8. Morgan read the scene as the Expulsion from Paradise with reference to a sword held by the figure on the left. Yet this figure appears to be naked which would mean that the angel of the Expulsion was unclothed, and that either Adam or Eve had been omitted. The omission of either Adam or Eve led Conybeare Bruce to interpret the scene as the driving of the animals into the Ark.⁵⁴ For this to be convincing one would like to see at least the hindquarters of an animal or two. And, I do not know of a representation of Noah loading the Ark in which he is holding a staff or rod. Instead, Knight and Wood provide a far more convincing reading. They equate the figure holding the staff with 'Moses, flanked by Aaron, striking the rock and bringing forth water (Exodus 17: 1–6)', which could be an analogue for St Gwynllyw striking the dry ground with his stick so water sprang up on the site of the present cathedral.⁵⁵ Given that Moses striking the rock is a type for the Baptism of Christ, the inclusion of the Moses scene adds credence to the reading of the Baptism on the left face of this capital. In turn, the association of Baptism with the death and resurrection of Christ, it is worth noting that representations of the Raising of Lazarus frequently show Christ with a rod in hand. Similarly, in scenes of Moses crossing the Red Sea, Moses parts the waters with a rod. Knight and Wood convincingly associate this with St Cadog parting the waters of the River Taff so that he could reach the deathbed of his father.⁵⁶ Reference to the Life of St Gwynllyw is also apposite; chapter 16, 'How by the assistance of Saint Gwynllyw, a Dean, without his knowledge, passed through an unpassable river'.⁵⁷

In connection with the drill holes on the west face of both the left and right capitals, Knight and Wood drew attention to such holes on the Hedda Stone in Peterborough Cathedral, 'an eighth-century solid stone shrine-cover or skeuomorph shaped like a casket'.⁵⁸ Such holes might have been made for the collection of miracle-working dust or 'they might also have taken a scrap of cloth or the like that could absorb the presence of the saint'.⁵⁹ The theory is an attractive one although concern might be expressed on the small diameter of the Newport holes versus their much larger counterparts on the Hedda Stone.

Roman associations for the entasis of the shafts of the archway are also matched with the style of the major figures on both sides of the left capital. The neatly combed, cap-like hair and the ribbed folds of the tunic are paralleled in the figure of Christ on the fourth-century mosaic from the Roman villa of Hinton St Mary (Dorset) now in the British Museum.

⁵³ Thurlby, *The Herefordshire School of Romanesque Sculpture*, fig. 281.

⁵⁴ Bruce, 'Suggestions', 147.

⁵⁵ Knight and Wood, 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport', 179–80; *The Life of St Gwynllyw*, chapter 9, 'On the breaking out of a spring of water at the prayer of Saint Gwynllyw', https://www.celticchristianity.infinitesolutions.com/books/Vita_Saint_Gwynllyw.pdf

⁵⁶ Knight and Wood, 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport', 180.

⁵⁷ https://www.celticchristianity.infinitesolutions.com/books/Vita_Saint_Gwynllyw.pdf

⁵⁸ Knight and Wood, 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport', 181.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

Whitson Church and St Thomas, Overmonnow

The two-order south doorway of Whitson church has a continuous inner order with a quadrant roll which motif appears in the arch of the second order where it is carried on carved capitals atop coursed nook shafts.⁶⁰ The left capital is a trumpet scallop while upright leaves articulate the capital on the right. The arch is segmental in the tradition of the Bishop's chapel of Hereford Cathedral, the crypt of St Peter's Abbey Gloucester, and the north and south crossing arch of St John the Evangelist, Milborne Port (Somerset).⁶¹ This is not the only detail to reflect late eleventh-century practice in Romanesque architecture of the region. It is strange that the capitals are not set horizontally but rather in a manner that makes them the lowest voussoir in the arch. This very detail is paralleled on the inner faces of the gallery arches in the east side of the north transept of St Peter's Gloucester.⁶² It would seem to be an adaptation of pre-Conquest design as in the south doorway of the west tower at Barnack (Northamptonshire) where the outer order of the arch springs from a projecting block set atop the impost at the top of the jamb. Whether the Whitson doorway reflects an ongoing practice through the twelfth century or a conscious revival of a near-century-old design is not known. Either way, such a reflection of century-old practice is also witnessed in the priest's doorway on the north side of the chancel at St Thomas, Over Monnow.⁶³ The inclusion of plantain-leaf capitals and a gorged or channeled roll moulding on the angle of the second order the doorway preclude a date before c. 1160 and may even be as late as the 1180s. Both motifs have their origin in early Gothic in northern France. The gorged roll is first used in England in the eastern arm of York Minster as rebuilt by Archbishop Roger of Pont l'Eveque 1154–81, and in Scotland in St Andrew's Cathedral Priory, commenced 1160–62.⁶⁴ Geographically closer to Newport, gorged rolls were used in the Augustinian Priory church at Keynsham, founded 1166/67, and in Wales they appear in the west windows of Cistercian Margam Abbey, probably between 1170 and 1180.⁶⁵ Plantain notches are used in French early Gothic capitals.⁶⁶ Other motifs are less progressive, not least the frame and gable of the doorway. These have been paralleled with the north portal of All Saints, Lullington (Somerset), and the west portal of St Cronan's Cathedral, Roscrea (Co. Tipperary), both of which may reflect to work of Bishop Roger at Sarum Cathedral, 1102–39.⁶⁷ Yet for the use of nook shafts at the outer angles of the porch in linke with the nook shafts of the outer order of the doorway the

⁶⁰ Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, 166–7, fig. 227.

⁶¹ Gem, R., 'The Bishop's Chapel at Hereford: The Roles of Patron and Craftsmen', in *Art and Patronage in the English Romanesque* (ed. S. Macready and F. H. Thompson, 1986), London, 87–96; Waller, F.S., 'The Crypt of Gloucester Cathedral', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 1 (1876), 147–152; Fernie, E., *The Architecture of Norman England*. (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2000), 114, fig. 161. There is also a segmental chancel arch at St Clears priory church (Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*), 133–34, fig. 179.

⁶² I am grateful to Richard Bryant for introducing me to this detail.

⁶³ Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, 167–8, fig. 228.

⁶⁴ Thurlby, M., 'Roger of Pont l'Évêque, Archbishop of York (1154–81), and French Sources for the beginnings of Gothic architecture in Northern Britain', *England and the Continent in the Middle Ages: Studies in Memory of Andrew Martindale*, ed. John Mitchell (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 2000), 35–47; idem, 'St Andrews Cathedral-Priory and the Beginnings of Gothic Architecture in Northern Britain', in *Medieval Art and Architecture in the Diocese of St Andrews: The British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions*, XIV, ed. John Higgitt (1994), 47–60; Harrison, S. and Norton, C., *York Minster: An Illustrated Architectural History 627-c.1500* (York: York Minster, 2015), 30–33.

⁶⁵ Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, 123, fig. 165.

⁶⁶ Jalabert, D., 'La flore gothique, ses origines, son evolution du XIIe au XVe siècle', *Bulletin Monumental*, XCI (1932), 181–246 at 190–99.

⁶⁷ Thurlby, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, 168.

closest parallel is with the north portal of St Mary Magdalene, Twyning (Gloucestershire), which probably dates from the late eleventh century.

Conclusion

Roman associations are important for various aspects of Romanesque architecture in Monmouthshire. They are evident in the detailing of the Great Tower of Chepstow castle, in the columns of the west archway at St Gwynllyw, Newport, and in the use of tufa in the transverse arches at Chepstow Priory and the west archway at St Gwynllyw, Newport. The nave of Chepstow Priory fuses Norman and pre-Conquest elements, introduces a precocious example of rib vaulting, and incorporates Imperial associations in the design of the west front. The principle of design variety in the nave of Chepstow Priory is adopted in the nave capitals and bases, and in the chevron of the west archway at St Gwynllyw, Newport. While the capitals of the latter archway are not the most aesthetically accomplished works of Romanesque sculpture, iconographically they are of the greatest interest in combining biblical theme with the lives of the local saints Gwynllyw and Cadog. The south doorway at Whitson and the priest's doorway at St Thomas, Over Monnow, juxtapose progressive and conservative details. The latter illustrate a phenomenon which is perhaps too frequently overlooked in the study of Medieval architecture.

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GLoucester AND HER WELSH DAUGHTER: ST GWYNLLYW'S CATHEDRAL AND THE ANGLO NORMANS

By Jeremy Knight

In the spring of 1093 King William Rufus (1087–1100) lay dangerously ill at Gloucester, where he had been holding his Christmas court and crown wearing. Fearing for the welfare of his soul, he made a series of grants to churches. This was at the time when Abbot Wulfstan of St Peter's Abbey in Gloucester (1066–1072) later bishop Wulfstan II of Worcester and his successor Abbot Serlo (1072–1104) were virtually re-founding the Saxon abbey and building the great Romanesque church which is now Gloucester cathedral, with the support of land grants from Norman magnates.¹ To St Peter's Abbey, Rufus granted the church of St Gwynllyw, now Newport cathedral, which held a community of canons under a dean and where St Gwynllyw lay *in pavimento ecclesie* – in the floor of the church – in the 'position of honour' south of the altar, on the priest's right hand as he celebrated the Mass. Normally, care was taken to obtain the consent of any interested parties to grants, as is often noted in charter texts, but the unusual circumstances may have meant that things were hurried and some of Rufus's grants were subsequently found to be faulty, the Anglo Saxon Chronicle even claiming that, once recovered, the king cancelled some of them.²

William Rufus had initiated a new forward policy in Wales, resulting in the conquest of Brycheiniog and much of Morgannwg. He probably built the earthwork castle which until the nineteenth century stood close to St Woolos's church and he installed Robert de Haya as lord of Gwynllyog. During the subsequent dispute over the church, three priests, possibly surviving members of the earlier community of canons gave evidence that they had heard and seen Robert de Haya grant (?confirm) the church of St Gunlei to the abbey and monks of Gloucester in the time of Bishop Herewald of Llandaff (1056–1104) and Abbot Serlo of Gloucester (1072–1104) and that they had seen the monks in possession and receiving the fruits of the church.³ In 1122, however, Henry I granted the Honour of Glamorgan, including Gwynllyog and Newport, to his illegitimate son Robert, Earl of Gloucester, who disputed the validity of Rufus's grant. He installed his chaplain, Picot, a Frenchman by his name, in the church. Picot claimed to hold it by *monachatu*- monastic right- as the successor of the pre-Norman canons, or perhaps as the head of the still existing community. He was more than a simple chaplain. He had his own burgesses and burgage rents and may even have been Robert of Gloucester's physician. A lengthy legal dispute between St Peter's Abbey and the Earls

¹ 'In this year, at Lent, King William was taken so seriously ill at Gloucester that he was everywhere reported dead. During his illness, he made many vows..... To many monasteries he made grants of land, which he subsequently withdrew when he recovered.' Anglo Saxon Chronicle D text sub anno 1093. David Bates, 'The building of a great church: the Abbey of St Peter's Gloucester and its early Norman benefactors' *Transactions Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society* 102 (1985), 129–32.

² The grant is recorded in the chronicle of Abbot Walter Frocester (1382–1412). See W.H. Hart (ed.) *Historia et Cartularium monasterii sancti Petri Gloucestriae* (Rolls Series, 3 vols 1863–7), Vol. 1, 102 – 'King William junior, attacked by a serious illness at Gloucester, gave to God and the church of St Peter of Gloucester the church of St Gwynllyw of Newport, with 15 hides'. Christopher Brooke, 'St Peter of Gloucester and St Cadog of Llanarfarn.' In Kenneth Jackson et al. (eds), *Celt and Saxon: Studies in the Early British Border* (Cambridge 1963), 258–262.

³ Hart, *Historia et Cartularium* Vol 2, DIX, 51. James Conway Davies, *Episcopal Acts and Cognate Documents Relating to Welsh Dioceses 1066–1372* (Historical Society of the Church in Wales 2 vols, Vol 2, L 139, 649–50.

of Gloucester ensued, which was only resolved in 1156.⁴ This is the historical background against which we must interpret the building history of St Gwynllw's cathedral.

St Gwynllyw of Newport and Caradog of Llancarfan

Most of what we know of the early history of St Gwynllyw's derives from a twelfth century life of the saint, the *Vita Gundleii*.⁵ Though other copies exist, the main source is in a British Library manuscript, London Cotton *Vespasian A XIV*, a collection of Welsh saint's lives written in Monmouth Priory around 1200, based on earlier texts of around the 1140s, with links to St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester, and to St Cadog's monastery at Llancarfan in Glamorgan. *Vespasian A XIV* also contains a life of St Tatheus of Caerwent, which stylistic details show to be by the same hand as the *Vita Gundleii*. Both were probably the work of the hagiographer Caradog of Llancarfan.⁶

Caradog was one of a remarkable dynasty of scholar clerics associated with Llancarfan.⁷ He wrote a life of St Cadog for Llancarfan and another of St Gildas for the monks of Glastonbury. These were 'signed' works, with colophons claiming authorship, but he was almost certainly the commissioned author of other lives for the communities of Caerwent, Llanilltud Fawr (Llantwit Major) and of St Cyngar of Congresbury in Somerset. He might almost be described as the first Welsh professional historian, though the lives are primarily concerned with the property rights of the various churches and in some respects he is closer to a modern QC presenting the case of his clients.⁸

To Anglo Norman reformers, Welsh minster churches, with their bodies of married secular clergy were in urgent need of reform. St Peter's, Gloucester was an ancient foundation, of seventh century origin which lay within the diocese of Worcester. Wulfstan, when bishop of Worcester, was also involved in the reorganization of the Irish Church. In 1074, an Irish monk from Worcester, trained under Wulfstan, became bishop Patrick of Dublin and Wulfstan was later venerated in Dublin as a saint.⁹ Relations between Worcester and the Welsh Church were close. Bishop Urban of Llandaff was a former priest of Worcester and the Llandaff charters show the influence of Worcester charters, particularly those of the time of Wulfstan.¹⁰ The common theme of reform links Worcester's interests in Ireland and Wales.

St Peter's Abbey acquired a portfolio of Welsh possessions, including St Gwynllyw's, Llancarfan; Ewenny and briefly Llanbadarn Fawr near Aberystwyth. These were not simply hostile takeovers, but part of a reform programme like that in Ireland. In some cases, small Welsh

⁴ David Crouch (ed.) *Llandaff Episcopal Acta 1140–1287* (Cardiff, South Wales Record Society 1988), nos 11–14, 9–12. Monachatu – Hart, Vol 2, DXI, 52–3; Conway Davies, L 135, 52–3; Patterson, R.B., *Earldom of Gloucester Charters: the Charters and Scribes of the Earls and Countesses of Gloucester to A.D. 1217* (Oxford 1973), 13 and nos 87 & 182. However he thinks the physician of that name could have been a different person.

⁵ London, British Library Cotton. *Vespasian A XIV*, folios 13–16; Wade Evans, A.W., *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogicae* (Cardiff 1944), 172–193.

⁶ Knight, J.K., 'St Tatheus of Caerwent: An analysis of the Vespasian Life'. *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* 3, part 1 (1970–7), 29–36.

⁷ Conway Davies, Vol 2, 506–536.

⁸ John Reuben Davies, *The Book of Llandaff and the Norman Church in Wales* (Boydell, Woodbridge 2003 – Studies in Celtic History XXI), 132–36. Knight, J.K., *South Wales from the Romans to the Normans* (Amberley Press, Stroud, 2013), 124–27.

⁹ Aubrey Gwynn 'The first bishops of Dublin', in H Clarke (ed.) *Medieval Dublin: The Living City* (Dublin, 1994), 37–61.

¹⁰ Wendy Davies, 'St Mary's Worcester and the *Liber Landavensis*'. *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 4, (1970–73), 459–85.

communities may have welcomed a powerful protector like Gloucester from the threat of predatory Anglo-Norman lords. Usually the existing property rights of the canons were respected. At Llancarfan the hereditary dynasty of scholar-clerics remained in occupation under the new order. Similarly reform of the house of canons at Chirbury, on the Shropshire/Powys border as an Augustinian house took thirty years. The Augustinians settled at nearby Snead in 1190 and moved to their new home by 1198, but it was the 1220s before all the four existing prebends fell vacant.¹¹ In the case of St Gwynllyw's this suggests that the community of canons attested in the *Vita Gundleii*, continued in occupation of the church for some years. All this explains the apparent paradox of a member of a Welsh house of canons at Llancarfan, taken over by an Anglo-Norman monastery, writing lives of saints which defended the property rights of their English supplanter.

The first half of the *Vita Gundleii* is a straightforward narrative of his life, using the stock miracles and hagiographical commonplaces of such lives. The second half, far more interesting historically, comprises a series of posthumous miracles showing how the long dead St Gwynllyw protected his foundation against predators and threats to its property. In context, it becomes clear that the writer had one particular threat in mind. The miracles all tell how a succession of rulers, including Harold Godwinson and William II, had infringed the property rights of St Gwynllyw's, or looted items stored in it for safe keeping. In nearly all cases, the ruler himself was said to be unaware of the wrongdoing and hastened to make amends when he learnt of what had happened. The message is clear – the earls of Gloucester had infringed the right of St Peter's Gloucester to the church, but when they learnt the true facts of the case, they would make amends.

Picot, the chaplain of Robert Earl of Gloucester makes a guest appearance, thinly disguised as Ednywain of Gwynedd in one of the posthumous miracles:

'Ednywin of Gwynedd, a most intimate friend of Caradog, king of the people of Glamorgan' (predecessor in title of the Earl of Gloucester) 'broke into St Gwynllyw's church, stole the chalice and 'before the altar dressed himself in the sacred vestments'. At Matins, when a priest entered to say mass, he saw by candlelight 'an incongruous figure, vested not as he ought to be vested'. His cries brought the other canons of the community. 'There is a stranger in the church' he told them 'clothed...in ecclesiastical attire'. Ednywin was seized and brought before Bishop Herewald of Llandaff. Ednywain/Picot was then divinely punished by feeble mindedness.¹²

The episode implies that there was only the single church of the canons, not a separate free standing grave chapel or *eglwys y bedd* as at many early Welsh churches housing the grave of a patron saint. St Gwynllyw's was finally confirmed to St Peter's Gloucester by bishop Nicholas of Llandaff in 1156.

The Vita Gundleii and the Romanesque Arch

The earliest parts of the cathedral comprise an aisled Romanesque nave of the mid twelfth century and a western grave chapel or *eglwys y bedd*, in which St Gwynllyw lay *in pavimento ecclesie* to the right of the altar.¹³ The opening between grave chapel and nave is a richly decorated Romanesque arch incorporating two re-used Roman columns, whose figured capitals Malcolm Thurlby discusses

¹¹ Knight, *South Wales from the Romans to the Normans*, 153 & 155. Marjorie Chibnall, *Victoria County History, Shropshire* Vol 2, (1973), 59–62.

¹² *Vita Gundleii* 14 (Wade Evans, 186–9).

¹³ *Vita Sancti Cadoci* 28 (Wade Evans, 90–91): 'Gwynllyw... was buried by the wall on the south side in his own monastery (*monasterio*), Eglwys Wynllyw' – '*sepultus est iuxta parietem in dextrali parte*'.

above. The jambs of the arch are intact, with no signs of door fittings and the arch has clearly never been an external opening. Instead it must have led from the western chapel to the existing nave, or its predecessor.

Malcolm Thurlby has emphasized how the architecture of the nave is paralleled at Gloucester's other possession of Ewenny and at Gloucester itself. This restrained work is in sharp contrast to the exuberant style of the arch, its idiosyncratic figured capitals and its re-use of Roman material. The two are unlikely to be part of the same building programme. An indulgence of Archbishop Theodore of 1139–1146 suggests that building work was then in progress, or at least contemplated.¹⁴ However, we have evidence that in the latter year Picot's Chaplain of St Gundlei was in possession of the church and in a boundary dispute with the monks of Bassaleg.¹⁵ Any work carried out at that time was presumably by him. This may provide a context for the arch and may also imply that the present nave is no earlier than the final settlement of the dispute in 1156. An indulgence of Archbishop Theodore datable to 1156–61 to those visiting the church of St Gundlei at Newport, suggesting that work was then underway and donations to the work needed might confirm this.¹⁶

The figured capitals of the arch have been much discussed. Thurlby has summarized these views and provided a fresh analysis. Reading from left to right the probable readings are:-

1. The Flood
2. Noah releasing a dove from the ark
3. The Holy Trinity – with possible reference to the baptism of Christ
4. Moses striking the rock to bring forth water

These choices of theme must surely relate to their context within the building. The two possibly relevant elements are the grave of St Gwynllyw and the fine Romanesque font. The latter was broken up in Cromwellian times and the existing font is reconstructed from fragments dug up within the chapel during a nineteenth-century restoration. However, it is likely to be in broadly its original context. With its early form of stiff leaf foliage, it has been dated by Thulby to *c.* 1180.¹⁷

The references to water and to the Holy Trinity on the capitals might imply a baptismal theme. With the extension of the church eastward under Picot and the creation of the arch linking the two elements, the previous canon's church cum grave chapel may have obtained a new role as parish church and place of baptism. In view of Picot's possibly French name, it may be significant that both E.A. Freeman (who was well acquainted with Normandy) in the 1850s and the architect W.D. Caroe in 1933 thought that the capitals showed strong French influence. Caroe suggested a mid-French origin, whilst Rita Wood cited parallels from Dijon (Côte d'Or), Bernay (Eure) and from Modena in north Italy.¹⁸

At the same time, the rich decoration of the arch may signal the presence of the saint in his adjacent tomb. An episode in the life tells how, like Moses, he had struck the dry ground near his

¹⁴ Hart, Vol 2, DXXVI, 62; Conway Davies, Vol 2, L 97, 736.

¹⁵ Hart, Vol 2, DXVI, 58; Crouch, *Llandaff Episcopal Acta* 2.

¹⁶ British Library Cotton Charter XVI, 38. Clark, G.T. (ed.) *Cartae et Alia Munimenta quae an Dominicum de Glamorgancia Pertinent* (Cardiff, 6 vols, 1891), vol 3, DXI, 77.

¹⁷ Malcolm Thurlby. *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales* (Logaston 2006), 163–64.

¹⁸ Freeman, E.A. 'On architectural antiquities in Monmouthshire, part II' *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 2nd series 2 (1851), 31–47 and 3rd series 4 (1858), 31–47. Caroe, W.D., *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 88 (1933), 388–92. Rita Wood in Knight and Wood, 'St Gwynllyw's Cathedral, Newport; the Romanesque arch' *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 155 (2007), 163–186 (at 174–9).

church to create a spring or well known as *Fons Gundlei* – Gwynllyw’s Well.¹⁹ Another episode tells of a Welsh poet (*Britannis... versificator*) who composed verses on the life and miracles of St. Gwynllyw. Whilst completing them he was caught in a severe flood on the Gwent Levels, described in terms strikingly similar to the Great Flood of 1607. Mounting to his roof, the poet recited his verses to St Gwynllyw and was saved by the saint.²⁰ Like Noah, he had been saved from the flood, but by the intercession of St Gwynllyw. The themes of salvation by and from water are strikingly similar.

However, if the arch belongs to a pre-Gloucester phase and the *Vita Gundleii* was written to support the rival claims of Gloucester, it is difficult to see how episodes from the Life could have been depicted on the capitals. Possibly the Welsh poet and his verses were not an invention of Caradog of Llancarfan, but were used as a source by him and also influenced the sculptor of the arch. The carvings would then derive not from Caradog’s Life of Gwynllyw, but from the earlier verses of the unnamed Welsh poet.

¹⁹ Vita Gundleii 9 (Wade Evans, 180–81).

²⁰ Vita Gundleii 11 (Wade Evans, 182–3).

‘ST EILIWEDD THE VIRGIN LIES IN THE CHURCH AT USK’: THE FOUNDING OF USK PRIORY AND ITS EARLY ENDOWMENT, WITH A NOTE ON THE ORIGINS OF THE CULT OF ST RADEGUND OF POITIERS IN BRITAIN

By Bruce Coplestone-Crow

The Benedictine nunnery of St Mary at Usk was founded by Richard fitzGilbert of Clare in 1117–36. He built a cruciform Romanesque church, parts of which can be seen in the present parish church of St Mary. The earliest record of the Clare foundation is in a charter of Richard ‘Strongbow’ of Clare, Richard fitzGilbert’s nephew, dating from about 1160. This confirms to the nunnery all the gifts of lands and revenues made by himself and his predecessors. Richard fitzGilbert’s church, however, was not the first church on the site. This was one dedicated to St Eiliwedd which stood within or on the margins of the civilian settlement associated with the Roman Legionary fort of Burrium. To the west of this church, and separate from it, stood a chapel-y-bedd or mortuary chapel covering Eiliwedd’s remains that survived until it was demolished in 1844. It seems likely that this became the chapel of Saint Radegund noted in later records of the priory. Radegund, who died at Poitiers in AD 587, was a Merovingian saint who is little known on this side of the Channel. Although surviving records of her presence on this side of the Channel begin only in the 9th century, her cult appears to have arrived here in the first place in the second half of the 7th century, brought by traders bringing pottery from Poitou and Charente into the Severn Estuary.

The Founding of the Benedictine Priory

When the priory of Benedictine nuns at Usk was dissolved in 1536 the nuns then present accounted ‘Sir Richard de Clare, Sir Gilbert his sone, erles of the Marches’ as their founders.¹ These two founders are Richard son of Gilbert fitzRichard of Clare who died in 1136, and his son Gilbert, who was made earl of Hertford by King Stephen and who died in 1152.² As Richard succeeded his father only in 1117 this may provide a *terminus post quem* for his foundation. Earl Gilbert, his son, seems to have provided the house with a confirmation of their lands immediately after his father’s death in 1136 and shortly before Usk fell into Welsh hands. Neither of these barons, however, were ‘erles of the Marches.’ ‘Earl of March’ was a title created by the crown for the Mortimer family of Wigmore in 1328, so cannot have been a title carried by Richard and Gilbert. However, Usk did come into the hands of the Mortimers. This was in the person of Edmund II de Mortimer, earl of March, in 1368 and it passed through those of his son Earl Roger VI and grandson Earl Edmund III, until the latter died without heirs of his body in 1425. Over time the nuns might have attached this title to their two founders in order to make them seem more illustrious, for although Richard and Gilbert represented the main line of the Clare family they bore no titles.

The Normans in Gwent

Neither Richard fitzGilbert, founder of the nunnery, nor any other members of his family, however, were among the earliest Normans in Gwent. It was William fitzOsbern, earl of Hereford, who, soon after the Conqueror granted the earldom to him, moved to secure its western border by attacking the

¹ Dugdale, Sir William, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (6 vols. in 8, London, 1817–30), iv, 592.

² Williams, D.H., ‘Usk Nunnery’, *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 4 (1980), 44–5.

Welsh of south Wales,³ and reducing the kings of Gwent to the status of ‘servants’ or ‘client-kings’ of William the Conqueror.⁴ The earl then annexed to his earldom the parts of Lower Gwent south of the forest of Wentwood as far west as the castle he built at Caerleon, and established himself and his knights on the newly conquered lands. See Map 1.

Whereas a fairly comprehensive settlement was achieved south of Wentwood, with a castle at Striguil (Chepstow) as its *caput* during his time as earl, in the parts north of Wentwood (known to the Welsh as the commote (local administrative division: see Map 1) of Bryn Bûga (which commote including Tryleg),⁵ he seems to have had time only to establish a few demesne manors, including, possibly, a castle at Usk, before being called away to the continent at the end of 1070, where he was killed in battle early in the next year. His influence in Gwent as a whole, however, was sufficient for his son Earl Roger to be able to style himself ‘lord of Gwent’ before losing all his lands for rebellion in 1075.⁶

After Earl Roger’s forfeiture, Lower Gwent and its castle at Striguil passed to Ralph de Limésy and then to William d’Eu, who had them at the time of *Domesday Book* in 1086.⁷ He lost his lands for rebellion ten years later and Lower Gwent and Striguil were then retained by the crown until King Henry I gave them, minus the manors or lordships of Tregrug (Llangibby) and Caerleon (which belonging to Robert fitzMartin and Winebald de Ballon respectively), together with William d’Eu’s former fief in England, to Walter fitzRichard, younger brother of Gilbert fitzRichard, father of Richard of Usk. This was before 1119, when Walter was counted among the Norman magnates of the diocese of Llandaff,⁸ and most probably in 1114, when Henry passed through Gwent at the end of his campaign of ‘conquest’ in Wales.⁹

Usk and the commote of Bryn Bûga should, therefore, have belonged to Walter fitzRichard and not to Richard fitzGilbert, his nephew. But the fact that it was Richard, not Walter, who established Usk Priory and endowed it with lands and churches in Gwent must mean that he had had a grant of it from Walter, either in fee or for his life. As confirmation that such a grant was made we need only note that when Walter founded Tintern Abbey in 1131, he gave to it no lands in Usk and Bryn Bûga.¹⁰

Morgan ab Owain and Usk

In April 1136 Richard fitzGilbert was killed by Morgan ab Owain, leader of the Welsh of Gwent, during the resurgence of Welsh nationalism that had followed the death of King Henry I in the

³ Orderic Vitalis: *The Ecclesiastical History* (ed. & trans. Chibnall, M., 6 vols, Oxford, 1969–80), iv, 260–1.

⁴ Evans, J.G. & Rhŷs, J. (eds), *The Book of Llan Dâv, Liber Landavensis* (Oxford, 1893), 278–9.

⁵ Bryn Bûga as a name for both the part of Lower Gwent north of Wentwood, and also Usk itself, does not appear until the 15th century: Wyn Owen, H. & Morgan, R., *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales* (Llandysul, 2007), 484. It is not known what antiquity it had, but is a convenient term to use here.

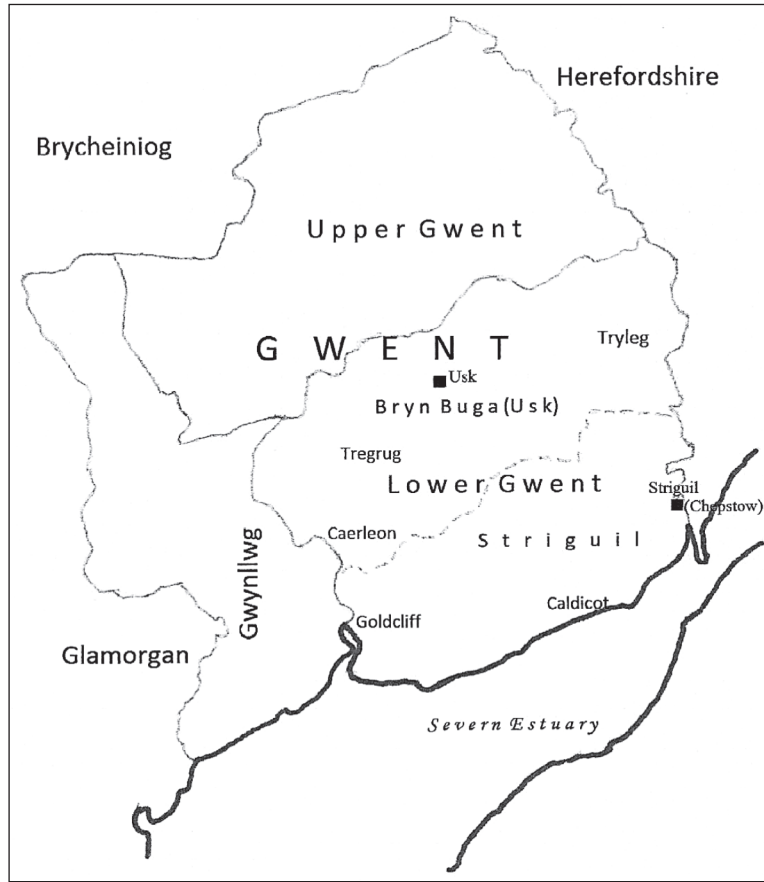
⁶ Evans & Rhŷs, *Book of Llan Dâv*, 274–5.

⁷ *Domesday Book, Vol. I* (Record Commission, 1783), f.162.

⁸ A bull of Pope Calixtus II dating from 1119 names Walter fitzRichard as a despoiler of the church of Llandaff and its lands: Evans & Rhŷs, *Book of Llan Dâv*, 93–4.

⁹ The king was at Kidwelly on 21 July and at Gloucester by 2 August: Davis, R.H.C. *et al.* (eds), *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* (3 vols, Oxford, 1913–68), nos 1041 (part 10) & 1042; Baddeley, W. St C., ‘Further Evidence of Norman Gloucester’, *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 41 (1918–19), 87–90.

¹⁰ Estavarnay (Monkswood) and Tryleg, the two granges Tintern Abbey had in Usk lordship, were given by Earl Gilbert of Pembroke in 1138–48 and by William II Marshal, earl of Pembroke, in 1223 respectively: Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, v, 267 Charter I.



Map 1. Anglo-Norman Lordships in Lower Gwent in the 12th Century.

previous year.¹¹ Having disposed of its Anglo-Norman lord Morgan went on to seize his castle at Usk. He is not described as ‘of Usk’ until 1138,¹² but Richard’s death was undoubtedly the prelude to the taking of his castle. It may, however, have been in a short interlude between the death of his father and Morgan’s capture of Usk that Richard’s son Gilbert issued a charter to the nuns that was of sufficient moment for them to regard him as their second founder. Once he was in possession of Usk, however, Morgan went on to expand the territories under his rule by taking the lordship of Caerleon from Roger de Ballon and, in the part of Lower Gwent south of Wentwood (see Map 1), the lordship of Goldcliff from Walter de Chandos ‘whose father Robert had founded Goldcliff Priory in 1113. By way of celebrating his new-found importance (and at the same time giving notice of his intention

¹¹ *Brut y Tywysogyon, Peniarth MS 20 Version* (ed. Jones, T., Cardiff, 1952), 51. Gerald of Wales, in his *Journey Through Wales* (ed. & trans., Thorpe, L., Harmondsworth, 1978), 108–9, says it was Morgan’s brother Iorwerth who did the killing.

¹² Orderic Vitalis: *Ecclesiastical History*, vi, 517–8.

to hold on to the lands he had conquered) he built at Usk castle an idiosyncratic, two-storey, great-tower or keep in Anglo-Norman model which still survives today.¹³

The seizure of Usk and Goldcliff might have proved disadvantageous to the two Norman-founded priories. This was not the case, however, and both Morgan and his brother Iorwerth were generous benefactors of Goldcliff.¹⁴ No record has survived of any similar treatment of Usk, but we can probably assume that the nuns there, inheritors of the traditions of St Eiliwedd (see below), were not disturbed. Perhaps, therefore, we can recognise in his ecclesiastical activities the same pragmatic approach he had to all things Anglo-Norman at the time when he secured from two local magnates both safety from aggression and recognition of his position as ‘king’.¹⁵

Walter fitzRichard, Richard’s overlord at Usk, died early in 1138 without heirs of his body and king Stephen replaced him with Gilbert fitzGilbert (died 1148), Richard’s younger brother. Later in the year Stephen gave Gilbert the earldom of Pembroke and the earldom of Hertford to Richard’s son Gilbert.¹⁶

Both of these magnates were important supporters of Stephen in the contest with the Empress Matilda for the throne of England. Civil war between the two parties erupted in 1139 and ended fourteen years later with the Treaty of Westminster through which Stephen recognised Matilda’s son, Henry (the future Henry II), as his heir. Also part of the treaty was a clause that stipulated that when Prince Henry acceded to the throne all the lands that had changed hands since Stephen had seized the throne in 1135 would return to their previous holders.

This clause came into force when Stephen died only a year later and Henry became king. For Morgan ab Owain this meant the surrendering of Caerleon to Henry, who promptly gave it back to him as a grant out of his royal demesnes of Gloucestershire.¹⁷ Usk, meanwhile, returned to the Clare family - not to the family of Richard fitzGilbert the founder of the priory but to the successor of Walter fitzRichard, who had received Striguil with its lordship of Lower Gwent and barony in England from King Henry I. This turned out to be Earl Richard ‘Strongbow’ of Clare (1148–76), son of Earl Gilbert of Pembroke. He, however, was not ‘Earl of Pembroke’ after Henry’s accession, since this was a title that Stephen had bestowed on his father.

Earl Richard ‘Strongbow’ of Clare

Although Richard was not earl of Pembroke after 1154, King Henry did allow him the title of ‘earl’. From that year onwards, therefore, he calls himself either ‘earl of Striguil’ or, as in the following charter (an *inspeximus* of Elizabeth de Burgh, lady of Clare and Usk, dated 1330), merely ‘Earl Richard son of Earl Gilbert’. It is likely that this charter – an important one, since it is our only

¹³ There are drawings and plans of the keep in Knight, J.K., ‘Welsh Space and Norman Invaders: Usk Castle 1136–1245’ in Knight, J.K. & Johnson, A. (eds), *Usk Castle, Priory and Town* (Almeley, 2008), 55–68.

¹⁴ *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1257–1300*, 358 no.2 (Morgan and Iorwerth); 359 no.3 (Morgan and Iorwerth); 360 no.5 (Morgan).

¹⁵ See Crouch, D., ‘The Slow Death of Kingship in Glamorgan’, *Morgannwg*, **29** (1985), 20–41, for recognition of Morgan’s kingship by Earl Robert of Gloucester, paternal half-brother to the Empress Matilda, daughter of King Henry I and lord of Glamorgan, and by two more of her allies, Miles of Gloucester (died 1143, earl of Hereford from 1141) and by his son Earl Roger (died 1155). Miles and Roger were both lords of Brycheiniog as well as earls in Herefordshire. See Coplestone-Crow, B.E.C., ‘The Anarchy in Herefordshire’ in Thurlby, M., *The Herefordshire School of Sculpture* (Logaston, 2013), 7–9.

¹⁶ Davis, R.H.C., *King Stephen* (London, 1967, repr. 1990), 133.

¹⁷ *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Second, Third and Fourth Years of the Reign of King Henry II* (Master of the Rolls, 1844), 49; Hall, H. (ed.), *The Red Book of the Exchequer* (3 vols, Rolls Series, 1896), 679.

evidence of the priory’s earliest endowment - was obtained by the prioress and nuns within months of the coming of the earl to Usk.

Earl Richard, son of Earl Gilbert, to all his friends and men French, English and Welsh, greeting. Know that I have granted to God and St Mary and the nuns serving God at the church of St Mary at Usk the tithes of his demesne in the vill of Usk, of the vill and of the entire parish; and all the tithes of the money rents of that vill; and the ninth fish of his fisheries on the Usk; and the tithes of the fishery of Kemeys [Commander]; and two carucates of land in the said vill; and three burgages and all the liberties and customs which may be in my *burgo* of Usk or in Striguil. Also the church of Raglan with tithes of my demesne except the tithes of money and money rents of the said vill, and twelve acres of demesne. Also the church of Llandenny [*Mathenny*] with tithes of my demesne of the vill and of the whole parish and of the money rents of the said vill; and one bordar with five acres of land. Also the church of Llanbadog, with the tithes of my demesne and of my demesne of Cilfeigin [in Llanbadog], and the tithes of the vill and of the money rents of the said vill, and of the pannage and forestage of Penperlleni [*Pethllenny*], and of the assarts of in my fee on the other side of the Usk.

Also the church of Badgeworth, with the three chapels one of which is Shurdington and [the others] each Hatherley [i.e. Upper and Lower Hatherley], with the third part of the tithes of my demesne and the third part of the sustenance [arising out] of my demesne, and two parts of the tithes of wine, and all the tithes of apples, and all the tithes of the vill.

And all the land which Osbertus the Mason [*cementarius*] gave when his brother rendered it to the said church.

And twenty-seven acres of land in Trostrey near the hermitage [in exchange] for the tithes of one hundred acres which I gave to Brother Elembert on *Languarde* Hill [*in monte de Languarde*]; and thirty acres between Usk [River] and Berthin [Brook] and the hermitage of Trostrey, with two acres of adjacent land.

And one carucate of land in *Rubethllenny* of wood and plain and the pannage in the same annexed to that land; and four acres in the marsh of Magor; and four acres at *Elnulphbiry*; and twelve acres at Wolvesnewton [*Nova Villa*] of the land of Walter Parvus, and two parts of the tithes of the demesne of Pencarreg which belonged to the sons of Osbert and Edric; and four acres of the land of William the Welshman; and four acres of the land of William fitzWarin; and four acres of the land of Roger [of?] *Ribale*; and half the tithes of the [land of] William the Welshman, and all the tithes of that of William fitzWarin. And from my forest whatever is necessary for their building and the pasture of their flocks, and all free common and customs as granted by my predecessors, etc.

Witnesses: countess Isabel, Isabel her daughter, Ralph Bluet, Walter Bluet, Ralph de Bendeville [and] Ralph his son, Bleddyn son of Reginald, Raymond son of William son of Gerald, Wyberd, Robert Taillepetit, Geoffrey (or Godfrey) the chaplain, Nicholas the clerk and Walter the clerk.¹⁸

The Churches and Lands in Earl Richard’s Charter

This is an important document in the history of the nunnery of Usk as it is the only one of its charters whose text has survived into the modern era. It is difficult to decide which of these lands and revenues had been granted by his ‘predecessors’ and which by Strongbow. Apart from ‘or in Striguil’ in its ninth line, which seems like a later insertion, the first paragraph probably represents the priory’s original endowment. In 1291 the prioress had the Welsh churches at Llangeview and Llanfihangel Tormynydd as well as those mentioned in this part of the deed. She also had the four

¹⁸ Owen, E. (ed.), *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the British Museum Relating to Wales* (4 vols, Cymmrodorion Record Series, 1900–22), no.1182. The Latin text is in Wakeman, T., ‘On the Town, Castle and Priory of Usk’, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, **10** (1855), 261–3 and an ‘improved’ Latin text in Bradney, Sir J.A., *A History of Monmouthshire* (4 vols. in 7, London, 1907–32), iii, 47. There is also an English text in the late Geoff Mein’s *Norman Usk: the birth of a town* (Usk, 1986), 119.

English ones named in the next paragraph.¹⁹ These churches and the English manors on which they were situated had all belonged to William d'Eu of Striguil in 1086 and had passed to Walter fitzRichard by grant of King Henry. Strongbow had inherited them through his father, so it could be either he or his father who gave them. The same goes for the four acres of meadow each at Magor and Knollbury (*Elnulphbiry*²⁰) in Undy. Magor was a demesne manor of the lord of Striguil, as Knollbury may also have been.

Osbert the Mason's lands probably lay at a place close to Usk called *Hodeshale*: Matthew 'son of Mason' had one quarter of a knight's fee at this location in 1295. He had been preceded by a Matthew 'of Usk' who had the fee in 1246.²¹ In 1568 John Thomas held from the lordship of Usk the manor of *Huddlehay alias Greig Thomas* for one-tenth knight's fee.²²

Brother Elembert was the hermit of Trostrey. His rather rare name suggests that his family were Flemings from the village of Marck near Calais, since two *vicomtes* of Marck in the first half of the 12th century (father and son) bore the name Elembert.²³ Marck was held under the counts of Boulogne and an Adelolf de Marck came to England with count Eustace II of Boulogne at the Conquest and received from him extensive lands in Essex.²⁴ The family also acquired lands at Bardfield in the same county from the lords of Clare. First an Aytrop (*Eutropius*) de Marck and then a Henry de Marck had lands at Bardfield from which manor Henry endowed the priory the Clares had founded at Stoke-by-Clare.²⁵ A Eustace de Marck had witnessed a deed of count Eustace III of Boulogne in Essex in about 1120 along with William, the Clare's subtenant at Corton in Suffolk.²⁶ Several years before this, in 1111, William of Corton (himself possibly a Fleming, since he held lands in Essex from the count of Boulogne) had been with Gilbert fitzRichard, Richard of Usk's father, when he granted the church at Llanbadarn Fawr in Ceredigion to Gloucester Abbey.²⁷ Gilbert invited many Flemings to settle in Ceredigion (who had been given Ceredigion by Henry I) to aid him in holding the land against the Welsh and William of Corton and a member of the Marck family were among these. Thus we find a Henry de Marck, a descendant of Adelolf, with Earl Roger of Hertford, Gilbert's grandson, in 1156–64 to witness a charter giving lands in Ceredigion to the Commandery of the Hospitallers at Slebech in Pembrokeshire.²⁸ With members of this family holding lands from them in East Anglia and in Ceredigion, therefore, there can be little doubt that they also followed the Clares into Lower Gwent, one of them, Elembert, becoming the hermit at Trostrey. The location of the hill called *Languarde* is unknown, but it probably lay not far from Trostrey. Mein attempted to

¹⁹ Denton, J. & Taylor, B., 'The 1291 valuation of the ecclesiastical benefices in Llandaff diocese', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, **147** (1998), 144–5; 'The priory's lands and churches in Gwent are mapped in Williams, D.H., 'The Religious Orders' in Griffiths, R.S., Hopkins, T. & Howell, R. (eds.), *The Gwent County History, Volume 2, The Age of the Marcher Lords, c.1070–1536* (Cardiff, 2008), 203.

²⁰ Morgan, R., *The Place-Names of Gwent* (Llanrwst, 2005), 113.

²¹ *Calendar of Inquisitiones Post Mortem*, iii, no.371; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1364–7*, 274.

²² Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire from the coming of the Normans into Wales down to the present time*, iii, 52.

²³ Lambert of Ardres: *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* (trans. Shopkow, L., University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2007), 167.

²⁴ *Domesday Book*, ff.27, 28b, 29; Tengvik, G., *Old English Bynames* (Uppsala, 1938), 97–8.

²⁵ Harper-Bill, C. & Mortimer, R. (eds), *The Stoke-by-Clare Cartulary* (3 vols, Suffolk Records Society, Woodbridge, 1982–4), nos. 539, 554.

²⁶ Round, J.H., *Studies in Peerage and Family History* (London, 1901), 164.

²⁷ Davis, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normanorum*, ii, no.1041 (part 10).

²⁸ Charles, B.G., 'The Records of Slebech', *The National Library of Wales Journal*, **5** (1947–8), 191 Charter II.

relate this place-name to Llangua in Grosmont,²⁹ but there is no evidence for this other than a passing similarity in spelling. Elembert’s presence, plus other Flemings (or men of Flemish extraction), such as Guy fitzTice of Whiston and the William de Bapeaume who in 1133–6 gave his land in Goldcliff Moor to Goldcliff Priory,³⁰ give further substance to Rippon’s speculation that Flemings were partly responsible for draining the Gwent Levels.³¹

Rubethllenny or ‘Perlleni Hill’ (*W rhiw* ‘hill’ + place-name ‘Perlleni’) may be an earlier version of the place-name Penperlleni (‘hill of Perlleni’³²) in the parish of Goetre Mawr in the lordship of Usk (NGR SO323046).

Walter Parvus’s land of *Novum Villam* was at Wolvesnewton. He also had the manor of Llanwern in Striguil lordship and Dewstow in the lordship of Caldicot. Caldicot belonged in 1086 to Walter of Gloucester and passed to his son, Earl Miles of Hereford, and his successors. A Hugh Parvus was living at a date before 1095³³ and Roger son of Hugh Parvus in 1141.³⁴ Walter Parvus was possibly Roger’s brother. Roger witnessed a charter to Tintern Abbey of Gilbert fitzGilbert, earl of Pembroke and lord of Striguil, in 1138–48.³⁵ Roger’s son Hugh Parvus conceded to Llanthony Priory the chapel of St David at Dewstow, which was in his fee, and in 1166 he held lands from Margaret de Bohun, lady of Caldicot, on which the service of four knights’ fees was owed.³⁶ Another Hugh Parvus was living in 1191/2 but the line ended in an heiress, Margery, who married William de Pontlarge (Pont de l’Arche), who had control of the Parvus lands in Gloucestershire in 1216.³⁷

Regarding the sons of Osbert and Edric of Penclawdd, Mein suggests that the Robert fitzEdric who witnessed earl Gilbert of Pembroke’s charter to Tintern along with Alfred and Ralph de Bendeville and Walter Parvus may be the unnamed son of this Edric referred to.³⁸

William Walensis was domiciled at Dinham in the lordship of Striguil. Dinham passed through a succession of people with the cognomen Walensis or Welsh until it passed into the hands of the Knoville family. In 1295 Gilbert and Bogo de Knoville held Llandenny from the lord of Usk by an unspecified amount of knight service.³⁹ William’s four acres were possibly at Llandenny, therefore.

William fitzWarin may have been a brother of the Adam fitzWarin who witnessed many charters made at their castle of Clare by Gilbert fitzRichard, Richard of Usk and Earl Gilbert of Hertford, son of Richard of Usk. These include the Earl Gilbert’s grant of Cardigan Priory to Gloucester Abbey.⁴⁰

²⁹ Mein, *Norman Usk, The Birth of a Town*, 119.

³⁰ *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1257–1300*, 362 no.2.

³¹ Rippon, S., *Gwent Levels: the evolution of a wetland landscape* (CBA Research Report 105, 1996), 84–6.

³² Owen & Morgan, *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales*, 370–1.

³³ Walker, D. (ed.), ‘Charters of the Earldom of Hereford 1095–1201’, *Camden Miscellany* 22 (1964), no.60. This Hugh Parvus may be the knight named Hugh who held Sopworth, Wilts, from William d’Eu of Striguil in 1086: *Domesday Book*, f.71b.

³⁴ Hart, W.H. (ed.), *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae* (3 vols, Rolls Series, 1863), no.284; Round, J.H., *Ancient Charters, Royal and Private, to AD 1200* (London, 1888), no.11.

³⁵ *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1300–26*, 97, charter 3.

³⁶ Hart, *Historia et Cartularium...de Gloucestriae*, nos.673, 674, 677; Crouch, D. (ed.), *Llandaff Episcopal Acta 1140–1287* (Cardiff, 1988), no.22; Walker, ‘Earldom of Hereford Charters’, no.89.

³⁷ *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium 1201–16* (Record Commission, 1835), 194.

³⁸ Mein, *Norman Usk, The Birth of a Town*, 40; *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1300–57*, 97 no.3.

³⁹ Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, iii, 4.

⁴⁰ Walker, D. (ed.), ‘A Register of the Churches of the Monastery of St Peter’s, Gloucester’, *An Ecclesiastical Miscellany* (Publications of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, Records Section, Volume XI, 1976), no.66.

The lands of Roger (of?) [A]*ribale* may have been at Allt-y-bela in Llangwm. In 1295 John ap Reginald owed the service of one knight's fee on lands at three locations, one of which was *Arthibile* in Llangwm.⁴¹

The Witnesses to Earl Richard's Charter

The first witness to this charter was Countess Isabel (Elisabeth), widow of Earl Gilbert of Pembroke. She may be the 'Lady Elisabeth de Clare still living in 1172.'⁴² With her was Isabel, her natural daughter by King Henry I. A 'Lady Elisabeth de Clare' gave 3s 4d rent in Shirenewton, 'toward the foundation of the priory, to maintain [supplies of] wax and oil.'⁴³

Ralph and Walter Bluet were brothers. Ralph was the elder of the two, holding Silchester in Hampshire and other English manors from Richard Strongbow as lord of Striguil, and the manors of Langstone and Whitson in Lower Gwent (where they had the family of Guy fitzTice as subtenants) from the lord of Caerleon. Walter Bluet received Raglan in the lordship of Usk from Richard in the winter of 1171/2, while Strongbow and King Henry II were in Ireland.⁴⁴

Ralph (II) de Bendeville and Ralph (III) his son were successive lords of Itton and Harpson in the barony of Striguil. They were probably related to the Alfred de Bendeville who was butler to the counts of Mortain in Sussex. It may have been this Alfred who was in Ceredigion with Gilbert fitzRichard, father of the founder of Usk Priory, in 1111; at St Dogmael's in Pembrokeshire in 1120; and at Colchester in Essex (probably) to witness a charter of Richard of Usk's son Gilbert (earl of Hertford from 1138) to the abbey of St John at Colchester in 1136–8.⁴⁵ His close affinity with the Clare family is demonstrated in 1151 when he made a gift to the Order of the Hospitallers for the souls of Gilbert fitzRichard, Richard of Usk, Earl Gilbert of Pembroke, and Earl Gilbert of Hertford.⁴⁶ A Ralph de Bendeville (Ralph I) who may have been Alfred's brother, was probably the man whom Walter fitzRichard of Striguil (1114–38) settled at Harpson in Portskewett. Ralph II gave Chepstow Priory two-thirds of all the tithes of Harpson.⁴⁷ Another Alfred de Bendeville, together with Ralph II de Bendeville and Walter Parvus of Llandenny witnessed a charter to Tintern Abbey of Gilbert fitzGilbert, earl of Pembroke.⁴⁸

Bleddyn son of Reginald (or Reynold) may be a member of a family who held a fraction of a knight's fee at Cilfeigan in Llanbadock. In 1295 Iorwerth ap Benet held one-eighth knight's fee there by Welsh tenure.⁴⁹

'Raymond son of William son of Gerald' became (or was already, perhaps) Strongbow's brother-in-law. He was the son of William fitzGerald of Carew in the earldom of Pembroke, his grandmother being the celebrated Nest daughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of Deheubarth (died 1093), wife of Gerald of Windsor, castellan of Pembroke. He became known later in life as Raymond 'le

⁴¹ Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, iii, 4, 165.

⁴² Delisle, V.L. & Berger, E. (eds), *Receuil des Actes d'Henri II, roi de Angleterre et duc de Normandie* (4 vols., Chartes et Diplômes Relatifs à l'Histoire de France, tomus VII, Paris, 1916–27), no.576 and note.

⁴³ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, iv, 592.

⁴⁴ See Coplestone-Crow, B.E.C., 'Strongbow's Grant of Raglan to Walter Bluet', *Gwent Local History*, **89** (2000), 3–27.

⁴⁵ *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, ii, no.1041 (part 10) (and see Baddeley, Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, iv, 130 Charter II; Moore, S.A. (ed.), *Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Johannis Baptiste de Colecestria* (2 vols., Roxburghe Club, 1897), i, 141.

⁴⁶ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vi, 807 Charter XII.

⁴⁷ Crouch, *Llandaff Episcopal Acta*, no.40.

⁴⁸ *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1300–26*, 97, charter 3.

⁴⁹ Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, iii, 4.

Gros’ (the Fat) and under that name witnessed his brother-in-law’s grant of Raglan to Walter Bluet in 1171/2. The fact that he does not use this cognomen here and that he evidently felt the need to identify himself fully suggests that he was still a young man when the charter was issued. If it dated from after 1170 (as has been suggested) Raymond would certainly have called himself ‘the Fat’, a soubriquet which he became known by at about the time as he led Strongbow’s advanced force to Ireland in 1169.

Robert Taillepetit (‘cut short [in height]’) was possibly Strongbow’s steward of Usk. His widow Parnel was receiving an annual pension of five marks at Usk in 1185.⁵⁰

Godfrey was probably a chaplain of Countess Isabel’s. He witnessed a charter in which Richard Strongbow confirmed grants to Tintern Abbey with the consent of ‘Countess Isabel his mother’ in 1148–54.⁵¹

Church of St Eiliwedd (Eluned)

Richard fitzGilbert’s cruciform Romanesque church was not the earliest on the site. This earlier church was dedicated to the Welsh saint St Eiliwedd (Eluned). Writing of his visit to Usk in 1478, William Worcestre says that ‘St Eiliwedd the virgin lies in the church at Usk’ and, as if to confirm that no other church in Usk is meant, he says, further, that she lies ‘in the church of the virgin nuns of the town of Usk’.⁵² His assertion is confirmed by the presence in the medieval town of a street called *Elewith, Elywith* or *Elewithstreet*, ‘Eiliwedd Street’.⁵³ This entered the town through its east gate and passed along the line of the modern footpath through the churchyard.⁵⁴ Its course was dictated by the line of the outer lip of the ditch on the north side of the Roman Legionary fortress of Burrium, built c. 55AD, which preceded the town of Usk.⁵⁵ This fortress had a life of only about twenty years before it was dismantled and its ditches filled in. A small fortlet was then built to guard a centre of iron-working. The fortlet’s life was also limited and by the 2nd century industrial activity was being carried out by the people of the Roman small town of Burrium that replaced both fort and fortlet, and which existed down to the end of the 4th century and perhaps beyond. The limits of this town are unknown, but it seems that the church of Eiliwedd was established on its northern fringe. The presence of this church argues for some form of continuity of settlement on the site between the late Roman and the early medieval periods.

Eiliwedd was one of the many alleged daughters of the legendary Brychan, lord of Brycheiniog. She is said to have lived in the 6th century and to have suffered martyrdom by the Iron Age hill-fort on Slwch Hill, to the east of Brecon. Her legend says that after she was beheaded on the hill by an importunate prince a spring of water immediately arose on the spot.⁵⁶ A chapel was later erected on the site and she had another chapel in a similar position by the hill-fort at Walterstone

⁵⁰ Taylor, A.J., ‘Usk Castle and the Pipe Roll of 1185’ *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, **99** (1947), 250.

⁵¹ *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1300–26*, 97, charter 3.

⁵² William Worcestre: *Itineraries* (ed. Harvey, J., Oxford, 1969), 155, 157.

⁵³ Knight & Johnson (eds), *Usk Castle, Priory and Town*, 31 and fig. 8.2; Courtney, P., *Report on the Excavations at Usk 1965–76* (Cardiff, 1994), 101, 102, 106.

⁵⁴ See fig. 8.2 in Knight & Johnson, *Usk Castle, Town and Priory*.

⁵⁵ See the plan of the Legionary fortress superimposed on the modern town town, Fig.3 in Manning, W., *Report on the Excavations at Usk: The Fortress Excavations 1972–4* (Cardiff, 1989).

⁵⁶ Baring-Gould, S & Fisher, J., *The Lives of the British Saints* (4 vols, Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1907–13; reprinted Felinfach, 2000), iii, 420.

in Herefordshire.⁵⁷ This too was built over or adjacent to a spring, one whose waters ran northwest into a stream called *Nant-y-Galles* in a charter of the early 7th century.⁵⁸ Her church on the site of the priory church at Usk may also have lain close to a spring whose waters ran down to the Usk, and which, after the Legionary fortress was built, ran into its ditch. Her clear connection with water and bathing (and thus, in Christian terms, with baptism into the life of Christ) suggests that she may have taken the place of a local water-goddess.

The building of Richard fitzGilbert's new church involved the demolition of the original Welsh church, but it left behind to its west a probable *capel-y-bedd* of St Eiliwedd's which was demolished only in 1844 for an extension to the nave of the church. In Welsh ecclesiastical tradition a *capel-y-bedd* was a chapel built over the grave of the saint to whom the attached or adjacent church was dedicated. Its purpose was to preserve their remains and to encourage pilgrimage, the latter producing a highly desirable income in either money or in kind. Most were situated away from the main church somewhere within its churchyard, but a few were built axially, as seems to have been the case at Usk. Two views of the church drawn by Sir Richard Colt Hoare in 1801 and 1806 (Figs 1 & 2)⁵⁹ show a small building standing west of the nave. On a plan of the town in William Coxe's *Historical Tour in Monmouthshire* church and chapel appear as a single building,⁶⁰ but from Colt Hoare's drawings it is clear that the chapel was a short distance west of the nave (the lower part of the nave's west window disappears behind its eastern end). In more detail, his views show a small, partly ruined (its gabled roof has some tiles missing) rectangular building about 35ft (10.5m) long and about half as wide (c. 5m). Its height is more difficult to estimate as the base of its walls are obscured by the churchyard wall, but it appears to be in proportion to the rest of its dimensions. Midway along its north wall is what appears to be a round-headed doorway and to its west a mullioned window of 16th or 17th century date. This is clearly a later addition, as is the chimney stack at the gable end for a fireplace in the west wall. If this is the *capel-y-bedd* of Eilwedd, any remains of her church must lie under the present nave.

The linear nature of the church and *capel-y-bedd* of St Eiliwedd apparent at Usk has parallels elsewhere in Wales and may be due to Anglo-Saxon and, ultimately, Merovingian influence.⁶¹ Other examples survive at Partrishow in Breconshire (now Powys), St Woolos's (St Gwynllyw's) at Newport in Gwent and Llantwit Major in Glamorgan.⁶² All of them lie in parts of Wales most open to

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, 418–22; Wedell, N., 'St Ailworth: a Celtic Saint in the Black Mountains?' *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, **146** (1997), 79–100. A cross-inscribed stone from the site of the chapel of St Ailworth was noted in 1812 but has since been lost. As the cross was incised an early medieval date can be assigned to it and this in turn supports the attribution of the chapel to an early saint: Redknap, M. & Lewis, J.M. *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales, Volume 1, South-East Wales and the English Border* (Cardiff, 2007), 536.

⁵⁸ Evan & Rhys, *The Book of Llan Dâv: Liber Landavensis*, 160; Coplestone-Crow, B.E.C. *Herefordshire Place-Names* (2nd ed., Almeley, 2009), 145.

⁵⁹ Coxe, W., *An Historical Tour Through Monmouthshire* (2 vols, London, 1801), i, 133; Hoare, Sir R.C., *A collection of forty eight views of Noblemen's and Gentlemen's seats, towns, castles, churches, monasteries and Romantic Places in north and south Wales* (John and Josiah Boydell, London, 1806).

⁶⁰ Reproduced in Courtney P., *Report on the Excavations at Usk 1965–1976: Medieval and Later Usk* (Cardiff, 1994), 2.

⁶¹ Cf. Blair, J., 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters: a topographical review'. In Blair, J. and Sharpe, R. (eds) *Pastoral Care Before the Parish* (Leicester University Press, 1992), 226–266.

⁶² Raleigh Radford, C.A. & Hemp, W.J., 'Pennant Melangell: the church and the shrine', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, **108** (1959), 81–113; Edwards, N. & Lane, A., 'The Archaeology of the Early Church in Wales: an introduction' in Edwards & Lane (eds.), *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, Oxbow Monograph **16** (1992), 9–11; Baring-Gould and Fisher, *Lives of the British Saints*, iii, 189, 463–6; & iv, 250, 463–6.

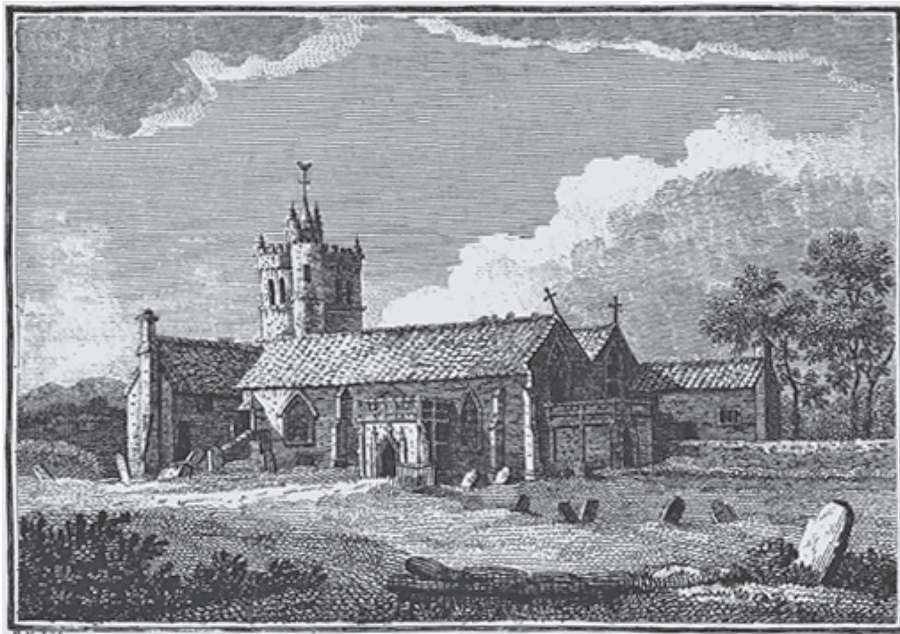


Fig. 1. Usk Church as drawn by Sir Richard Colt Hoare and engraved by William Byrne. Published by Cadell and Davies in Coxe's 'An Historical Tour In Monmouthshire' in 1800.
Courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries of London.



Fig. 2. Usk Church as drawn by Sir Richard Colt Hoare and engraved by William Byrne. Published in 1806.
Courtesy of Cardiff University Library, Special Collections.

Anglo-Saxon influence. South Wales in particular came under Anglo-Saxon hegemony from the late 9th century onwards, when its kings sought the protection of King Alfred of Wessex from attack by the Vikings or by their more powerful Welsh (and English) neighbours.⁶³ Men with English names start appearing in Welsh pedigrees at this time, and if the number of purely English names appearing in documents in the *Book of Llandaff* is anything to go by Gwent and Glamorgan experienced significant English settlement.⁶⁴

It is possible that, over time, St Eiliwedd's church and *capel-y-bedd* attracted a small community of female recluses to live close by it. This kind of activity has been proposed for the churches at Gwytherin in Denbighshire (now Clwyd) at Penant Melangell in Montgomeryshire (now Powys).⁶⁵ They might be women from the better families of the district, either unmarried or widows, and seeking a purpose in life. Something similar has been proposed for a church at Chapel Farm in Wigmore, Herefordshire, close to the Welsh border.⁶⁶ Here, however, there were both male and female anchorites at various times in its history and this may have been the case with the Welsh churches also. Eventually they would form a small nunnery dedicated to the saint of the church to which they had become attached. Churches dedicated to male saints established in the early medieval period in Wales such as this also attracted a small group of hermits or recluses to live by it. In some cases these settlements developed into *clas* or monastic churches served by a body of *claswyr* or secular canons under an abbot. Some of these were still in existence when the Normans invaded Wales and were readily re-founded by them as Benedictine houses or colleges of Augustinian canons. No female equivalent to these is known, but whereas the communities proposed for Gwytherin and Penant Melangell are not thought to have survived into the Norman era, it is likely that the Usk community did survive and became the Benedictine nuns of Richard fitzGilbert's new priory-church.⁶⁷

The Chapel and Cult of St Radegund at Usk Priory and her Cult in Britain

St Radegund's chapel is first mentioned by Adam of Usk, the priest and chronicler, in a letter to the pope written in 1404 concerning the parlous state the nunnery had fallen into as a result of the activities of Owain Glyndwr. He informs the pope also that there was 'within the walls of this monastery, a certain chapel built in honour of St Radegund, the virgin nun, former queen of France, to which the people of that region show great devotion, and which they visit frequently, especially between the feasts of Easter and Whitsun'.⁶⁸ It lay within the walls but not attached to any particular building.⁶⁹ It is mentioned again in 1535 when the nuns were receiving a modest income of 1s 8d annually from 'offerings in Saint Radegund's chapel'.⁷⁰ As their total income was just over £69 per

⁶³ Asser: *Life of King Alfred* (ed. Keynes, S. & Lapidge, M., London, 1983), 96; Kirby D.P., 'Hywel Dda: Anglophil?', *Welsh History Review*, 8 (1976), 1–13; Loyn, H., 'Wales and England in the Tenth Century: the context of the Athelstan Charters', *ante* 10 (1980/1), 283–301; Edwards, N. and Lane, A. (eds), *The Early Church in Wales and the West*. Oxbow Monograph 16, 1992, 9–11.

⁶⁴ See the map of English place-names in Gwent recorded before 1300 in Morgan, *Place-Names of Gwent*, 16.

⁶⁵ Edwards, N. and Lane (eds), *The Early Church in Wales and the West*. Oxbow Monograph 16, 1992, 9–11.

⁶⁶ Coplestone-Crow, B.E.C., 'Feverlege: a lost Premonstratensian Priory at Wigmore', *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club, Herefordshire*, 59 (2011), 93–8.

⁶⁷ Gray, M., 'Women of Holiness and Power: the cults of St Radegund and St Mary Magdalene at Usk', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 18 (2002), 6.

⁶⁸ Given-Wilson, C. (ed. & trans.), *The Chronicle of Adam Usk* (Oxford, 1997), 192.

⁶⁹ Williams, 'Usk Nunnery', 44.

⁷⁰ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, iv, 592.

annum, this very small amount suggests that pilgrimage to her chapel had declined considerably since Adam of Usk’s day.

The late Geoff Mein suggested that St Radegund’s might be the chapel demolished in 1844 and he is probably right in this,⁷¹ as no other obvious candidate is known. This, as we have suggested above, was originally the *capel-y-bedd* of St Eiliwedd so, if we are right, Radegund must have displaced her at some point. This was not such a big step as might seem at first sight, since Radegund was as much associated with water and bathing as the Welsh saint she replaced.⁷² In William Worcestre’s time, Eiliwedd’s grave was within the nun’s church and not in her grave-chapel. The nuns must, therefore, have translated her remains to a place of honour within the church built by Richard fitzGilbert. This might suggest that Eiliwedd was brought into their church at this time or sometime between then and 1404, although there is no reason while Richard’s church should not have contained Eiliwedd’s tomb or have a place of honour within it.

Radegund was a young princess of Thuringia, who was captured by Frankish raiders and educated at Athies in Flanders by Clothar I, king of Flanders (died AD 561). When she was of age, she became the second of his five wives. Radegund, however, preferred the church to the royal bed (Clothar complained that he had ‘married a nun’) and after several years of marriage fled to Bishop Medard at Noyon and pleaded with him to make her a nun so that her husband could not claim her back. Medard hesitated to make a nun out of a married woman and made her a deaconess instead. Thereafter she made her way to an enclave of Clothar’s kingdom around Tours and Poitiers. At first she led a reclusive life at the royal manor of Saix, but in about AD 552, founded a convent for two hundred nuns close to the city of Poitiers. She dedicated its church to St Mary but after acquiring a fragment of the True Cross from the Byzantine emperor, she changed it to Holy Cross. In time a convent of monks was added to this house in a move that is thought to have seen the establishment the first of the great double-monasteries of Merovingian France.⁷³ Because she had not proceeded in holy orders any further than deaconess, she could not herself be abbess of her foundation, so she gave that rôle to a childhood friend. Not being a nun also obliged her to live outside the walls of the convent in a cell she had specially built for her, and where she sought constant mortification of the flesh. She died on 13th August⁷⁴ AD 587 and was buried in the nearby church of Sainte-Marie-hors-les-Murs (now the church of Sainte-Radegonde). Gregory of Tours, the historian, and Venantius Fortunatus, the poet and a frequent visitor to the nunnery, were both her friends and shortly after her death Venantius wrote a *Vita Radegundis*. Baudovinia, one of the nuns at Holy Cross, expanded on this story and together the two ‘Lives’ spread her cult throughout Western Europe.⁷⁵

Radegund’s life as told by her hagiographers appealed to seekers of the reclusive life, either male or female. As a solitary in her cell at Poitiers she commended herself to both women and men

⁷¹ ‘St Mary’s Priory Church, Usk: some recent work and some new theories’, *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 19(2000), 58–72. See also Gray, M. & Rees, S., ‘The Medieval Priory and its Community’ in Knight, J. & Johnson, A. (eds) *Usk Castle, Priory and Town* (Logaston, 2008), 44.

⁷² Thompson, S., ‘Land, Water, Woman: Place, Identity and Coudrette’s *Mélusine* in Late Medieval Poitou’, *Newberry Essays in Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 8 (2014), 128–9.

⁷³ Aigrain, R., *Sainte Radegonda (vers 520–87)*, (Paris, 1918), 60–1.

⁷⁴ This was the date of her Feast Day on the Continent and sometimes on this side of the Channel. Often, however, for reasons unknown it was celebrated here on 11th February.

⁷⁵ Both ‘Lives’ are available in English in McNamara, J.A. (ed. & trans.), *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1992), 70–103. In respect of Usk in particular, see Gray, ‘Women of Holiness and Power: the Cults of St Radegund and St Mary Magdalene at Usk’, 3–11.

who sought the eremitical or anchoritic life.⁷⁶ Moreover, as both a queen and, through hagiographical tradition, a virgin, her life was thought to mirror that of the Virgin Mary, mother of Christ and Queen of Heaven. In Britain this meant that her name was commonly joined to Mary's in the dedication of churches and chapels – with Radegund playing the supporting role. Her journey from married woman to 'virgin martyr'⁷⁷ found particular resonance with widowed women who wanted to take part in the 'monastic' life of the church in their day and so gain some control over lives that, without a husband, could be quite precarious.

How and when the cult of St Radegund reached Usk is unknown. Devotion to her in Western Europe, and indeed in Britain (where it was never very extensive), has not been studied in any detail and this has hampered us in our search for its origins. Mein suggested that her presence might be due to the influence of Alice de Lusignan, wife (from 1253 until their separation in 1271) of Gilbert 'the Red' of Clare, earl of Gloucester and Hertford, who died in 1295 and this is perfectly plausible, as the Lusignans were counts of Angoulême and La Marche in Poitou.⁷⁸ Gray and Rees, however, say that the presence of a chapel in her name carries 'a hint of a pre-Norman cult'.⁷⁹ In support of this proposal we can quote Professor Emeritus George Beech of Western Michigan University, who has suggested a date in the 10th century for the arrival of her cult in Britain.⁸⁰ He based this on the appearance of her name on calendars or liturgies from English monastic houses dating from before the end of the 11th century. Most of them (Glastonbury, Evesham, Worcester, Winchester, Winchcombe and Exeter) lay in south west England. Glastonbury, where her name appears on the so-called *Leofric Missal* dating from about AD970,⁸¹ had an architectural link with Poitiers, the centre of St Radegund's cult, going back before this. Professor Beech noted the similarity between the mausoleum-type, semi-submerged, crypt of the 7th century at Glastonbury Abbey⁸² and the underground chapel (the Hypogée des Dunes) of similar date at Poitiers. This similarity he suggests could be taken as evidence that communication between the southwest Britain and Poitiers may go back a further two centuries. This proposition ties in with Beech's belief that her cult had

⁷⁶ Wehlau, R., 'Literal and Symbolic: the Language of Asceticism in Two Lives of St Radegund', *Florilegium*, **19** (2002), 75–89.

⁷⁷ Her progress from one state to the other is traced in Smith, J.M.H., 'Radegundis peccatrix: authorizations of virginity in late antique Gaul' in Pousseau, P. & Papoutsakis, M. (eds), *Transformations of Late Antiquity: essays for Peter Brown* (Farnham and Burlington, 2009), 303–326. Rosser, S., 'Æthelthryth: a conventional saint?', *Bulletin of the John Ryland Library*, **79** (1997), 15–24, draws interesting parallels between the English saint and the Merovingian through the conventions of medieval female hagiography.

⁷⁸ Mein, A.G., 'St Mary's Church at Usk: some recent work and new theories', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, **16** (2000), 68–73.

⁷⁹ Gray & Rees, 'The Medieval Priory and Its Community' in Knight & Johnson (eds), *Usk Castle, Town and Priory*, 40.

⁸⁰ Beech, G., 'England and Aquitaine in the Century Before the Norman Conquest'. *Anglo-Saxon England*, **19** (1990), 81–101.

⁸¹ Orchard, N. (ed.), *The Leofric Missal*, 2 vols., Henry Bradshaw Society, **113** & **114** (2002), i, 177–8, 203–5 & ii, 58, 392. See also Wormald, F. (ed.), *English Calendars before A.D. 1100*, Henry Bradshaw Society, **72** (1934), no.4; Lapidge, M., 'Litanies of the Saints in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: a preliminary list', *Scriptorium*, **40** (1986), 76–7, 229; and Rushforth, R. *Saints in English Calendars Before A.D. 1100*, Henry Bradshaw Society, **117** (2008), no.7 & Table II.

⁸² Professor Roberta Gilchrist of Reading University has been leading a team reviewing all the unpublished materials arising from excavations at Glastonbury in the 20th century. This has come to the (provisional) conclusion that the earliest buildings at the abbey site, including the crypt, date from the last decades of the 7th century: 'Glastonbury Abbey: the archaeological story', *Current Archaeology*, **320** (November 2016), 18–27.

been brought to Britain by merchants and/or clergymen plying those western seaways that had for centuries linked this island with the western France and the Mediterranean.

If we take Beech’s south western distribution with that of the geographical distribution of all forty-three locations in Britain where evidence has been found of devotion to her in surviving records of the 9th to 16th centuries (see Map 2, and the appendix for its supporting evidence⁸³), his observation that her cult was brought here from western France along ancient seaborne trade routes, perhaps as early as the 7th century, is given added credibility. The overwhelming majority of them lie in the south west of England. Their distribution in the valley of the Severn and its tributaries is particularly marked, as are the rivers of Somerset that debauch into the Bristol Channel. The Bristol Channel coasts of north Devon and South Wales were also involved, it appears, as was the south coast of England as far east as the Hampshire Avon and the Isle of Wight.

These are precisely the areas of south west Britain frequented by merchants bringing pottery from western France (the so-called E-ware category of post-Roman imported pottery) in the late 6th and 7th centuries.⁸⁴ It came almost exclusively from ports in western France close to kilns in the provinces of Poitou and Charentes.⁸⁵ Although the exact location of the kilns is still unknown, it is possible that Poitiers itself was involved in its production. As it is likely that the traders from western France would have brought ideas with them as well as the pottery and other perishable goods for which they are better known, some of them could have brought with them the cult of their local Frankish saint. Earlier traders bringing pottery from the Mediterranean area in the 5th and 6th centuries⁸⁶ had resulted in some of them settling in south Wales,⁸⁷ so we should be alert to the possibility that this could also apply to those bringing E-ware from western France and settling in other areas apart from south Wales.

Other areas of Britain are mostly devoid of any record of St Radegund’s presence. There is, for instance, an almost complete absence of her cult in the Dumnonian Peninsula (Devon and Cornwall) west of Exeter, in England north of the Wash and in Wales, apart from the far southeast. These areas, indeed, were where the ‘British’ church remained strong. The origins of this church lay in the Roman era and maintained its independence from the Roman church to the Synod of Whitby in AD664. It was here that its leaders agreed to align their liturgical and tonsural practices with those of the Roman church, but even then it took a century for all churches in these regions to fall into line. In these areas, therefore, it is most unlikely that the cult of a Frankish saint of the Church of Rome would have found any favour in the 7th century. It was otherwise with the pottery they brought. This

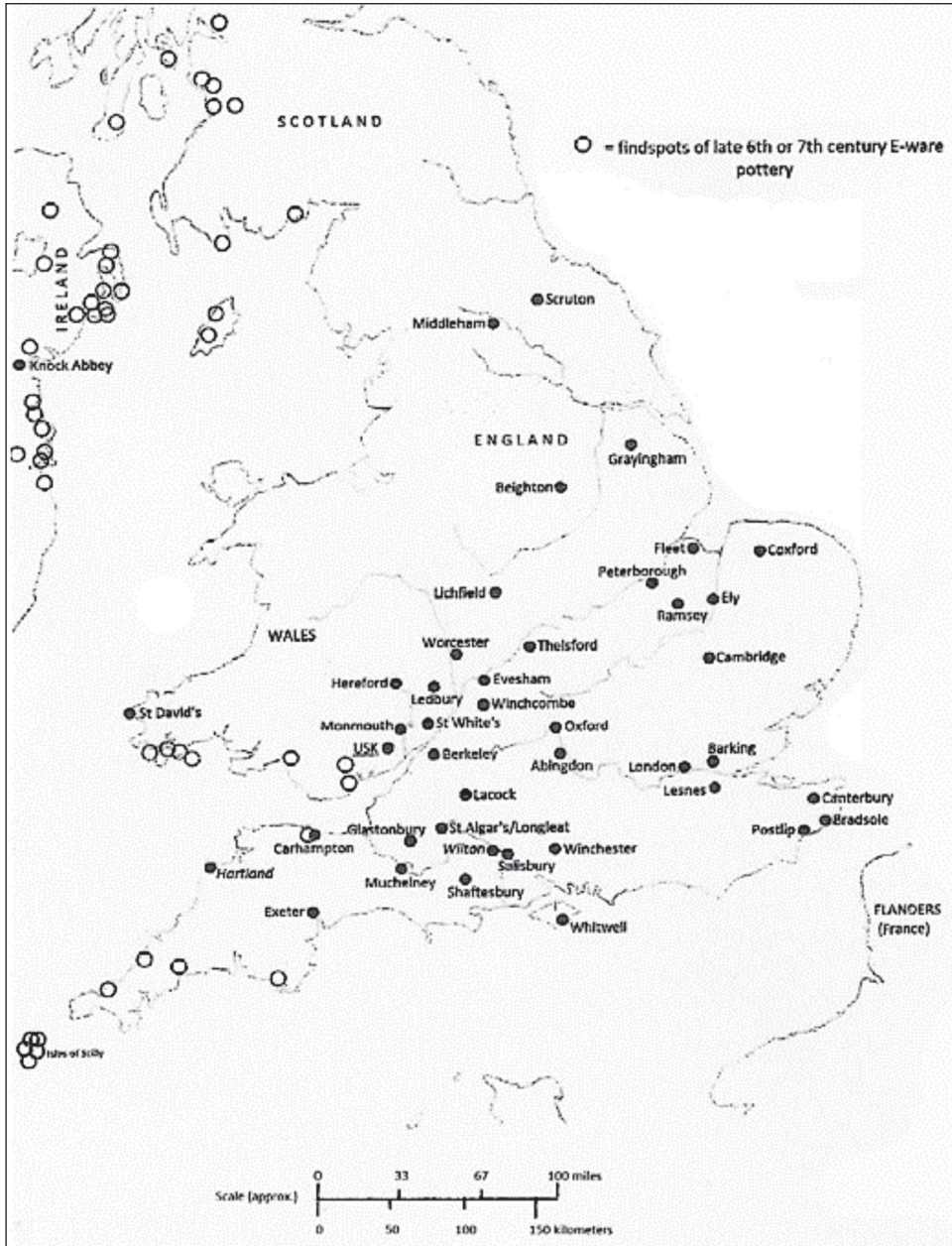
⁸³ This map makes no claim to exclusivity: there may be (and probably are) some references that have been overlooked or not found, but the distribution of the majority of the places where her cult is found is so distinctive that further evidence it unlikely to alter it. Note that the dedication of the church at Maplebeck in Nottinghamshire to St Radegund dates only from its restoration in 1898. Before this it was dedicated to St John: Southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/Maplebeck/hintro.php (retrieved 13th March 2015).

⁸⁴ Wooding, J.M., *Communication and Commerce Along the Western Sealanes AD 400–800* (British Archaeological Reports, International series 654, Oxford, 1996), 59, 77–8; Campbell, E., *Continental and Mediterranean Imports in Atlantic Britain and Ireland* (CBA Research Report 157, York, 2007), 32–52, 132–9.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁸⁶ The most recent discussion of the kind of pottery brought from the Mediterranean, a subject whose content seems to change on an almost annual basis, is in Duggan, M., ‘Ceramic Imports to Britain and the Atlantic Seaboard in the Fifth Century and Beyond’, *Internet Archaeology*, Issue 41 for March 2016.

⁸⁷ Hemer, K.A., Evans, J.A., Chenery, C.A. & Lamb, A.L., ‘Evidence of early medieval trade and migration between Wales and the Mediterranean Sea region’, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, **40** (2013), 2352–2358.



Map 2. Places in Britain where St Radegund is cultivated for (or, in *italics*, where the name Radegund appears) in surviving records of the 9th–16th centuries.

was welcomed by them as a nostalgic reminder of the glories of the empire that had formerly ruled over them.⁸⁸

In the parts of England south of the Wash and as far west as the Rivers Wye in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire and Parrett in Somerset, however, the Roman church introduced by the Gregorian mission of AD597 and which by the mid-7th century had converted most of England, held sway. In these areas, therefore, the cult of St Radegund would be most welcome, and this is what we seem to be seeing in the distribution pattern on Map 2. Evidence of the importation of E-ware pottery (the black circles) reaches into the Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary as far as a line from the mouth of the Usk on its north coast to Sand Point on its south. Beyond this is where we start seeing evidence of Radegund’s cult, particularly in the valley of the lower Severn. It seems, therefore, as if a (Poitevin?) boat bringing E-ware from western France⁸⁹ had sailed along the north coast of the Dumnonian Peninsula, where it had found a ready market for the pottery it had in its hold. Having entered the mouth of the Severn, however, it found little or no interest in its pottery, but great interest in the devotion to St Radegund that its sailors brought with them. Then, on its return journey along the south coast of Wales it was again able to trade its pottery (but not ideas) with the British people. Likewise, a boat sailing along the south coast of England, from Land’s End to the Solent, found little interest in its pottery east of the River Exe, but great interest in the cult of St Radegund as far east as the Isle of Wight, where it turned for home.⁹⁰ This may be a simplistic model for the actual event itself. There may have been, or more probably was, more than one or two boats involved and it may have taken longer to achieve than just two voyages. Map 2, however, points to a clear cultural division between the British west of the mouth of the Severn and the Anglo-Saxons to its east.⁹¹

Seen from this angle, the popularity of the cult of St Radegund can be viewed as a largely 7th century phenomenon, introduced to the Severn estuary area and the south-west of England by sea from Poitou. Even though there is no record of its presence in this area before the late 10th century, there is every reason to suppose that Radegund’s was a cult had been brought from its home in Poitou as much as three hundred years or more earlier.

Regarding devotion to her at Usk specifically, the activities of the monks of the neighbouring house at Monmouth Priory in the 12th century are instructive. Founded some sixty years before this, by the 1140s the monks were displaying such an intense interest in Radegund as to acquire a moiety of one of her her church at Grayingham in Lincolnshire and on the other side of a country currently wracked by a vicious and protracted civil war.⁹² Such ardent devotion to Radegund this displays,

⁸⁸ There is a paradox here, as White has noted, in that these people of the geographical extremities of England and Wales were, in fact, those least affected by Roman civilization. Scotland and Ireland were not at all affected by it: White, R., *Britannia Prima* (Stroud, 2007), 154.

⁸⁹ See the excellent perspective map reproduced in *ibid.*, 162, which gives a better picture of the less-daunting distances involved than do conventional maps of Europe.

⁹⁰ For possible sea routes bringing post-Roman imported pottery into the Bristol Channel and English Channel coasts, see Thomas, C., *Tintagel, Arthur and Archaeology* (Batsford, 1993), map on page 97; Hollinrake, N., ‘Dark Age Traffic on the Bristol Channel, UK: A Hypothesis’, *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 36 (2007), 336–343; Lane, A., ‘The End of Roman Britain and the Coming of the Saxons: An Archaeological Context for Arthur’ in Fulton, H. (ed.), *A Companion to Arthurian Literature* (Chichester, 2012), 25–6.

⁹¹ In respect of the imaginary line across the Severn between Uskmouth and Sand Point suggested here, Lane notes (*op.cit.* p26) that it is ‘as if there were a political boundary on the Severn blocking...trade’.

⁹² For an assessment of the *chaotic condition* of the county of Hereford and neighbouring parts of Wales at this time, see Coplestone-Crow, B.E.C., ‘The Anarchy in Herefordshire’ in Thurlby, M., *The Herefordshire School of Romanesque Sculpture* (Logaston, 2013), 1–42.

taken with the relatively dense cluster of places around the mouth of the Severn (which include Usk) showing interest in her, suggests that her cult had a long history in the area by the 1140s, perhaps going back many centuries. When exactly she took over St Eiliwedd's *capel-y-bedd* at Usk, if that is what happened, is unknown, but there must be a suspicion from the probable history of her cult in the area that this was before rather than after Richard fitzGilbert of Clare founded the Benedictine nunnery.

APPENDIX

These are locations of the monasteries, churches and chapels where there is record of Radegund's name in use in the period from the late 9th century to the Dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII in the 16th century. Except in a few cases, the dates given are the dates or approximate dates at which her cult is first noted, not necessarily the actual or approximate time it reached those places.

Abingdon (Berks) 1118

Ralph, chamberlain to Faricius, abbot of Abingdon, obtained some clothing of St Radegund in the second year after the death of Faricius, in February 1117.⁹³

Ardland (Gloucs)

See St White's.

Barking (Essex) 1404

In an Ordinal written and presented to the abbess of Barking in 1404, *Radegundis uirginis* was commemorated on 13 August.⁹⁴

Beighton (South Yorks) 1279

In 1279 Walter de Furneaux made over the manor of Beighton to William his brother in return for 80 marks and 1d rent payable on St Radegund's Day in the church of St Radegund at Beighton. It was still dedicated to Radegund in 1537.⁹⁵ The present dedication is to St Mary the Virgin

Berkeley (Gloucs) 1281–1321

In the time of Thomas of Berkeley, 6th baron (1281–1321), Henry son of Ralph the Gardiner granted to him a messuage in 'the new town of Berkeley' next to the lane leading to the chapel of St Radegund. Eve Maidosa, widow of William the Baker of Berkeley, had granted Henry a shop in 'the new town of Berkeley' between the holding of Robert the Smith and the street from *la Boregate* to the chapel of St Radegund and next to the road from Berkeley market to a certain bridge.⁹⁶ 'St

⁹³ Hudson, J. (ed. & trans.), *Historia Ecclesie Abendonensis: the History of the Church of Abingdon* (2 vols, Oxford, 2002), ii, 224–5.

⁹⁴ Tolhurst, J.B.L. (ed.), *The Ordinal and Customary of the Benedictine Nuns of Barking Abbey*, 2 vols, Henry Bradshaw Society, **65** (1927) & **66** (1928), i, 8 & ii, 276.

⁹⁵ Lysons, D. & S., *Magna Britannia, Vol. 5 Derbyshire* (London, 1817), 47; Cox, J.C., *Notes on the Churches of Derbyshire* (4 vols, London and Derby, 1875–9), i, 83–9; Jeayes, I.H. (ed.), *Descriptive Catalogue of Derbyshire Charters in Public and Private Libraries and Muniment Rooms* (London & Derby, 1906), no.267.

⁹⁶ Wells-Furby, B., *A Catalogue of the Medieval Muniments of Berkeley Castle* (2 vols, Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society, 2004), 111. 'The Maydose Shop'.

Radegund’s Lane’, which was the name of a street running up to an 18th century church tower from the High Street, indicates this was the tower of St Radegund’s chapel the body of which lay to its east.⁹⁷ The street-name has been revived in the past few years.

Bradsole (Kent) 1193

In 1193 Hugh, a canon of Prémontré in France, founded the Premonstratensian abbey of St Radegund at Bradsole in Kent with the assistance of local landholders. He was its first abbot.⁹⁸

Cambridge (Cambs) 1153–8

The nunnery here originated in a group of women of ‘superior birth’ living close to a church of St Mary lying outside the town of Cambridge in the time of bishop Nigel of Ely (1133–69).⁹⁹ Various grants to these nuns of St Mary were confirmed by King Stephen in a charter issued when he was engaged in the siege of Meppershall castle, Bucks, in 1149 or 1150.¹⁰⁰ The first time they are referred to as nuns of St Mary and St Radegund, however, is in a charter of bishop Nigel’s issued the period 17 August 1153 to c. 1158 confirming this charter of Stephen’s.¹⁰¹ A deed of King Malcolm IV of Scotland dating from the summer of 1163 is also addressed to the nuns of St Mary and St Radegund at Cambridge.¹⁰² Bishop Nigel’s church had in use a missal written c. 1020 whose litany included St Radegund: see Ely below. He may have been responsible for the addition of her name to the dedication of the nuns’ church.

Canterbury (Kent)

Christ Church c. 950–75 (c. 600?) & ‘St Radegund’s Bath’ (1450)

The litany appended to the ‘Salisbury Psalter’, which was written at Christ Church, Canterbury, in c. 950–75, contains her name.¹⁰³ Her cult, however, may have arrived in Canterbury three centuries or more before this. Bertha, the Christian wife of the heathen King Ethelbert of Kent (c. 565–616), was the granddaughter of Clothar I, king of the Flanders, whose second wife had been Radegund. Family connections also meant that she must have known St Radegund before she came to Kent. She could, therefore, have brought her cult with her.

There was once a well called ‘St Radegund’s Bath’ outside the north gate of the city whose name may date from Bertha’s time. Its remains now lie under a carpark. In about 1230 the abbey of St Radegund at Bradsole in Kent was given land at Froxpole outside the north gate. This land included a natural spring that fed a bath that may have been Roman in origin. It became the site of a hospice set up by the abbey to cater for the needs of pilgrims to the tomb of St Thomas Becket and was known in 1450, at least, as ‘St Radegund’s Bath’.¹⁰⁴ The bath may have taken its name from the

⁹⁷ *Ex inf* Dr Stuart Prior, who kindly conducted me round the excavations at Berkeley he has been engaged in over several years.

⁹⁸ *Victoria County History of Kent*, Vol. 1 (1926), 172–5.

⁹⁹ The standard work on the founding of this house is Gray, A., *The Priory of Saint Radegund, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1898). It was suppressed in 1494 at the instigation of the then bishop and its site is now occupied by Jesus College.

¹⁰⁰ Davis *et al* (eds), *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, iii, no.138.

¹⁰¹ *English Episcopal Acta 31: Ely 1109–97* (ed., Karn, N., British Academy, 2005), no.20.

¹⁰² Gray, *Priory of St Radegund*, 76–7.

¹⁰³ Lapidge, M. (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*, Henry Bradshaw Society, **106** (1991), 83, 286.

¹⁰⁴ Harvey, I.M.W., *Jack Cade’s Rebellion of 1450* (Oxford, 1991), 65 and note 50; Gardiner, D., ‘Notes on an Ancient House in Church Lane, Canterbury’, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, **51** (1939), 108–112; *St Radegund’s Place, Canterbury: development principles* (Canterbury City Council, 2011), 3–4.

fact that it was possessed by the abbey of St Radegund at Bradpole from c. 1230 onwards, although a date nearly six hundred years earlier is equally plausible. No church or chapel dedicated to the Frankish saint is known, but given the close connection between saints and holy wells, it is possible that one had once existed close to ‘her’ bath.

Carhampton (Somerset) 1510

There were lights in St John the Baptist’s church to Radegund and five other saints in 1510.¹⁰⁵

Coxford (Norfolk) 1465

In 1135–44 William de Chesney founded a priory of Augustinian canons in his church of St Mary at East Rudham. This was re-founded by his nephew John in 1158 and was removed eastward to Coxford in about 1216.¹⁰⁶ There was a chapel and guild [‘society for mutual aid’] of St Radegund in the priory church of St Mary at Coxford in 1465 and the chapel had a ‘lady anchoress’ in 1526.¹⁰⁷

Ely (Cambs) c. 1020?

The so-called *Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, written at Winchester New Minster c. 1020, probably, has in its litany, besides St Radegund, saints specific to both Ely and Peterborough, and was probably intended for use at either (or both) of these houses.¹⁰⁸ See Winchester.

Evesham (Worcs) later 11th (poss.1064–70)

A kalendar of the latter part of the 11th century in use at the priory here includes her name.¹⁰⁹

Exeter (Devon) mid-11th

St Radegund is invoked in a mid-11th century litany from the cathedral here.¹¹⁰ In 1219–21 there was a chapel or oratory of St Radegund in an archdeacon’s house in Palace Gate.¹¹¹ In 1283 the dean and chapter received the advowson of the church of Widecombe-in-the-Moor on condition that a memorial service for Roger de Thoriz, late dean, should be held in St Radegund’s chapel.¹¹² A chantry or mortuary chapel of St Radegund was built into the west front of Exeter Cathedral in the mid-14th century and there is a statue of her on the exterior which dates from the same period.

¹⁰⁵ *Victoria County History of the County of Somerset: Carhampton Religious History* (first draft, May 2010, retrieved 4 April 2015), 8.

¹⁰⁶ Davis *et al*, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, iii, nos. 247–8; *Victoria County History of the County of Norfolk*, Vol.2 (1906), 378.

¹⁰⁷ Blomefield, F. and continuators, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk* (11 vols, London, 1805–10), vii, 151–7

¹⁰⁸ Wilson, H.A. (ed.), *The Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, Henry Bradshaw Society, **11** (1896), 10; Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies*, 82; Rushforth, R., *Saints in English Kalendars Before A.D. 1100*, Henry Bradshaw Society, **117** (2008), no.12 & Table II.

¹⁰⁹ Wormald, (ed.), *English Kalendars before A.D. 1100*, no.16; Rushforth, *Saints in English Kalendars Before A.D. 1100*, no.22 & Table II. As late as 1580 the people of the village Bengeworth, which lies just across the river Avon from Evesham, were Christening children of both sexes with the name Radegund: Brittain, F., *The Lyfe of Saynt Radegunde* (Cambridge, 1925), pxii.

¹¹⁰ Lapidge, ‘Litanies of the Saints in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: a preliminary list’, no.22.

¹¹¹ Orme, N., *The Churches of Medieval Exeter* (London, 2014).

¹¹² Edmonds, W.J., *Exeter Cathedral* (London, 1898), 17–18.

Fleet (Lincs) 1529

There was a chapel of St Radegund in the church of St Mary Magdalene here. In his will of 16 September 1529, William Dawson of Fleet bequeathed 6s 8d ‘to the making of oure Ladie Radybound chapell’ in the church of St Mary Magdalene at Fleet. In the next year William Crane of Fleet left 12d ‘to the makyng of our Lady of Redybone chapell’ in the same church.¹¹³

Glastonbury (Somerset) 969–987

The *Leofric Missal*, written in northeast France or Flanders (both of them areas that were closely associated with Radegund) in the second half of the 9th century and which includes her name in both its kalendar and litany, was at Glastonbury Abbey by 969–987.¹¹⁴

Gloucester

There is a persistent belief that there was a chapel of St Radgund in the abbey church here but this has no basis in fact, however convenient it would have been for our argument.

Grayingham (Lincs) 1146

As mentioned before, Monmouth Priory had obtained a moiety of St Radegund’s church here ‘with the land of that vill and its appurtenances’ by 1146.¹¹⁵ It was probably given to the priory by Earl Ranulf of Chester, who had received a gift of that moiety of Grayingham from King Stephen.¹¹⁶ The other moiety belonged to the bishop of Lincoln.

Hartland (Devon) 1100–08

There was a British monastery here when King Henry I gave the manor of Hartland to Geoffrey de Dinan in or soon after 1100. Although there is no connection between the two events, it is curious that we find Geoffrey’s wife Oriel using the cognomen *Radegundis* eight years later when she consented to the establishment of a church of St Malo at her home at Dinan in Brittany.¹¹⁷ She and her husband belonged to the extended family of Dol-Dinan-Combours of northeast Brittany, none of whom are known to have had any special regard for Radegund. It is even more curious to find that when the British monastery was reformed as a house of Augustinian canons in 1165–9, it was Richard of Ilchester, a local boy from Sock Dennis in Somerset, whom Henry II had made archdeacon and treasurer of Poitiers, who was responsible.¹¹⁸ Circumstantial evidence, therefore, suggests that the British clergy at Hartland had come to know of St Radegund through long association with English settlers in the area and that this was the situation still in the time of Oriel de Dinan and Richard of Ilchester.

¹¹³ *Lincolnshire Wills*, Vol.2 (British Record Society, 1918), 146 & vol.3 (British Record Society, 1930), 78.

¹¹⁴ Orchard (ed.), *The Leofric Missal*, i, 177–8, 203–5 & ii, 58, 392. See also Wormald, *English Kalendars...*.no.4, Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies...*,76–7, 229 and Rushforth, *Saints in English Kalendars Before A.D. 1100*, no.7 & Table II.

¹¹⁵ Round, J.H. (ed.), *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France Prior to AD 1200*, no.1126.

¹¹⁶ Davis *et al.*, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, iii, no.494.

¹¹⁷ Jones, M., *The Family of Dinan in England in the Middle Ages* (Dinan, 1987), 18–20; Lobineau, Dom G.H., *Histoire de Bretagne* (Paris, 1707), 141.

¹¹⁸ Doble, G.H., *The Life of St Nectan* (The Saints of Cornwall, Part 5, Dean and Chapter of Truro Cathedral, 1970), 75–6. The date of reform by Richard of Ilchester is from Holdsworth, C., in *Monastic Research Bulletin*, 7 (2001), 12.

Hereford (Herefs) c. 1300

St Radgund's name is on an Ordinal in use at the cathedral here c. 1300.¹¹⁹

Lacock (Wilts) 1480-c. 1500

A Kalendar used by the Augustinian nuns of Lacock Abbey celebrated Radegund on 12 August (not 13th).¹²⁰

Ledbury (Herefs) before 1250

A light of St Radegund in Ledbury Church had been endowed before 1250 with a piece of arable land in Ledbury. Her chapel was probably the ornate north-east chapel that is now used as a meeting room.¹²¹

Lessness (Kent) early 13th century?

An early 13th century missal of the abbey of St Thomas the Martyr here has Radegund's name against 13th August, but written in a later hand.¹²²

Lichfield (Staffs) 1242

Hugh of Sotby, dean of Lichfield, founded a chantry chapel of St Radegund in the cathedral in 1242.¹²³ In c. 1255 Richard of Whittington granted rents at Whittington to canon Hugh of Sotby for his chantry at the altar of St Radegund in Lichfield Cathedral. This altar lay in a chapel off the south choir aisle, which was rebuilt in the 1230s and 1240s.¹²⁴

London, Old St Paul's 1189–98

Richard fitzNeal, bishop of London 1189–98, established an altar to St Radegund in Old St Paul's Cathedral. By 1349, when Bishop William de Everden was placed in a tomb within it, there was a chapel of St Radegund in the cathedral's crypt.¹²⁵

Longleat (Wilts) 1235

See St Algar's.

¹¹⁹ Frere, W.H. & Brown, L.E.G. (eds), *The Hereford Breviary* (3 vols, Henry Bradshaw Society, **26** (1903), **40** (1911) & **46** (1915), ii, 111 and note b.

¹²⁰ Smith, W., 'The Kalendar of the Augustinian Abbey of Lacock', *Ephemrides Liturgicae*, **99** (Jan-Feb 1985), 88–9, 96.

¹²¹ Pinches, S. (ed. with contributions from Baker, N., Cooper, F. & Ray, K.), *Ledbury People and Parish Before the Reformation* (Chichester, 2010), 43–4; Cooper, J., 'St Radegund' in *Herefordshire Past*, The Newsletter of The Trust for the Victoria County History of Herefordshire, 2, no.11 (2011), 14–15.

¹²² Jebb, Dom Philip, *Missale de Lesnes*, Henry Bradshaw Society, **95** (1964), 43.

¹²³ *Gateway to the Past*; Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent's Cultural Heritage, Records of the Paget Family, Barons of Beaudesert, Marquesses of Anglesey and Earls of Uxbridge, The Manor of the Chantry of St Radegund, Lichfield.

¹²⁴ *Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, Vol.14 (1990), 47–57 and 147, 212, 217. See also Fox, J.C. (ed.), 'Catalogue of the Muniments and Manuscript Books Pertaining to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield', *Staffordshire Historical Collections*, **6** pt.1 (1886), 117, 167.

¹²⁵ Rousseau, M-H, *Saving the Souls of Medieval London: perpetual chantries at St Paul's Cathedral c. 1200–1548* (London, 2011), 69, 72.

Middleham (North Yorks) 1478

In 1478 Richard of Gloucester (later king Richard III) founded a college of six priests and a dean in the church at Middleham. Among their specified duties was to pray on the feast days ‘of such saints as I have devotion to’. There were thirty-nine of these, including St Radegund.¹²⁶ The church is dedicated to St Alkelda.

Monmouth (Monmouthshire) 1146

Why the monks of Monmouth Priory should want a share of St Radegund’s church at Grayingham (q.v.) in Lincolnshire on the opposite side of a country wracked by civil war is not an easy question to answer. Possibly there was a pre-existing but unrecorded devotion to her in their church, but we can only speculate.

Muchelney (Somerset) 14th century

The calendar of a late 13th century breviary of this abbey had the Feast of St Hyppolitus set against 13th August, but a later medieval hand added St Radegund.¹²⁷

Oxford (Oxon) late 15th

A late 15th century Kalendar from the university has Radegund’s name against 11 February.¹²⁸

Peterborough (Cambridgeshire) 11th?

The so-called *Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, written c. 1020 at Winchester New Minster probably, has in its litany saints (besides St Radegund) specific to Ely and Peterborough, and was probably intended for use at either (or both) of these houses. See Winchester.

Postling (Kent) 1217–27

The church of St Mary at Postling in Kent was given to Bradsole abbey by Philip III de Columbers in 1217–27. The addition of the name Radegund to its dedication may date from this time.¹²⁹

Ramsey (Hunts) late 10th?

The so-called ‘Ramsey Psalter’ or ‘Psalter of Oswald’ dating from c. 975–1000 has been connected with Oswald, bishop of Worcester 961–72 and archbishop of York 972–992. It was written either here or at Winchester.¹³⁰ See also Winchcombe.

St Algar’s at Frome (now in Langley) and later at Longleat (Somerset, then Wilts), 1235

‘Brothers’ at a ‘house’ of St Mary at Langley in Somerset in the time of Henry I may have brought the cult of Radegund with them when they were reformed as the Augustinian priory of St Radegund

¹²⁶ Bartlett, R., *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?: saints and worshippers from the martyrs to the Reformation* (Philadelphia, 2013), 236.

¹²⁷ Schofield, B. (ed.), *Muchelney Memoranda edited from a breviary of the abbey with an essay on Somerset medieval calendars by the Dean of Wells* [J.Armitage Robinson], Somerset Record Society, **42** (1927), 135.

¹²⁸ Wordsworth, C., *Ancient Kalendar of the University of Oxford*, Oxford Historical Society, **45** (1904), 217.

¹²⁹ *Victoria County History of the County of Kent*, Vol.2 (1926), 172–5; Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vii, 940 Charter I.

¹³⁰ Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies...*, 74, 207.

at Longleat a short distance away, although that priory is not on record until 1235.¹³¹ The ‘house’ of the brothers seems to have stood at what is now St Algar’s Farm. The farmhouse there incorporates much 14th century masonry from an ecclesiastical building and lies adjacent to the site of a Roman-British villa.¹³² Leland says the chapel in Selwood Forest contained the bones of St Aelfgar, a saint otherwise unknown, and whom Blair suggests was an Anglo-Saxon hermit.¹³³

St David’s (Pembs) c. 1082

Her name occurs in a *martyrium* written c. 1082 for Rhygyfarch (d.1099), scholar and teacher at the cathedral of St David.¹³⁴

St White’s or Ardland (Gloucs) 1530

There was a hermitage or chapel at Ardland dedicated to St White (or Candida) and St Radegund. When Earl Roger of Hereford founded the Cistercian abbey of Flaxley in the Forest of Dean in 1151–3 he endowed it with ‘all the land called *Wastadene* that had been Wulfric’s and a forge at Ardland’.¹³⁵ By 1158 the land had become the grange of *Westedena*.¹³⁶ Towards the end of his reign King Henry II (1154–89) granted the hermitage and ‘chapel of *Herdlande*’ to a certain William who, in the time of Henry’s son King Richard (1189–99), granted to Flaxley the chapel, the hermit himself and all his possessions, the abbey agreeing in return that it would provide food daily for him and for those with him and also clothing as needed so that he could devote himself entirely to the life of an anchorite.¹³⁷ In 1221 John of Monmouth, warden of the Forest of Dean, was told to allow the abbot of Flaxley to hold in peace the hermitage of Ardland as he had held it in the reign of King John (1199–1216).¹³⁸ Four years later Henry III granted permission for *Panie* of Lench to live as a recluse at Ardland and authorised the constable of St Briavel’s to give her four acres of land near her hermitage and two oaks for its repair.¹³⁹ In 1241 Henry gave *Juetta de Wiz* the hermitage (*recluserium*) of Ardland.¹⁴⁰ In 1519 Thomas Sayce, hermit, was licenced to collect alms in Hereford Diocese for the repair of the chapel of St Candida and of the roads leading up to it. John Sayce was the hermit in 1522 and in 1527 it was James Robins. In 1530 the proctor of the convent of Flaxley obtained a licence to collect alms in the diocese for the repair of the chapel of SS Candida and Radegund at their grange of Ardland and of the adjacent public roads.¹⁴¹ It is possible that references

¹³¹ *Victoria County History of Wiltshire*, Vol. 3 (1956), 302–3; Ross, C.D. (ed.), *The Cartulary of Cirencester Abbey, Gloucestershire* (2 vols., Oxford, 1964), nos. 56–9, 596–605; Jones, W.R. & Macray, W.D. (eds), *Charters and Documents Illustrative of the History of the Cathedral, City and Diocese of Salisbury* (Rolls Series, 1891), no. 208 Part I.

¹³² Somerset Historic Environment Record, PRNs 24463, 28571 & 30359 (2010).

¹³³ Blair, J., ‘A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints’ in Thacker, A., & Sharpe, R., (eds), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford, 2002), 503.

¹³⁴ Lawlor, H.J., (ed.), *The Psalter and Martyrology of Ricemarch* (Henry Bradshaw Society, 47 (1914), 20.

¹³⁵ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, iv, 590 Charter I. A confirmation charter of Duke Henry of Normandy, later King Henry II, dating from 1151–4.

¹³⁶ Conway Davies, J. (ed.), *Cartae Antiquae Rolls 11–20* (Pipe Roll Society, 1957), no.521.

¹³⁷ Crawley-Boevey, A.W. (ed.), *The Cartulary and Historical Notes of the Cistercian Abbey of Flaxley* (Exeter, 1887), no.25. The site of the chapel and hermitage is at St White’s Farm, Cinderford, NGR SO658131: Teague, S., *St White’s Farm, Cinderford, Gloucestershire*, Oxford Archaeology Project, 2007. The farm is surrounded by evidence of ancient iron mines and forges.

¹³⁸ *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum* (2 vols., Record Commission, 1833–44), i, 441.

¹³⁹ *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium* (Record Commission, 1835), 44, 51.

¹⁴⁰ *Calendar of Close Rolls 1237–42*, 273.

¹⁴¹ *Registrum Caroli Bothe, episcopi Herefordensis*, Canterbury and York Society, 28 (1921), 355, 356, 359.

here to St Candida (Latin for ‘white’) or St White refer to devotees of St Radegund, who wore a distinctive white headdress.¹⁴² If this is the case, then there was only ever a hermitage chapel of St Radegund at this location and later generations confused her with the mysterious St Candida or St White of Whitchurch Canonicorum in Dorset.

Salisbury (c. 1445)

A list of relics the cathedral possessed c. 1445 included ‘the heer of Seint Radegunde’.¹⁴³

Scruton (North Yorks) medieval (12th?)

According to local tradition, the church here became dedicated to St Radegund after some soldiers of the village came back from King Henry II’s wars in Poitou and Aquitaine and having been inspired by her story when at her tomb in Poitiers.¹⁴⁴ This was probably written in the light of Frances Arnold-Forster’s, *Studies in Church Dedications of England’s Patron Saints* (London, 1899), 491 where she says ‘the connexion between our Plantagenet kings with Poitou supplies an all-sufficient explanation of her introduction into this country.’ It was St Radegund’s c. 1720.¹⁴⁵

Shaftesbury (Dorset) c. 950–1000 or c. 1035–40

A psalter written somewhere in southwest England in the second half of the 10th century (Salisbury Cathedral Library MS 150, ‘The Salisbury Psalter’) and containing St Radegund’s name may have been written at the nunnery established here by King Alfred c. AD 888. Also, a prayer book (British Library Cottonian MS Galba A xiv) for a monastic community written in the first half of the 11th century (perhaps c. 1035–40) contains information that suggests it may also have been written here.¹⁴⁶

Thelsford (Warks) 1200–1212

Augustinian canons of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre founded a small monastery dedicated to St John the Baptist at Thelsford early in the reign of King John (1199–1216). By 1212, however, the lands here of that short-lived order had been given to canons of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity for the Redemption of Captives – ‘Trinitarians’ for short – and the church was now dedicated to St Radegund. The Trinitarians had been founded by St John de Matha in northern France in 1198 and one of its guiding principles was the freeing, by ransom or otherwise, of Christians captured by Muslims. Radegund’s rôle as a patron of prisoners has already been noted and her devotion to the Trinity is mentioned in Baudovinia’s ‘Life’ (‘the name of the Trinity which the blessed woman ever cherished in her heart’).¹⁴⁷ In 1212 Henry of Barford and Isabel his wife had

¹⁴² Bond F., *Dedications and Patron Saints of English Churches: ecclesiastical symbolism, saints and their emblems* (Oxford, 1914), 328.

¹⁴³ Wordsworth, C., *Ceremonies and Processions of the Cathedral Church of Salisbury: edited from the Fifteenth Century MS no. 148* (Cambridge, 1901), 40.

¹⁴⁴ *The Northern Echo*, 8th April 2011.

¹⁴⁵ Gale, R., ‘Description of Scruton’, *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica: Antiquities in Lincolnshire* (ed. Nichols, J., 8 vols, London 1780–90), iii, 218.

¹⁴⁶ Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies...*, 69–70, 83, 169, 286; Sisam, C. & Sisam, K. (eds), *The Salisbury Psalter*, Early English Text Society, old series, 242 (1959), 7, 12; Muir, B. (ed.), *A pre-Conquest English Prayer Book*, Henry Bradshaw Society, 103 (1988), 25–192.

¹⁴⁷ McNamara, *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages*, 99.

given the church of Barford and lands in the parish to ‘the canons of St Radegund of Thelsford’.¹⁴⁸ Two years later William de Lucy of Charlecote addressed a charter ‘to the honour of God, St John the Baptist and St Radegund the Virgin’ in which he gave ‘to the religious men there serving God’ the church of Charlecote and arable and meadow land in that parish ‘to build thereupon a church to the honour of the aforesaid saints, and a hospital for the relief of poor people, receipt of pilgrims’.¹⁴⁹ Subsequently, the ‘brethren’ of Thelsford appear frequently in ecclesiastical records of the area. A new church was begun in the reign of Edward I and bishop Giffard of Worcester consecrated this and its churchyard in 1285.¹⁵⁰ There were both ‘friars’ and ‘sisters’ of St Radegund at Thelsford in 1300 and 1411 attached to the hospital established by William de Lucy.¹⁵¹ The seal of the priory depicted St Radegund with two small figures, male and female, on each side in attitudes of prayer and which are probably intended for captives.¹⁵²

Whitwell (Isle of Wight) late 12th century

Whitwell was part of the manor William fitzStur had at Gatcombe in 1086. The church was built towards the end of the 12th century by the lords of Gatcombe ‘who raised an altar there to their patron St Radegund’. A decree of the time of Bishop Richard Fox of Winchester (1501–28) says that the church consisted of two chapels, the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Whitwell and the chapel of St Radegund contiguous to it, the former supported and repaired by the people of Whitwell and the latter by the rector of Gatcombe.¹⁵³

Wilton (Wilts) 1391

There appears to have been a monastic house of some sort at Wilton under a certain Iwig who died *c.* AD 690 and who was buried there. Dumville has called this person ‘the other principal saint of Wilton’, apart from St Edith, daughter of King Edgar of England.¹⁵⁴ In 773,¹⁵⁵ Weohstan, ealdorman of Wiltshire, established a house of secular priests attached to church at Wilton. ‘It was called a college then, even though the church had been founded long before in honour of Our Lady – because of the fierce war, however, it had almost ceased to exist’. The clerks were there to sing and read for the soul of his father-in-law Æthelmund, who had been killed recently in battle with the Danes.¹⁵⁶ The college stood on the site of the present ruined church of St Mary and as it had long

¹⁴⁸ *Victoria County History of Warwickshire*, Vol.2 (1908), 106.

¹⁴⁹ Dugdale, Sir William, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1st edition, London, 1656), 393–4.

¹⁵⁰ *Victoria County History of Warwickshire*, ii, 107.

¹⁵¹ *Calendar of Papal Registers: Papal Letters* 6 (H.M.S.O, 1904), 328; Gray, M., *The Trinitarian Order in England: Excavations at Thelsford Priory* (ed. Watts, L. & Rahtz, P.), B.A.R. British Series, 226 (1993), 12.

¹⁵² Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vi, 1564.

¹⁵³ *Victoria County History of Hampshire*, Vol.5 (1912), 202–4.

¹⁵⁴ Dumville, D.N., *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History of Late Anglo-Saxon England: Four Studies* (Woodbridge, 1992), 62 note 131. See also Blair, J. ‘A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints’, 541.

¹⁵⁵ The date is from Hearne, T., (ed.), *Johannis Lelandi: Antiquarii De Rebus Britannicis Collectaneæ* (6 vols, London, 1770), i, 67.

¹⁵⁶ M.Dockray-Miller (ed. & trans.), *Saints Edith and Æthelthryth: Princesses, Miracle Workers, and Their Late Medieval Audience* (Turnhout, Belgium, 2009), 58–9. The text is from ‘The Wilton Chronicle’, a Middle English poem composed *c.* 1420 and now in BL Cottonian Faustina B.III, ff.194r to 274v. By contrast with *Victoria County History of Wiltshire*, Vol.3 (1955), 231, which says that ‘little confidence’ can be placed in the historicity of this ‘Life of St Edith’, Haslam, J. & Edwards, A. (in *Wiltshire Towns: the archaeological potential* (Devizes, 1976), 123) are more favourable towards it and it has been largely rehabilitated by Nijenhuis, W.F. in ‘The Wilton Chronicle as a Historical Source’, *Revue Bénédictine*, 115 (2005), 370–399. This theme has been carried forward in Dockray- Miller’s edition of the chronicle.

preceded Walston’s foundation it may have been the monastic house of Iwig. In AD 827 or 830,¹⁵⁷ Weohstan having died, Alburga, his widow and a sister of King Egbert of Wessex, ‘established that religious house further’ by supplying it with twelve nuns under an abbess. When in AD 890 King Alfred fortified Wilton as a *burh* against further attacks from the Vikings or Danes he then gave *maner(ium) suum in Wiltonia dicto Monaster(ium)*¹⁵⁸ for the founding of a nunnery of Our Lady and St Bartholomew. He himself laid the foundation stone (by tradition, on the site of Wilton House) and when it was completed two years later the sisters at the old priory of St Mary joined the nuns in the new church, making a house of twenty-six nuns.¹⁵⁹

Radegund, the name of the abbess Alfred appointed over his nuns, is such a rare one in any context, medieval or modern, it is likely that, either she was named by her father after St Radegund, or that she took the name from an earlier church or chapel in Wilton dedicated to the saint, perhaps the one established by Iwig. In 1391 King Richard II gave the wardenship of a ‘hospital or chapel of St Radegund by Wilton’ to one his clerks.¹⁶⁰ By analogy with two other hospitals, one of them also ‘by Wilton’, it should probably have stood on or by one of the gates to the town’s defences. The other hospital ‘by Wilton’ given by King Richard to the same clerk was one dedicated to St John,¹⁶¹ and we know that this stood just outside the West Gate of the town’s defences.¹⁶² Yet another hospital, the one dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, stood in a similar position in relation to the town’s East Gate. On this basis, St Radegund’s ‘by Wilton’ should have stood close to its North or South Gates. Haslam has noted the Anglo-Saxon habit of placing churches over or by the side of the gates to their *burhs*, so this sort of relationship of St Radegund’s to Wilton’s *burh* might be expected.¹⁶³

Winchcombe (Gloucs) c. 950–1000

A psalter known as the ‘Winchcombe Sacramentary’ that dates from the late 10th century (possibly 985–7), and which has St Radegund in its litany, was probably written at the abbey here.¹⁶⁴ The abbey was founded in AD 798 and re-founded in AD 970 after its destruction by the Danes.

Winchester, New Minster (later Hyde Abbey, Hants) 1006–23 (or c. AD 886?)

Four 11th century sources combine to make New Minster at Winchester (founded AD 901 and becoming Hyde Abbey in 1109) a centre of devotion to Radegund.

¹⁵⁷ The ‘Chronicle’ (pp76-7) says this foundation occurred 63 years before King Alfred re-founded it in AD 890.

¹⁵⁸ For the geography of Wilton in medieval times, see Haslam, J., (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England* (Chichester, 1984), 67–9 and the excellent plan of the town on p90.

¹⁵⁹ Dockray-Miller, *Ib.*, 60–1, 74–5, 76–7.

¹⁶⁰ *Calendar Patent Rolls 1388–92*, 429.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 432; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1385–9*, 418, 476.

¹⁶² For the location of the Hospitals of St John and St Mary Magdalene in relation to the town’s defences, see the map in Haslam, *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England*, 90.

¹⁶³ Haslam & Edwards, *Wiltshire Towns*, 125 and 143 note 61.

¹⁶⁴ Lapidge, ‘Litanies of the Saints in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: a preliminary list...’, 76, 222; Davril, A. (ed.), *The Winchcombe Sacramentary: Orleans, Bibliothèque municipale, 127(105)*, Henry Bradshaw Society, 109 (1995), 23, 262; Dumville, D.N., *English Caroline Script and Monastic History: Studies in Benedictinism A.D. 950–1030* (Woodbridge, 1993), 58 note 259. In ‘Abbot Germanus, Winchcombe, Ramsey and the “Cambridge Psalter”’, in Korhammer, M. (ed.), *Words Texts and Manuscripts: studies in Anglo-Saxon culture presented to Helmut Gneuss* (Cambridge, 1992), 99–129, Lapidge suggests that Ramsey (to which the Winchcombe monks were evacuated, temporarily, in 975) is a possible alternative origin for the sacramentary.

Firstly, the kalendar of the *Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, which was written here, probably, in 1006–23 contains St Radegund's name.¹⁶⁵ The origins of this *Missal* are disputed. Professor Dumville suggests St Augustine's at Canterbury rather than New Minster, but it seems certain that, wherever this was, it was intended for use at either Ely or Peterborough, or both.¹⁶⁶

Secondly, the so-called 'Lambeth Psalter' (Lambeth Palace Library MS 427) which was written at Winchester, possibly, in the first half of the 11th century contains Radegund's name in its litany.¹⁶⁷

Thirdly, a psalter and litany in the British Library (Arundel MS 60) dating from the third quarter of the 11th century (and more certainly written here) contains her name.¹⁶⁸

And fourthly, the minster had 'vestments of St Radegund the Virgin' in the late 11th century.¹⁶⁹

A manuscript written at Rheims in 883/4 (Corpus Christi Cambridge College 272 'The Psalter of Count Achadeus') may have been brought from Flanders to King Alfred's court at Winchester by Grimbauld the Priest in AD 886. It contains Radegund's name in its liturgy. Dumville, however, doubts whether it came to England in this manner.¹⁷⁰

Worcester (Worcs) c. 1065

Her name appears on a kalendar in use in the cathedral here in the time of bishop Wulfstan 1062–95.¹⁷¹

Two other medieval notices of St Radegund in England have been noted-

An early 15th century English satirical poem 'Why I Can't Be a Nun' includes Radegund in a list of prominent English, Irish and continental foundresses and abbesses. The English ladies are Edith of Wilton (died AD 984), Audrey (Etheldreda) of Ely (died AD 679), Frideswide of Oxford (died AD 727), Withburga of Dereham (late 7th century AD), Mildred of Minster-in-Thanet (died c. AD 737), Sexburga of Minster-in-Sheppey (died c. AD 700), and Ermengild, an early 8th century abbess of Ely.¹⁷² The single Irish saint is Bridget of Kildare (died AD 525), patron of Ireland and abbess of the first Irish nunnery. The continental ones are Clare of Assisi (died AD 1253), who founded the Order of Poor Clares, and Scholastica (6th century AD), sister of St Benedict and the

¹⁶⁵ Wilson (ed.), *The Missal of Robert de Jumièges*, ppxxxix-xl & 10. See also Lapidge, M., *The Cult of St Swithun* (Oxford, 2003), 80 and note 20, 248 note 177; Barlow, F (ed.), *The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster* (2nd. ed. Oxford, 1992), 28 note 60; Rushforth, *Saints in English Kalendars Before A.D. 1100*, no.12 & Table II; and Ellard, G., 'Devotion to the Holy Cross and a Dislocated Mass-Text', *Theological Studies*, **11**(1950), 350. Dumville, *Liturgy and Ecclesiastical History of Late Anglo-Saxon England: Four Studies*, 26, 50, 60, 91–2 presents the alternative view that it was written at Christ Church, Canterbury.

¹⁶⁶ Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies...*, 82.

¹⁶⁷ Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies...*, 75–6, 216; Gretech, M., *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform* (Cambridge, 1999), 40.

¹⁶⁸ Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies...*, 68, 145; Keynes, S. & Lapidge, M., *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred* (Harmonsworth, 1983, repr. 2004), 214 note 26.

¹⁶⁹ Birch, W. de G. (ed.), *Liber Vitae: Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester* (Hampshire Record Society, 1892), 149.

¹⁷⁰ Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies...*, 64–5, 113. See also Keynes & Lapidge, *Alfred the Great...*, 214. Dumville, *English Caroline Script and Monastic History: Studies in Benedictinism*, 131 note 91.

¹⁷¹ Wormald, *English Kalendars before A.D. 1100*, no.17; Rushforth, *Saints in English Kalendars Before A.D. 1100*, no.21 & Table II.

¹⁷² Furnivall, F.J. (ed.), *Early English Poems and Saint's Lives* (Berlin, 1862), 148.

principal female saint of his Order. The clear implication of the poem is that Radegund could be regarded at that time as the equal in England to these internationally famous women.

Later in the century, in 1466, we find Alice Chaucer, duchess of Suffolk, with a ‘quire of a legende of Raggehande’ in her portable library at Ewelme in Oxfordshire,¹⁷³ so copies of one or other of her ‘Lives’ must have been present in England as suitable reading for the literate, high-born, lady.

There are also two notices of her presence in Ireland -

Knock (Knockabbey, Co. Louth) **1166–74**

The so-called ‘Martyrology of Gorman’, written by Marianus Gorman, abbot of a house of Canons Regular at Knock, near Louth, in 1166–74, has Radegund’s name set against 13 August. She is referred to in Gaelic as *Radcuind noem nuaghel*, ‘Holy, fresh-fair Radegund’.¹⁷⁴

Rathkeale (Rath Caolao; Co. Limerick) **1435**

In December 1435 Pope Eugenius IV wrote a letter to the Augustinian Priory of St Mary at Rathkeale in the diocese of Limerick in which he mentions the devotion there ‘of the venerable image of St Radegund’.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Jambeck, K.K., ‘The Library of Alice Chaucer, Duchess of Suffolk: A Fifteenth Century Owner of a “Boke of Le Citée de Dames”’, *The Profane Arts*, 7 (1998), 113–5, 129–130.

¹⁷⁴ Stokes, W. (ed.), *The Martyrology of Gorman*, Henry Bradshaw Society, 9 (1895), ppviii–xix, 156–7.

¹⁷⁵ *Calendar of Papal Letters Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 8 (HMSO, 1909), 118. Rathkeale lies twenty-four miles southwest of the city of Limerick and so is too far west to appear on Map 2.

THE TROY HOUSE ESTATE INVENTORY OF 1557: WEALTH, POWER AND ECHOES OF A ROYAL VISIT

By Ann Benson

The author is grateful to Tony Hopkins for his expertise on structuring this article.

In 1557, an inventory was made of the Troy House estate evaluating the contents of the house and the land belonging to it. It was probably commissioned after the deaths of Charles Herbert and his mother, Blanche, in the same year. Charles had inherited the property in 1524 from his father, William. Blanche, as William's widow, was entitled to live in her husband's property until her death.¹ Like his father, Charles held important offices for the Duchy of Lancaster but towards the end of his life, as his wealth dwindled, he was much in arrears to the duchy. This might explain why the inventory survives among the records of the Duchy of Lancaster in The National Archives.² It illuminates a Tudor residence of some status. It also bears the imprint of a royal visit to the house some 55 years earlier, recording rooms still described as the king's little, great and inner chambers, and the queen's little and great chambers. The inventory is transcribed for the first time in this article.

The Royal Visit

In August 1502, Sir William Herbert of Troy's influence in Wales – and Gwent in particular³ – was acknowledged with a royal visit.⁴ Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, his Queen Consort, stayed at Sir William's house at Troy, one mile south of Monmouth, during the course of their journey to visit William's half-brother, Sir Walter Herbert, at Raglan Castle.⁵ Undoubtedly, Sir William would have ensured that Troy House was a fitting residence to accommodate the king and queen.

The queen appears to have travelled to Troy separately from the king with a man being paid three shillings and four pence to guide her from 'Flexley Abbey [in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire] to Troye besides Monmouth'.⁶ She arrived at Troy on 14 August and only continued to Raglan five days later.⁷ The king held a meeting of his Council at Troy on 15 August.⁸ The king and queen were together at Troy when the Council meeting took place. Given the names of the chambers in the inventory, both resided at Troy, which has not been previously recognized. The queen was about four months pregnant at this time and in recent weeks had suffered ill-health.⁹ She might well have welcomed her rest at Troy before moving to Raglan Castle some five miles distant and all the hospitality that would be offered there by Sir Walter.

¹ Benson, Ann, *Troy House: A Tudor estate across time* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017), 37.

² TNA DL 3/69 R3f.

³ Robinson, W.R.B., *Early Tudor Gwent 1485–1547* (Welshpool: W.R.B Robinson, 2002), 16; Robinson, W.R.B., 'The Administration of the Lordship of Monmouth', in *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* (2002), XVII, 37; Benson, Ann, *Troy House: a Tudor estate across time*, 35–6.

⁴ Nicolas, N.H. (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York* (London: William Pickering, 1830), xcii, 44 & 47.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, 47.

⁷ Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, xcii.

⁸ Hill, L.M. (ed.), *The Ancient State Authoritie, and the Proceedings of the Court of Requests by Sir Julius Caesar* (Cambridge: 1975), 67.

⁹ Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, xcii.

It is during the time of the queen's stay at Troy that she most likely visited Monmouth Priory, which is within one mile.¹⁰ Indeed, given the closeness of the Priory to Troy House and her pregnancy, it is inconceivable that she would not have visited it to make an offering, as she had done at several locations during her journey to Troy and would also make as she returned to Westminster from Raglan Castle.¹¹ Arguably, this was the occasion when the two vestments of c. 1502 made by her embroiderer, Robinet, and his assistants (browderers) were donated to the Priory. One was a red chasuble (Fig. 1) with *opus Anglicanum* (fine English) embroidery, which is still in the possession of St Mary's Catholic Church in Monmouth.¹² The other (Fig. 2) was a red and gold embroidered cope¹³ that is now displayed within the church of St Bridget, Skenfrith on the Monmouthshire/Herefordshire border.¹⁴ However, the long-held belief that Elizabeth was the donor of this cope has recently been challenged.¹⁵

A second chasuble is thought to have been donated by Elizabeth to the Priory at Abergavenny (Fig. 3), perhaps during the time she spent at Raglan Castle after leaving Troy House.¹⁶ All three vestments are of very similar red velvet: in the Sarum Liturgy, red was the colour of Festivals. Also, they all have winged seraphs with feathered legs. The Abergavenny chasuble and cope are alike in that they are covered with embroidered groups of three feathers (*fleur-de-lys*) and the barrel or 'tun' on which each seraph stands is of the same design showing spokes.¹⁷

The seraphs on the chasuble given to Monmouth Priory stand on a 'block' and with a letter 'M' shaped like a heart containing the letters 'O' and 'R' (Fig. 4). The MOR so formed is the rebus of John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, cardinal, statesman and one of Henry VII's principal advisers.¹⁸ Morton's death in 1500 precedes Henry and Elizabeth's visit to Troy in 1502. Perhaps this explains why Elizabeth – or Henry – was able to donate this particular chasuble to Monmouth Priory during this visit.

It is unclear whether Sir William Herbert of Troy was still married to his first wife, Margery, or his second, Blanche, at the time of the 1502 royal visit, although Blanche's funeral elegy, composed by the bard, Lewys Morgannwg, includes a reference to Henry VII being welcomed at Troy.¹⁹

¹⁰ *Ibid.* See also Alison Weir, *Elizabeth of York, the First Tudor Queen* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2013), 392–3.

¹¹ Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, xcii, 42; Weir, *Elizabeth of York*, 392–5.

¹² A chasuble is an ornate sleeveless outer vestment worn by a Catholic or High Anglican priest when celebrating the Holy Mass.

¹³ A cope is a semi-circular long mantle, open in front and fastened at the breast with a band or clasp, which distinguishes it from a chasuble, which has straight edges sewn together in front. A cope may be worn by any rank of the clergy and is not worn for celebrating the Holy Mass.

¹⁴ The display at St Bridget's Church includes a brief history and some explanation of the cope's motifs.

¹⁵ I am most grateful to Rev. Dr. Jean Prosser OBE for sharing her knowledge of these new theories and look forward to her publishing them in the near future.

¹⁶ This chasuble dates to c. 1502 and is now held at the Church of Our Lady and St Michael, Abergavenny.

¹⁷ The V & A confirms that all three vestments are of a similar age and most likely to have been designed by the same hand.

¹⁸ John Morton (c. 1420–1500) succeeded Bouchier as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1486, Alcock as Lord Chancellor in 1487 and was responsible for much of the diplomatic and financial work of Henry VII's reign. See Christopher Harper-Bill, 'Morton, John (d. 1500)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Accessed 4 September 2017.

¹⁹ See Benson, *Troy House: a Tudor estate across time*, 36, for a translation of part of this elegy.



Fig. 1: Chasuble, St Mary's Catholic Church, Monmouth.

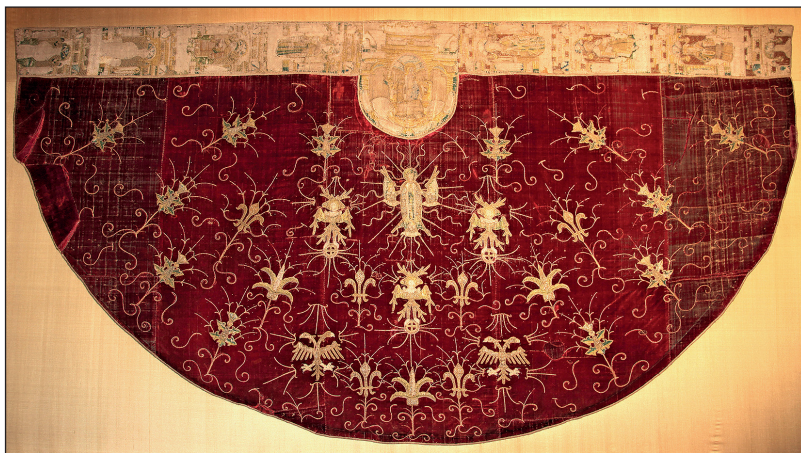


Fig. 2: Cope, St Bridget's Church, Skenfrith. Image courtesy of Rev. Dr. Jean Prosser OBE.



Fig. 3: Chasuble, Church of Our Lady and St Michael, Abergavenny.



Fig. 4: Detail of the MOR rebus for John Morton on the Monmouth chasuble.

The Inventory of 1557: background

Sir William predeceased Blanche in 1524 and by the 1530s Lady Herbert of Troy, as she was then known, resided in the Royal Household. She held the position of Lady Mistress in charge of the care of the three royal children, the future Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I.²⁰

On retirement, Blanche returned to Troy where she lived in part of the house whilst Charles, her oldest son by William, occupied the remainder with his second wife, Cicill. This was consistent with the directions in Sir William's will: Blanche inherited William's 'Capitall mese with the apparthen^{unc}[es] called litill Troy', the manor of nearby Wonastow and the tenement that he had built in Chepstow.²¹ Blanche and Charles had the:

occupying of all Troy's contents and all good[es] and Catall[es] utensilyes and Implement[es] of household ... for term of lyfe of the said Blanche And after her desesse to the said Charlys if he overlyve: having trist that she will kepe hir self sool while she lyvith.²²

Dower and the widow's third entitled a wife to live in her husband's property until her death.²³ Lady Troy's retirement to her own furnished apartments within Troy House whilst her son, Charles, and his wife also occupied the building, was in keeping with this practice. Such arrangements often created a stasis in which little alteration was carried out. Consequently, the inventory of 1557, conducted in the same year after the deaths of first Blanche and then a few months later, her son and heir, Charles, is likely to show little change from what existed at Sir William's death in 1524.

So why was the 1557 inventory made after these two deaths? In July 1533 Charles had become deputy to Henry Somerset, second Earl of Worcester, as duchy steward for Monmouth, and he remained in the duchy's service until he ran into debt towards the end of his life. By the time the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* was compiled in 1535, Charles held a number of offices with religious houses.²⁴ After the Union he was one of the leading figures of the newly formed county of Monmouthshire and was its first sheriff in 1540, a position he held again in 1548.²⁵ In 1544 he went to France for the Boulogne campaign, supplying seven men for the expedition; he was also chosen as the king's standard-bearer at a wage of ten shillings a day.²⁶

However, during the last years of Charles's life his fortunes crumbled. Under Edward VI he remained active locally and received a knighthood in 1532, but with the advent of Queen Mary, his arrears of payments to the duchy caught up with him and in August 1554, John Phillip Morgan was put in charge of his office.²⁷ His indebtedness was the main theme of his will that he made on 23 April 1552.²⁸ As the will was not proved until 22 Jan 1558, Charles survived its making by several

²⁰ See Benson, *Troy House: a Tudor estate across time*, 36–7, for more details of Blanche, Lady Herbert of Troy.

²¹ TNA PROB 11/21/327. 15 March 1523.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ The law and customs protecting the property rights of widows were abolished by parliamentary statute for Wales in 1696 and everywhere by 1725. See Amy Erickson, *Women and Property* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

²⁴ The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (Latin for church valuation) was a survey of the finances of the Church in England, Wales and English-controlled parts of Ireland on the orders of Henry VIII.

²⁵ Hanbury-Tenison, Richard, *The High Sheriffs of Monmouthshire and Gwent* (R. Hanbury-Tenison, 2008),

1.

²⁶ www.tudorplace.com.ar/HERBERT3.htm. Accessed October 2017

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ TNA PRO 11/40/29, 23 April 1552.

years, probably dying shortly before his replacement on 20 Mar 1557 as the duchy's steward for Ebbw.

Charles had two daughters by his first wife, Elizabeth ap Rhys, and no legitimate children by his second wife, Cicill. Troy 'with the parke demaynes and all other lands tenement[es] reverc[i]ons service[es] and rents belonging to the same house lyng in the paryshes of Mychell Troy Comcarvan Monmouthe and Pennallte'²⁹ passed to Charles's eldest daughter, Joan (b. c. 1526), on his death in 1557.³⁰ Charles directed his executors to sell his manors of Wonastow and St Wogan's to meet his arrears and Wonastow was bought by his younger brother, Thomas, who went on to own considerable property including the abbey lands of Parc Grace Dieu and the Beaulieu granted by the king.³¹ From this time Wonastow ceased to be attached to Troy and became a separate estate.

It is against this background of Troy House being associated with the wealth and political power of Sir William Herbert, illegitimate son of Sir William Herbert, first Earl of Pembroke, followed by the debts of his son and heir, Sir Charles, that the 1557 inventory was made. There was a pressing need to sell off parts of the Troy House estate to raise funds to cover Charles's debts on his death. The inventory was most likely commissioned by Charles's heir, his daughter, Joan. She was at this time married to George ap James ap Watkin of Llanddewi Rhydderch,³² who, in an unknown capacity, served the office of sheriff of the county in 1560; they resided together at Troy.³³ The Troy inventory of 1557 refers to a chamber called that of William John ap James, most likely a relation of George.

Editorial method and structure

The inventory focuses on the value of different kinds of items both within and without the house, and in so doing, only lists those rooms ['chambers'] that contain items deemed to be of significant worth.³⁴ The inventory is written in secretary hand (Fig. 5), with some parts in Latin and is very indistinct in several places.³⁵ As for the inventory's abbreviation marks, when they stand for something determinable, I have added that letter or letters in square brackets to the transcription. When they don't, I have used the convention of merely adding an apostrophe after the word. It should be noted that some transcribed words readily reveal their meaning from their phonetic sounds.

The inventory is transcribed and published here in full with explanations of unfamiliar terms and comments on its content. Throughout the transcription the original Latin expressions of number have been given their Arabic equivalents in square brackets. This includes units of currency.

It begins with the valuation of the 'Corne nowe growyng uppon the grounde'. The 'corne' includes wheat and rye and both are described as being 'in the blade', which means fully ripe. Consequently, the inventory focuses on the money to be gained from the corn's harvest; it could also be that the inventory was made during the late summer, at harvest time, so that current prices could

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Bradney, Sir J.A., *A History of Monmouthshire Volume 2 Part 2 The Hundred of Trelech* (London: Academy Books Ltd, 1992), 162.

³¹ Sir Charles Herbert's will, TNA PROB 11/40/29. See also www.tudorplace.com.ar/HERBERT3.htm. Accessed October 2017.

³² *Vide* Vol. 1, 284, cited in Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire Volume 2 Part 2 The Hundred of Trelech*, 163.

³³ Hanbury-Tenison, *The High Sheriffs of Monmouthshire and Gwent*, 6.

³⁴ See Benson, *Troy House: a Tudor estate across time*, 73–109, for the architectural history of Troy House.

³⁵ I am very grateful to Dr John Booker for his assistance in deciphering the inventory's faint areas of writing and clarifying some of the words where the inventory's scribe has used contractions.

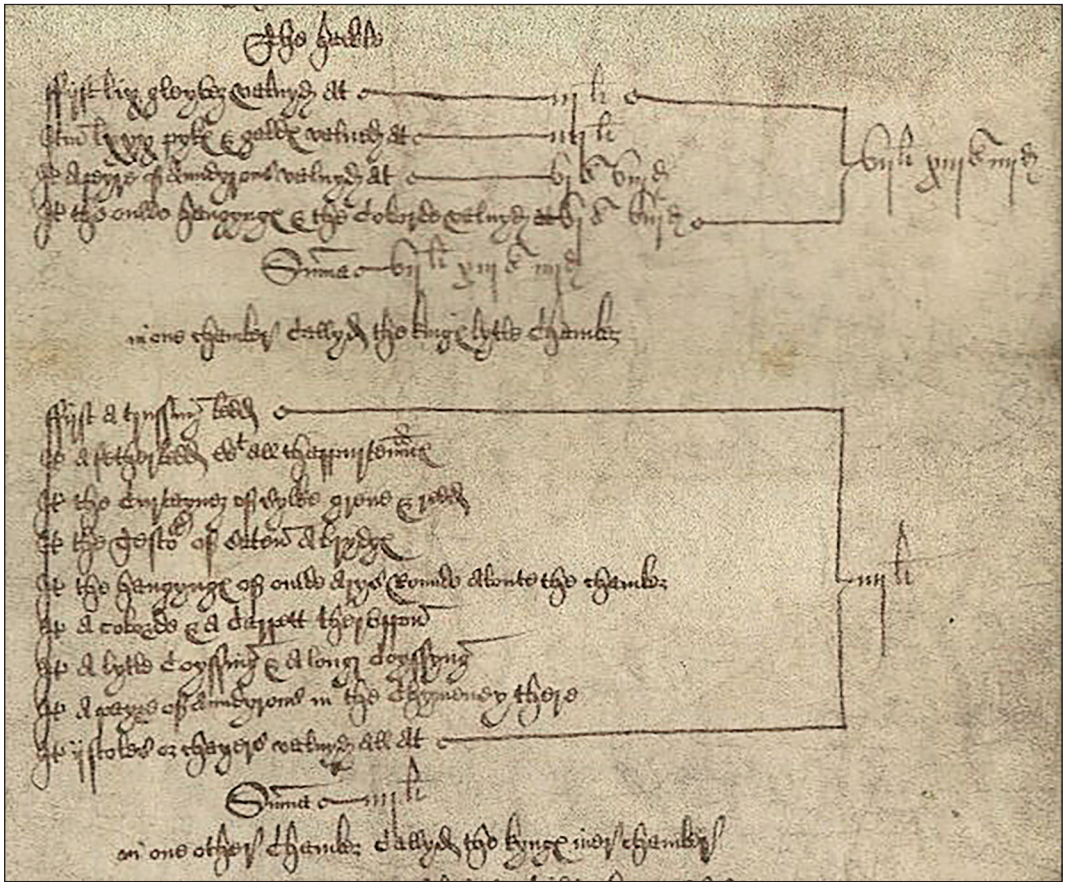


Fig. 5: Section of the 1557 Troy House Estate inventory (by permission of The National Archives).

be listed. Among the places recorded in this section are ‘duxhyll’ and ‘Wynyard’ whose current names and locations are unclear. The earliest estate maps for Troy are one by Joseph Gillmore dated 1712 and another by Jonathan Aram from 1765; there is no known map with field names before 1712. Neither map mentions ‘duxhyll’; this name is also not shown on recent maps of the Monmouth area, nor is it recognised by Stephen Clarke, the long-serving Monmouth archaeologist. Dux refers to a Saxon leader but given the phonetic nature of the inventory’s words, it is more likely that it refers to raised ground given over to ducks. As to Wynyard, there is anecdotal evidence that ancient vineyards existed in the Osbaston area of Monmouth. Certainly, the old street names of Vine Acre and The Vineyard in Osbaston support this view. ‘Drybrydge’ (Drybridge), ‘Wyesham’ (Wyesham), the parish of ‘Byshton’ (Bishton, six miles east of Newport), ‘pembridge’ (Pembridge, some five miles north of Monmouth) and ‘Mechell Troy’ (Mitchel Troy, two miles south of Monmouth) are more easily recognised for their current locations; Bishton and Pembridge are both sites of medieval castles. The total value of the corn harvest is given as £48 13s 4d.

The next item on the inventory deals with household linen (‘napery’) and implements found within specific rooms (‘chambers’) of the house beginning with the hall (‘Hawle’). A veritable

armoury appears to have existed within Troy's hall. A glaive (expressed in the plural, 'gleyvez' in the inventory) is a long pole with a single blade and there were fifty-nine of them, along with eighty pikes and the same number of gads, otherwise known as spears. Their total value is £7. These weapons would have been called upon when Troy's owner needed to muster men, horses and equipment. The number of weapons in the inventory reflects Sir Charles Herbert's expected commitment to supply arms. As described in *Men at Arms: musters in Monmouthshire, 1539 and 1601–2*, in the early months of 1522 and so within the lifetime of Charles's father, Sir William Herbert of Troy, England was on the brink of war with France as French ships were menacing the English coastline. Simultaneously, the Scots, allies of the French, were gathering hostile forces on England's northern border. Furthermore, crime was rife in the Welsh Marches: the king had no legal jurisdiction in the 'private' lordships of the March and members of the Council of the Marches were often too inexperienced – or too self-interested – for honest administration and impartial justice.

Acts passed during the 1530s, which have collectively come to be called the Act of Union, sought to redress this situation. However, by 1534 the breach with Rome was complete and the impact of the Reformation reverberated throughout Europe, resulting in a threatened military response by Catholic France and Spain. A general muster roll of the defences in southern, south-eastern and Welsh counties was ordered in 1539.³⁶ With the Troy House estate being extensive and owned by the politically powerful Herberts, it is no surprise that the 'Hawle' at Troy still contained an extensive number of weapons at the time of the 1557 inventory.

The 'Hawle' also contained a pair of hound irons ('Aundyrons'). Today, these would be known more commonly as firedogs, which are horizontal iron bars upon which logs are laid for burning in an open fireplace. Old hangings that would be used to cover the walls and a cupboard, complete the list of valuable items within the hall. This is followed by a list of items found within three rooms that are still referred to as the king's chambers. Clearly, the 1557 inventory cannot be taken as a list of all items that were present in these chambers during the time of the 1502 royal visit. However, as described earlier, given the stasis in Troy's development following the death of Sir William Herbert of Troy in 1524, the inventory shows what most likely remains of those items some fifty-five years after the visit. These start with items of significant value in the king's little ('lytle') chamber. There were two beds within it: a trussing bed, which is a bed that could be packed, as in a chest, for travelling, and a feather bed with all of its appurtenances, which would be the accessories for the bed such as covers, bolsters and pillows. Certainly curtains of green and red silk ('Sylke') hung from the bed's canopy ('Testo[u]r'). The bed's canopy is covered in satin and decorated with satin 'brydg[es]', which are braids made from twisting together strips of satin fabric. The walls of this room are hung about with old 'Arys': these are rich tapestries. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Arras, in France, was a thriving textile town. The industry specialized in fine wool tapestries that were sold to decorate palaces and castles all over Europe. Few of these tapestries survived the French Revolution, as hundreds were burnt to recover the gold thread that was often woven into them. *Arras* is still used to refer to a rich tapestry no matter where it has been woven. Indeed, at the time of the 1557 inventory, these tapestries were amongst the most valuable objects in England, and generally were valued more highly than paintings.

³⁶ Hopkins, Tony (ed), *Men at Arms: Musters in Monmouthshire, 1539 and 1601–2* (Newport: South Wales Record Society, 2009) 7. The 1539 muster was based on the lordship rather than the county, probably because the new county's administrative machinery was in its infancy. As yet, no muster roll for Monmouth lordship has come to light.

The king's little chamber also contains a cupboard with a carpet ('Carpett') upon it. The term, 'Carpett', refers to a covering, even a table cloth. However, given the obvious rich furnishing listed for the king's chamber it was most likely quite a thick and highly decorated cover, and to modern eyes, would indeed look like a piece of expensive patterned carpet. There was a little and a large cushion present: these were probably used to make the two stools or chairs in this room more comfortable. Certainly, this room would have benefited from the heat generated from a fire, as a pair of firedogs ('payre of Aundyrons') in the chimney is listed.

The inventory continues with a list of those items of significant value in the king's inner chamber. This room contained a bedstead with a feather bolster, two blankets and a heling, which is another general term used to describe a covering, so here it is a bedcover. The bed had a green silk ('saye') canopy ('Testo[u]r'). The walls were hung about with red and green silk – these colours echo the curtains in the king's little chamber, so someone had an eye for interior design when these rooms were furnished. Finally, there was a cupboard with a thick cover ('Carpett') upon it.

The last of the suite of three rooms allocated for Henry VII's visit in 1502 is called the king's great ('grete') chamber. Here, I have taken the 'Standyng bedd' to be a bed with hangings able to conceal a low or truckle bed beneath it and the 'Fetherbedd' to be a feather mattress upon the 'Standing bedd', although it could also refer to another bed with a mattress of feathers. As in the king's little chamber, 'thappurten^a[u]nc[es]' refer to the accessories associated with a bed. The bed had a 'Test[u]r', namely a canopy, but this time not decorated with braids but with a fringe ('Frynge') of silk, most likely green in colour to match the bed's green, silk curtains. There were two long cushions ('Coysyng[es]') in the window, which implies this window was within a recess to produce a window seat.

As in the king's little chamber there are old rich 'Arys' (tapestries) covering the walls and a cupboard with a cover upon it. This 'grete chamber' is listed as having a great window containing a 'carpett', which could be a thick decorated cover for putting on the floor, or more likely, on top of a seat formed from the stone beneath the base of the window. So this room had one, possibly two, windows, but certainly with one being very large ('grete Wyndowe'), signifying the importance of this room. It also had a hearth, as a pair of firedogs is listed for the 'Chymeney'. The total value of the various furnishings within the king's three chambers came to £9 6s 8d.

The queen had two chambers allocated to her during her 1502 visit to Troy House, a little ('lytle') and a great chamber, and they too were richly furnished even fifty-five years after the royal visit. Within the queen's little chamber there was a trussing bed with a feather mattress and all the usual accessories. The curtains hanging from the bed's canopy were of russet and blue coloured silk and the bed canopy ('Testo[u]r') was decorated with satin braids. There was a cupboard, which was covered with a cloth rather than the much thicker and richer covering of a 'Carpett', as in the king's chambers. The inventory says there were two stools or chairs; the doubt about their nature is perhaps due to them having wooden backs, so they resembled chairs rather than stools. There was a chest that is also described as a coffer ('Cofer'). The word coffer usually refers to a small chest or box for containing items of value; perhaps this was the small chest used for Elizabeth's jewels when she stayed at Troy House.³⁷ There was a square cushion and again the presence of firedogs and 'Chymeney' are evidence that the room could be warmed by a fire. No rich *Arras* hangings are listed for covering the walls, as in two of the king's chambers. However, the closet, which is taken here to be a very small room without windows formed by partitioning it off from the rest of the chamber

³⁷ Accounts show that Elizabeth's jewels were taken to Troy before Raglan. See Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, 44.

to provide an area of privacy, had walls covered with old painted ('peynted') hangings. These were likely to be lengths of linen painted a particular colour; they often contained images, including those of a religious nature.

Like the king, the queen had a great chamber but at the time of the inventory there is again no evidence of rich *Arras* tapestries being present, although it is possible they were removed after the royal visit. Here there was a 'standyng bedd' that had hangings and space beneath for a low or truckle bed and the accessories are listed as a feather bolster, two blankets and a cover ('heling'), although details of the nature of the cover are not given. The bed had a canopy ('Testo[u]') decorated with a silk fringe and the hangings of old green silk are most likely the curtains attached to the bed's canopy. It seems strange that there is no listing of firedogs for this great chamber. It is inconceivable that the queen would be provided with a great chamber without a hearth, although the little chamber does have this feature. Again, firedogs may have been removed sometime after the royal visit. There is a small chest ('Cofer') and a cupboard, which is covered with a red cloth rather than a more substantial cover of a 'carpett'.

Only four more chambers are listed in the 1557 inventory. However, the architectural history of Troy House shows that more rooms than these existed during the entire sixteenth century.³⁸ One can only speculate on there being a need to retain a certain level of household goods because Joan, Sir Charles Herbert's heir, and her husband, George, continued to occupy the house after Charles's death in 1557.

The remaining four chambers in the inventory begin with a 'closet'. This small room which seems to have existed for some time because it is described as 'oulde', contained a bedstead with a feather mattress, bolster, two blankets and a cover. The bed canopy and the curtains about it were made of buckram ('buckerham'), which is today taken to be a coarse cloth, made of cotton or occasionally linen and usually stiffened with starch. However, in the Middle Ages and into Tudor times it was a fine cotton cloth and was not made stiff. Old hangings of green and yellow silk most likely refer to coverings for the walls, rather than across a window as curtains.

The next room in the inventory is listed as a white chamber. The bedstead here had a feather mattress, a bolster, one blanket and a cover. In this room the canopy of the bed was of buckram. There were old, painted hangings about the room; it is tempting to suggest they were painted white to account for this chamber's name.

Next is a room that most likely takes its name from its one-time occupier. Given that this name ends in 'Jenn[e]rs', taken here to be James, it is most likely that it was at some time the room of a relation of George ap James ap Watkin of Llanddewi Rhydderch, the husband of Joan, Sir Charles Herbert's heir, and as suggested earlier, the owner of Troy in 1557 and perhaps with her husband, the most likely commissioner of the inventory. This chamber was certainly colourfully furnished with a theme of red and yellow. A bed capable of having another stowed beneath it ('standyng bedd') had a feather mattress, bolster and two blankets. The canopy of the bed was of red and yellow silk ('say') and although the material of the hangings about the room's walls is not stated, they were also coloured red and yellow. Two chairs are also listed.

The final room described in the inventory is called Lady Elizabeth's chamber. Whether a person called Elizabeth occupied the room at the time of the inventory or, like the king's and queen's rooms, retained its name long after the Lady Elizabeth used it, is unknown. However, Elizabeth Herbert was the first wife of Sir Charles Herbert of Troy. She was Elizabeth ap Rhys, daughter of

³⁸ See Benson, *Troy House: a Tudor estate across time*, 73–109.

Gruffydd ap Rhys of Dynevor, Carmarthen.³⁹ Joan was the older of the two daughters from this marriage and, as stated earlier, inherited Troy from her father.⁴⁰ Charles appears to have fathered a son by his second wife, Cicill Gage, but before they married as although listed as Charles's son by Cicill, he is referred to as 'Watkyn Herbert, my base son' in Charles's will of 23 April 1552.⁴¹ No other woman called Elizabeth can be traced as being even loosely associated with Troy House before 1557, other than Elizabeth Herbert (1476–1512) who married Sir Charles Somerset in 1492 and occupied Raglan Castle as their main marital residence. Consequently, Lady Elizabeth's chamber in the 1557 inventory was most likely that of Sir Charles Herbert's first wife.

Little is revealed about the furnishings such as the hangings about this room but it had a bed that could be packed for travel ('trussing bedd') and a canopy of joiners' work ('yoyn[er]s Worke'), which means it was made of wood and most likely carved.⁴² A feather mattress and bolster, two blankets, a cover, and for the first time in the inventory, a pillow, are listed. No values for these items are given for this room and one can only speculate on the reason. No rich furnishings appear to be present, not even simple hangings, unusual for a room named after a Lady. However, they could have been removed some time before the inventory, perhaps between the time of Elizabeth's death and Charles's subsequent marriage to Cicill (dates unknown).

The inventory continues with a list of people, presumably tenants, with a yearly ('by yere') value of their specified land – in effect their annual rent. The earliest map showing named fields on Troy's land is that of Gillmore dated 1712. Whenever it is possible to locate the inventory's areas of land, they are shown in Fig. 6 as annotations to Gillmore's map together with the current positions of the extant Troy House (H) and Mitchell Troy's Toll House (T). The Wye, Trothy and road directions shown on this map also help to position these areas of land in the current landscape.

In the first item John Curley is paying for a field ('fylde') of two acres which is associated with leverets ('levyett[es]'), namely hares that are less than one year old. Presumably, he had some role in their breeding or care; they would have been a source of food and fur. Neither Gillmore nor Aram name any area of land as 'levyette' or variations of this. Richard Tanner paid for a meadow and another piece of ground; the former must have been of considerable acreage given the relative amount of rent compared to John Curley's two-acre field. John Hoper, Thomas Miller ('Myller') and Patrick ('Petryck') each paid rent for a house. John Hoper also made payment for another item but the inventory is indistinct and the word, 'horsed', and a word possibly ending in '-yche', so possibly meaning horsed pitch, are but guesses. However, Gillmore's map of 1712 contains a reference to 'Horse Close' and locates this south of the Wye and Livox Wood (see 1 on Fig. 6). The entry for John Hore is unreadable, this time due to crossings out by the inventory's author.

Davyd John Howell of Penallt is listed as paying rent as is Watkin ap James ('Watkyn ap Jenn') but without any named land or houses. Finally, William Meford ('Wyll[i]m meford') pays rent for the title 'blacknorles'. Orles or arles are the local names for alder in the Monmouth area.⁴³ Indeed, an area of woodland high on the ridge above and to the south-east of Troy House is still

³⁹ See www.tudorplace.com.ar/HERBERT3.htm. Accessed September 2017.

⁴⁰ The younger daughter was Blanche, named after her grandmother.

⁴¹ TNA PROB 11/40/29.

⁴² The Worshipful Company of Joiners and Ceilers is one of the Livery Companies in the City of London. The Company has traditionally been separate from the Worshipful Company of Carpenters, for historically, Joiners attached wood using glue or other similar materials, while carpenters used nails or pegs. Joiners also carved wood, carpenters did not.

⁴³ Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire Volume 2 Part 2 The Hundred of Trelech* (London: Academy Books Ltd, 1992), 164.

called Troy Orles (Fig. 6). The common name for the alder tree is black alder, so ‘blackenorles’ could refer to an area of land containing alder trees. Title (‘tytle’) is the legal way of saying a person owns a right to something, so William may have had the right to the wood of the alders or he paid an amount to own the area of alders – it depends how the word, ‘tytle’, is being used.⁴⁴

The inventory ends with a valuation of the house and domains (‘demaynes’) of Troy and such land as Sir Charles (Herbert) kept in his own possession in terms of their rental worth per year. Where it has been possible to identify the location of the named items, they are shown on Gillmore’s map with a number (Fig. 6), which is also referenced within the text as a number in brackets. There are twenty-eight items, the first of which is Troy House, its offices, gardens and orchards, valued at 40s per year in rent.

Troy Park is shown as extending to 200 acres and compared to other valuations, of significant worth at £13 per year. Similarly, the area of the rabbit warren (‘Conynger’) and that for leverets (‘levyck’) is of substantial value at £6. This is followed by 60 acres of broomfields (‘bromfyld[es]’). Both Gillmore’s 1712 and Aram’s 1765 maps show two adjoining areas labelled as Great Broomfield and Little Broomfield. The former corresponds to the field in whose corner we now see the Toll House (T on Fig. 6) on the junction of the roads from Monmouth to Chepstow and Mitchel Troy. These two fields are most likely one and the same as the inventory’s ‘bromfyld[es]’ (2G and 2L); presumably these fields had broom growing in them. Then there are three separate areas, two of which have names that can be recognised today. These are 20 acres of Longstones fields (3) and 16 acres of Saint Dials meadow (‘seynt dyall[es]’) (4), both of which are still shown as the names of farms on current OS maps. The location of ‘Symon seals’ is shown by Gillmore as two fields bordered by the Monmouth to Mitchel Troy road to the east, and the Trothy to the west (5).

The next group of items begins with the mill closes (‘myll closez’) and the close between the waters, collectively of seven acres. The Troy estate contained a medieval water-driven mill; some of its stone walls remain and can be found near Troy Bridge, to the north-west of Troy House. The mill is on the south bank of the Trothy where the river splits into two to form an island and reforms as one water course just east of Troy House.⁴⁵ The mill closes (‘myll closez’) is the area of land around the mill, bordered today by the road from Monmouth to Mitchel Troy near Troy Bridge, and the ‘close’ is the area of the island. These areas are recorded by Gillmore in 1712 as ‘mill ham’ and a ‘small ground by ye Trothy Bridge and mill dam’ (6). The ‘byfyld[es]’ is shown as Buyfields on Gillmore’s map, and ‘grete ho[m]me appears to be Great Mead (respectively 7 and 8 on Fig. 6). ‘Tompe close’ is called Tump by Gillmore (9).

Then the inventory lists three fields of 45 acres ‘under the grove’. The only grove mentioned by Gillmore is most likely where I have put G on Fig. 6. However, the location of the three fields remains unclear as does the ‘Clawythe’ and the close of Robert Griffiths, although the latter is said to be at ‘town’s end’, and so one would assume it was near to Monmouth town. ‘Russhe way’ may refer to ground damp enough to grow rushes but this is not mentioned by Gillmore and his withy bed near the mill is a very small plot compared to the inventory’s 8 acres of ‘Russhe way’.

The inventory continues with the term, ‘Dux Hylle’, which I have taken earlier to be ducks hill; no such name appears on any map or is known by people today. Intriguingly, an unidentified area called goldsmith’s orchard (‘Goldesmythes orchearde’) is listed. The ‘black norles’ is presumably

⁴⁴ Alders have long been used where contact with water is required as they resist rot, for example in the production of water pipes, sluices and boats.

⁴⁵ See Benson, *Troy House: a Tudor estate across time*, 167. The remains of medieval bowls have been found in this mill’s location by Steven Clarke of Monmouth Archaeology.

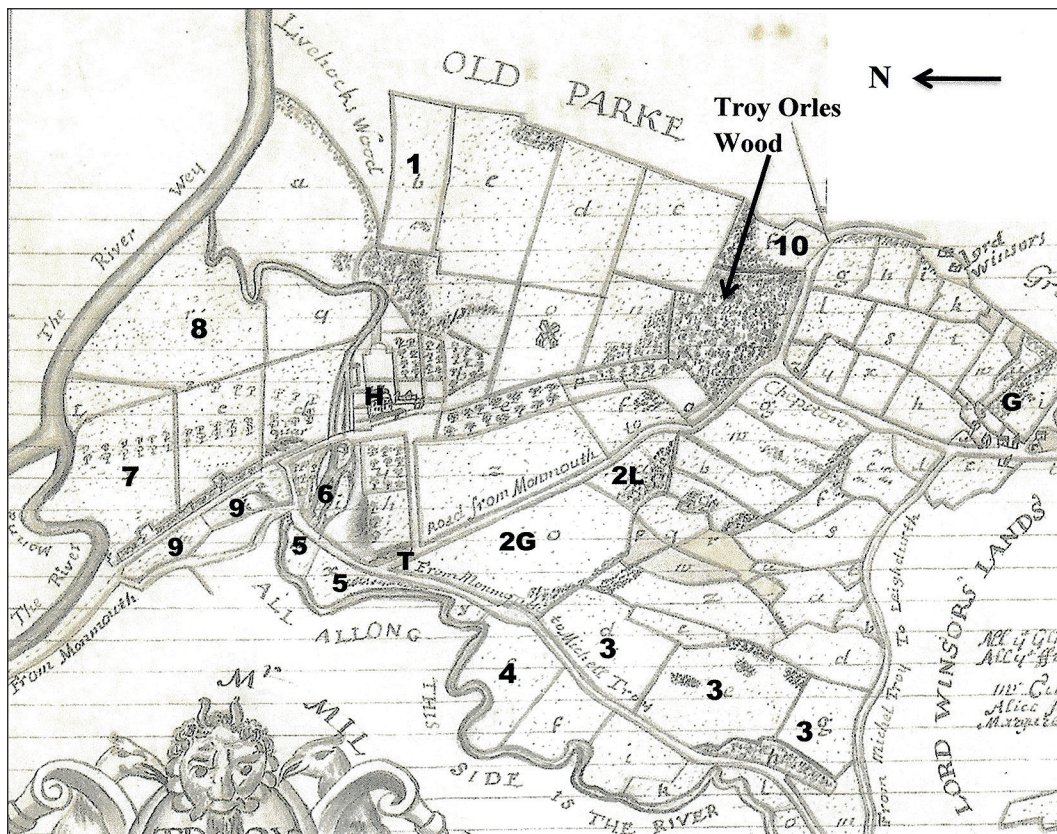


Fig. 6: Gillmore's map of 1712 annotated with the 1557 inventory's named areas of land.

Key: H = Troy House; T = Toll House; Troy Orles = blacknorles; G grove; 1 Horsed pyche;

2G Great bromfyld[es], 2L Little bromfyld[es]; 3 Longstones fields; 4 seynt dyall[es]; 5 Symon seals;

6 myll closez; 7 byfyld[es]; 8 grete ho[m]me; 9 Tompe close; 10 Lord's medowe.

the area of Troy Orles wood; the 'Lord's medowe' (10) could be the meadow shown close to this wood as they are listed together as one item. They are worth a considerable amount of money (£8), presumably because of the potential value of the alder trees when felled. The 'grete medowe' of 26 acres by the house cannot be identified using Gillmore's map as all areas close to the house have names different from this term. Unfortunately the beginning of the item relating to the garden by the goldsmith's orchard is indistinct in the inventory and this orchard is also not identified by Gillmore.

The last group of properties starts with what appears to be a prior's croft (pryor's Croft') of 12 acres. Certainly there was a chapel at Troy House with a financial responsibility to the Monmouth Priory in the thirteenth century.⁴⁶ This priory was dissolved in 1536. A croft is a small rented farm comprising a plot of arable land attached to a house and with a right of pasturage held in common with other such farms. The term, 'Pryor's Croft', may refer to an area of farmland that was once in

⁴⁶ Crouch, David, 'The Transformation of Medieval Gwent', in Griffiths, Ralph A., Hopkins, Tony and Howell, Ray (eds), *The Gwent County History. Volume 2. The Age of the Marcher Lords, c. 1070–1536* (University of Wales Press on behalf of the Gwent County History Association, Cardiff, 2008), 5.

the ownership of Monmouth Priory and although this might have ceased from 1536, when the priory was dissolved, the land's name may have been retained.

The water mill may be the mill between Troy House and Trothy Bridge as described earlier, or one that was also sited on the Trothy but close to what is now Millbrook Garden Centre. This mill was within the Troy estate's ownership at the time of the inventory. Pardon Cross ('p[ar]don Crosse') sounds like a monument at which pardons would be sought but to date, no record of such a structure has been identified. The locations of John Weaver's house and croft, and the 12 acres of land ('close') above the cow-house are not identified. The name of Margaret's husband is indistinct in the last item of the inventory. She appears to be recently deceased at the time of the inventory and so the meadow lying within the parish of Wonastow alongside the Trothy – precise location unknown – was no longer in her tenure.

Finally, there are two statements in Latin. Their English translations are provided.

Afterword

Some of the terms in the inventory may be subject to varied interpretation. Readers may be able to offer alternative explanations and I invite them to do so. Comments welcome: ann.benson1@btinternet.com

TROY HOUSE ESTATE INVENTORY 1557 (TNA DL 3/69 R3F.)

Corne nowe growing uppon the grounde

First xxj ⁱⁱ [21] Acres of Wheate & Rye in the blad[es] lyeng w ⁱⁿ the Franchyse of the towne of monmoth At duxhyll & the Wynyard[es] valued by estimac[i]on At	xiiij ^{li} vj ^s viij ^d [£13 6s 8d]
It[em] viij [8] Acres of Wheate & Rye in the blad[es] lyeng w ⁱⁿ the Fr ⁿ chese of the seyde Towne w ^{out} Drybrydye valuyd by estymac[i]on At	iiij ^{li} vj ^s viij ^d [£3 6s 8d]
It[em] xvj [16] Acres of Wheate & Rye in the blad[es] lyeng At Wyesh ^a m valuyd by estimac[i]on At	viiij ^{li} [£8]
It[em] xx [20] Acres of Wheate in the blad[es] lyeng w ⁱⁿ the p[ar]ishe of Byshton valuyd by Estymac[i]on At	x ^{li} [£10]
It[em] viij [8] Acres of Rye in the blad[es] lyeng at pembridge valued by estymac[i]on At	iiij ^{li} [£4]
It[em] xx [20] Acres of Wheate in the Blad[es] lyeng at Mechell Troy valuyd At	x ^{li} [£10]
<i>Sum[m]a grano[rum] in blad[is] xlviij^{li} xiiij^s iiij^d</i>	
<i>Total value of the corn in the blade = £48 13s 4d</i>	

The howsholde stuffe napery & implyment[es] of the howse devyded & severyd ev[er]y chamber & place of the same by yt selffe [itself] as herafter folowythe videl[ice]t [that is to say] in

The Hawle

First lix [59] gleyvez [glaive] valuyd At	iiij li [£3]
It[em] lxxx [80] pyk[es] [pikes] & gadd[es] [gad] valued At	iiij li [£4]
It[em] A peyre [pair] of Aundyrons valuyd At	vj s viij d [6s 8d]
It[em] the oulde hangyng[es] & the Coborde [cupboard] valuyd At	vj s viij d [6s 8d]

Sum[m]a vij^{li} xiiij^s iiij^d

[Total value = £7 13s 4d]

In one chamber Callyd the King[es] lytle Chamber

First A trussing bedd	
It[em] a fetherbedd w ^t All thappurten ^a [u]nc[es]	
It[em] the Curtayneze of Sylke grene & redd	
It[em] the Testou ^r of Saten A brydg[es]	
It[em] the hangyng[es] of oulde Arys Rounde Aboute the chamber	
It[em] A coborde & A Carpett theruppon	
It[em] A lytle Coysyng [cushion] & A long Coysyng	
It[em] A payre of Aundyrons in the Chymeney there	
It[em] ij [2] stoles [stools] or chayers valuyd All At	iiij li [£4]

Sum[m]a iiij li

[Total value = £4]

in one other Chamber Callyd the Kyng[es] iner chamber

Firste one beddstede w ^t A Fetherbedd bowlster ij [2] blankett[es] & A heling	
It[em] A grene Testou ^r of saye ov[er] the bedd	
It[em] the hangyng[es] About[es] the chamber of say Redde & grene	
It[em] A Coborde w ^t A carpet theruppon valuyd All At	xxvj ^s viij ^d [26s 8d]

Sum[m]a xxvj^s viij^d

[Total value = 26s 8d]

in one other Chamber called the King[es] grete chamber

First A Standyng bedd A Fetherbedd w ^t all thappurten ^a [u]nc[es]	
It[em] the Curtayneze of grene Sylke	
It[em] the Testou ^r w ^t A Frynge of Sylke	
It[em] ij [2] long Coysyng[es] in the Wyndowe	
It[em] the hangyng[es] of oulde Arys round[es] About[es] the chamber	
It[em] A Coborde & A Carpett theruppon	

It[em] A carpett in the grete Wyndowe
 It[em] A peyre of Aundyrons in the Chymeney there & valuyd All At iiij li [£4]
Sum[m]a iiij li
 [Total value = £4]

in one other Chamber callyd the quenez lytle chamber

First A trussing bedd A fetherbedd w^t all thappurten^a[u]nc[es]
 It[em] Curtayneze of Sylke Russet & blewe
 It[em] the Testo[u]^r of the bedd of Saten A bryddg[es]
 It[em] A Coborde w^t A clothe theruppon
 It[em] ij [2] stoles or Chayers
 It[em] A Chest or Cofer
 It[em] A Square Coyssyn
 It[em] A payre of aundyrons in the Chymeney there
 It[em] the Closett wⁱⁿ [within] the same Chamber hangyd w^t oulde peynted hangyng[es]
 valuyd All At xl s [40s]
Sum[m]a xls
 [Total value = 40s]

in one other Chamber callyd the Quenez grete Chamber

Firste A standyng bedd w^t A fetherbedd bowlster ij [2] blankett[es] & A heling
 It[em] the Testo[u]^r of the bedd frynged about w^t Sylke
 It[em] oulde hangyng[es] of grene Saye
 It[em] A chest or Cofer
 It[em] A Coborde w^t a redde clothe theruppon valuyd All At xxvj^s viij^d [26s 8d]
Sum[m]a xxvj^s viij^d
 [Total value = 26s 8d]

in the oulde closet

First A bedstede wt A fetherbedd A bowlster ij [2] blankett[es] & A heling
 It[em] the Testo[u]^r & Curtayneze of buckerham
 It[em] oulde hangyng[es] of grene & yelowe say valuyd All At xx s [20s]
Sum[m]a xx s
 [Total value = 20s]

in one other chamber called the whyte chamber

First a bestede wt A fetherbedd bowlster one blankett & A heling
 It[em] the Testo[u]^r of the bedde of buckerham
 It[em] oulde peynted hangyng[es] About the chamber valuyd All At xx s [20s]
Sum[m]a xx s
 [Total value = 20s]

in one other chamber called Will[i]am John Ap Jenn[e]rs Chamber

First A standyng bedd wt A fetherbedd bowlster & ij [2] blankett[es]

It[em] the testo[u]r of say redde & yelowe

It[em] the hangy[n]g[es] About the chamber redde & grene

It[em] ij [2] chayers valuyd All At

xx s [20s]

Sum[m]a xx s

[Total value = 20s]

in one other chamber called my lady Elizabethys chamber

Furste A new trussyng bedd wt A Testo[u]r of yoyn[er]s Worke A fetherbedd bowlster ij [2] blanket[es] A heling & one pyllowe.

It[em] of John Curley for ij Acres in levyett[es] fylde by yere ijs viijd [2s. 8d.]

It[em] of Rycharde Tann[er] for A medowe by yere xiijs iiijd [13s. 4d.]

It[em] of the same Rycharde for another pese of ground by yere ijs iiijd [2s. 4d.]

It[em] of John Hoper for a howse by yere vs [5s.]

It[em] of Thom^as myller for a howse by yere vjs viijd [6s. 8d.]

It[em] of Petryck for for a howse by yere vs [5s.]

It[em] of John Hoper for horsed ... yche iijs [3s.]

It[em] of Davyd John Howell of pennalthe by yere iiijs [4s.]

It[em] of John Hore by yere xx [?deletion]

It[em] Watkyn ap Jenn' by yere iijs iiijd [3s. 4d.]

It[em] of Wyll[i]am meford' for the tytle blackenorles by yere xiijs iiijd [13s. 4d.]

Sum[m]a xxiiiijli viijs iiijd

[Total value = £24 8s. 4d.]

The howse and the demaynes of Troy & such other land[es] as the seyde

S[ir] charles kept in his owne hand[es] valuyd at the rent[es] hereafter

menyoned

First the howse of Troy & all other howses of offyc[es] & the gardens & orchard[es]

therunto belongyng worthe by yere _____ xl^s [40s.]

It[em] the p[ar]ke conteynyng CC [200] Acres worth by yere _____ xiiij^{li} [£13]

It[em] the Conynger and the levyck worthe by yere _____ vj^{li} [£6]

It[em] the bromfyld[es] conteynyng lx [60] Acres worth by yere _____ xl^s [40s.]

Itbothe longestones fyld[es] conteynyng xx [20] Acres worthe by yere _____ xx^s [20s.]

It[em] seynt dyall[es] medowe conteynyng xvj [16] Acres worth by yere _____ xl^s [40s.]

It[em] Symon seals conteynyng vij [7] Acres worthe by yere _____ xx^s [20s]

It[em] both the myll closez conteynyng vij [7] Acres worthe by yere _____ xxvjs viijd [26s. 8d.]

It[em] the close between the waters worth by yere _____ vj^s viij^d [6s. 8d.]

It[em] all the byfyld[es] contaynyng xvij [18] Acres worthe by yere _____ iiiij^{li} [£4]

It[em] the arrable land *videl[icet]* [i.e.] the grete ho[m]me betwene the byfyld[es] & the

howse conteynyng xxx [30] Acres worthe by yere _____ iii^j^{li} [£4]
 It[em] the Tompe close conteynyng vj [6] Acres worthe by yere _____ vj^s viij^d [6s. 8d.]

It[em] the iij fyld[es] under the grove contaynyng xlv [45] Acres worthe be yere ii^j^{li} vj^s viij^d
 [£3 6s. 8d.]

It[em] the grove Contaynyng x [10] Acres worthe by yere x^s [10s]
 It[em] the Clawythe dee conteynyng vj [6] Acres worthe by yere xii^j^s iii^j^d
 [13s. 4d.]

It[em] Rob[er]t Griffy[th] [es] close at the townez ende conteynyng ix [9] Acres worthe
 by yere xx^s [20s.]
 It[em] the Russhe way conteynyng viij [8] Acres worth by yere xxxii^j^s iii^j^d
 [33s. 4d.]

It[em] Dux Hylle conteynyng v [5] Acres worthe by yere v^s [5s.]
 It[em] goldesmythes orchearde worthe by yere xxii^j^s iii^j^d [23s. 4d.]
 It[em] the black norles & the lord[es] medowe worth by yere viij^j^{li} [£8]

It[em] the grete medowe by the howse conteynyng xxvj [26] Acres worthe
 by yere v^{li} vj^s viij^d [£5 6s. 8d.]

It[em] a b.... & a garden by goldesmythes orchearde worth by yere iii^j^s [4s.]

It[em] the pryos Croft conteynyng xij [12] Acres worthe by yere xxvj^s viij^d [26s. 8d]

It[em] the water myll worth by yere iii^j^{li} xii^j^s iii^j^d [£4 13s. 4d.]

It[em] the Croft lyeng at the p[ar]don Crosse worth by yere x^s [10s.]

It[em] one croft lyeng by Johns wev[er]s howse conteynyng iij [3] Acres
 worth by yere xii^j^s iii^j^d [13s. 4d.]

It[em] the close above the Cowehowse conteynyng xij [12] Acres worthe by yere xx^s [20s.]

It[em] one medowe lyeng wⁱⁿ the p[ar]ishe of Wonastowe by trothy late in
 the tenure of m[ar]garet late wyff of phe' ... worth by yere xx^s [20s.]

*S^umma terra[rum] d[omi]n[ia]l[ia]m] __ lxviiijli vs viij d Et inde d[omi]no Regi & d[omi]ne Regine
 de Capital[i] reddit[u] p[er] annu[m] __ viijli vs vd*

Total value of all the demesne lands is £68 5s. 8d., of which £8 5s. 5d. is due annually to the King
 and Queen as Chief Rent.

*S^umma totalis reddit[us] terra[rum] & ten[emen]to[rum] p[re]dic[t]o[rum] ultra iunctur[am] d[i]c[t]e
 d[omi]ne Cicillie Clare p[er] annu[m] __ lxxxiiijli vijs vjd*

Total of all the rents of the said lands and tenements excluding the jointure to Lady Cicill Clare [Sir
 Charles Herbert's widow] amounts annually to £84 7s 6d.

THOMAS THOMAS AND THE EARLY HISTORY OF CRANE STREET BAPTIST CHAPEL

By Arthur Edwards

Crane Street Baptist Chapel, Pontypool, stands to-day where it has been since 1847. Its religious and social significance has declined, but it is still one of the finest buildings in the oldest industrial town in Gwent. To appreciate its splendour the visitor must not stop at the classical façade and portico but go inside to see how that façade is replicated in the design of the fine wooden platform-pulpit. Though the Bible lies open, as on other Nonconformist pulpits, the platform-pulpit was original.¹ Beneath the pulpit is the baptistery where hundreds were baptised by the first minister, Thomas Thomas, and became members of the church, the body of Christian believers who worshipped in the chapel.² The central place occupied by the Bible symbolises the Bible's total authority over all matters of belief and worship in the life of a Baptist church. Baptism by immersion after an act of faith was standard practice in all Baptist churches at the time, but in many other respects Crane Street chapel was unusual.³

This article will examine the important place occupied by Crane Street chapel in the religious, social and political development of Pontypool and in the Baptist denomination in Monmouthshire between 1847 and 1880. From the 1830s Nonconformists (Dissenters) were involved in battles to overcome their religious, social, educational and political disabilities. In the face of a privileged established Church of England they felt deprived of status.⁴ They looked to Whig and Liberal governments to reform this abuse. The perennial problem of church members becoming involved in political issues was discussed and resolved at Pontypool and elsewhere by the clear understanding that religious principles were involved in the principle of religious freedom: these involved 'the nature of the church and the rights of its divine head'. The disputes described in this article were about Christian principles and cannot simply be dismissed in our secular society as a power struggle. The Dissenters of Crane Street Chapel lived in a society of much greater faith than ours. Their religion dominated their campaign for equality and meant that their Christian integrity was not compromised by their political activity.⁵ The evidence for that judgement is based upon the recorded letters and speeches described in this article and upon the gold dust panned from the excellent record of Crane Street Chapel provided by its Minute Book for the period.

Beginning in Trosnant

Crane Street Chapel had its origin in the former meeting house of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in lower Trosnant. From its inception the worship in the chapel was entirely in English.⁶ This was

¹ It was original because the pulpit is a platform for teaching and discussion. See D.Huw Owen, *The Chapels of Wales* (Bridgend, 2012), 273.

² Anthony Jones, *Welsh Chapels* (Sutton, 1996), 51, 55 & 109. Chris Williams and Sian Rhiannon Williams (eds.), *The Gwent County History, vol.4, Industrial Monmouthshire, 1780–1914*, (Cardiff, 2011), 211. The platform-pulpit, reading-desk and glass ceiling were designed by Thomas Thomas himself.

³ Stephen R. Holmes, *Baptist Theology*, (London, 2012), 4, 90 & 108–109.

⁴ Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part 1* (Oxford, 1966), 79–95. Nonconformists could not be married in their own churches before 1836 or buried in parish churchyards before 1880; they could not attend the ancient universities before 1854. They had to pay a tax for the repair of their parish church. Arthur J. Edwards, *Thomas Thomas of Pontypool* (Caerleon, 2009), 62–73.

⁵ Timothy Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality* (Paternoster Press, 1999), 7, 25, 52 & 257.

⁶ Dilys M. Thorn, *Crane Street Baptist Church, Pontypool, 1836–1986* (Pontypool, 1989), 12.

not motivated by opposition to the Welsh language, but was part of the growing reality of the need to provide worship in the language that the majority of the worshippers wanted, as will be seen later. There were Methodist churches at Sowhill, Pontypool, Varteg and Abersychan where the worship was conducted in English, and the Anglican church of St. James in Pontypool had been set up in 1821 specifically and uniquely for worship only in English.⁷ That is an indication of the number who could speak no Welsh among the five thousand or so immigrants to Pontypool in the two decades before 1821.⁸

The growth in the number of Baptist chapels with worship in English in this part of Monmouthshire in the first part of the nineteenth century happened partly because of the prominent English-speaking families who moved into industrial Monmouthshire with the opening of tinworks and small collieries. These included the large Conway family of Baptist tinsplate manufacturers based at Ponthir, Pontrhydyrun, and Pontnewydd. Conway family connections were important to the development of Nonconformist networks; not only D.D. Evans, minister at Pontrhydyrun, but also Micah Thomas, Principal of the College and Baptist minister at Abergavenny, and Stephen Price, minister at Abersychan, were married into the family. Another powerful influence in favour of worship in English was provided by the Phillips family, descendants of the great Miles Harry, the first minister of Penygarn Baptist chapel from 1732 to 1776⁹. William Williams Phillips, Harry's great-grandson, was the founder and first deacon at Abersychan English Baptist Chapel, where he had moved from Bristol in 1827 and back to Pontypool in 1835. He and his wife, whom he had married in Bristol, had also been associated with the Baptist chapel at Pontrhydyrun and particularly with its Sunday-school teaching in the Sabbath school set up by the Conways. They wanted worship in English. In 1835 as land agent to the Pontypool Park estate, Williams was able to rent the Quakers' Meeting house in lower Trosnant so that he and his friends could have English services with the help of some local ministers and the students from Abergavenny Baptist Academy.¹⁰

The Revd Thomas Thomas and his wife Mary¹¹ arrived in Pontypool from London in the summer of 1836. He became minister of this church jointly with his appointment as President of the Baptist Academy, which moved in that year from Abergavenny. On 2 August, Thomas and Mary, together with fourteen others, including their niece Jane David, William Williams Phillips, his wife and six others from Abersychan, entered into the agreement or covenant for the formation of the church, as was the custom of Baptist churches. At this inaugural service in the former Friends' Meeting House, the Revd Stephen Price gave the opening prayer, and thus began an involvement with Thomas Thomas that would last for the next forty-five years. Also involved in that service were the Revd D.Rhys Stephen of Swansea, soon to move to Newport, the Revd David Phillips of Caerleon and the Revd Thomas Morgan of Birmingham. They had all been students at the Baptist Academy in Abergavenny, whose former tutor, Revd Micah Thomas, addressed Thomas Thomas at

⁷ E.T. Davies, *Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales* (Cardiff, 1965), 29.

⁸ I.G. Jones and D. Williams (eds.), *The Religious Census of 1851, vol. 1, South Wales* (Cardiff, 1976), 72–80; Sian Rhiannon Williams, 'The Welsh Language in Industrial Monmouthshire 1800–1901', in *Language and Community in the Nineteenth Century*, Geraint H. Jenkins (ed.) (Cardiff, 1998), 207.

⁹ *Dictionary of Welsh Biography sub Harry, Miles (1700–1776)*.

¹⁰ *Pontypool Free Press (PFP)*, 6 September 1862; Brynmor Pierce-Jones, *Sowing Beside All Waters* (Gwent Baptist Association, 1985), 102–104

¹¹ They were both Welsh; had met and married in Cardiff and he had been a student at Abergavenny Academy, 1822–4 before going to Stepney Baptist College 1824–28 and a pastorate in Henrietta Street Baptist church, Covent Garden, 1828–1836. See A.J. Edwards, *Thomas Thomas of Pontypool, Radical Puritan* (Caerleon, 2009), 5–11.

his induction into the new church. The sermon was preached by Dr. Murch, who had been Thomas Thomas's tutor at Stepney College.¹²

William Williams Phillips gave an account of 'the providential circumstances which led to the formation of this church'.¹³ The new church believed itself 'graciously directed by the peculiar providence of God'¹⁴ to receive Thomas Thomas as its pastor. It will be seen later that the members of the new church became a combination of congenial, like-minded people who could work together with a clear conscience. That was very important for Baptists for whom conscience and the freedom of the individual believer were important.¹⁵ By association with other Baptist churches in the area, they would come to modify the apparent absolutism in Baptist thinking about the primacy of the local church in the Baptist understanding of the Church.¹⁶ There is no monolithic Baptist church: there are Baptist churches. At the same time there have always been associations of churches, and what was achieved by Thomas Thomas and his circle of friends and associates around Pontypool happened by extending the fellowship of the local church to an association with other Baptist churches, and beyond them to other Nonconformist churches. Thomas Thomas's advocacy of disestablishment and his opposition to the payment of Church rate by 1847, did not prevent him from collaborating with some Anglican churches in wider causes.

Crane Street Baptist church was founded on what were understood by Thomas Thomas as democratic principles. This would be so important in bringing greater religious and civic freedom to the town of Pontypool and the parish of Trevethin. Given the fact that so few men in the town of Pontypool had the vote at that time, and certainly no woman, the democratic vote by secret ballot in church affairs for all the members of the new church, including the women, was a major breakthrough in a town ruled by the Lord Lieutenant and a few henchmen among the guardians of the poor. There is no evidence of women being able to vote by secret ballot in any other church in Monmouthshire by 1847. Crane Street church Minute Book reported that 'it was resolved to take the vote of the whole church' on the question of Open Communion in 1847 when Mrs. Read, who had been a communicant with the Baptist church at Helstone in Cornwall but had not been baptised by total immersion, applied to be admitted to Holy Communion at Crane Street. A vote of all the members by secret ballot resulted in stalemate, 27 in favour and 27 against.¹⁷ This was confirmed by Thomas Thomas when he recollected the event in November 1867:

This church has always rested on the broad basis of Christian democracy, and has been governed by universal suffrage, including that of the female members. The ballot has been resorted to on the most important occasions, as in the decision of the communion question and always in the election of officers...¹⁸

Thomas Thomas had been used to Open Communion in the Baptist church at Henrietta Street in London, but he never forced the matter or used a casting vote to break the democratic vote at Pontypool.¹⁹ The church meeting was not democratic for the sake of democracy, but in order that all

¹² Crane Street church Minute Book, (Minute Book), 3–4; Thorne, *Crane Street Baptist Church*, 12–13.

¹³ Minute Book, 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Holmes, *Baptist Theology*, 119–139.

¹⁶ Holmes, *Baptist Theology*, 95–97.

¹⁷ Minute Book, 1 November 1847. There was no casting vote to break the deadlock.

¹⁸ *Pontypool Free Press*, 16 November 1867.

¹⁹ T.H. Thomas, 'The Revd Thomas Thomas DD' in (ed. J. Vyrnwy Morgan), *Welsh Religious Leaders in the Victorian Era* (London, 1905), 147.

the members collectively could discern the mind of Christ, whose Lordship over them was paramount. That Lordship was present in the church through the 'ordinance of the Lord's Supper' and the new church's priorities were indicated on their first Lord's Day together on 7 August 1836, when the new pastor 'administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to the newly formed church'.²⁰ Thomas went on doing that once a month until his retirement from Crane Street chapel in 1873.²¹ The church members decided when the Holy Communion service would take place, just as they decided when to hold their monthly meeting. They also decided that when they received Holy Communion, they would pay their contributions for the pastor's stipend to the deacon and treasurer, William Williams Phillips, whom they elected by secret ballot after giving a week's notice of their intention to vote. He was the church's only deacon for its first three years, and he continued as senior deacon after the members had elected other deacons.²²

The members of the chapel lived with the consequences of their democratic decisions. They voted to ask Thomas Thomas to request the Baptist church at Caerleon to dismiss two members who should have been among the first members of the new church, John Gould and William Wise. This was done, and the two new members were welcomed into the fellowship on 28 August 1836. They were likewise democratically excluded according to Baptist practice, in November 1839. John Gould was dismissed for drunkenness and William Wise for being 'too much implicated in the measures of the Chartist rioters'²³ when he took part in the march on Newport in that month. Thomas Thomas's sermon on the Sunday after the Chartists' march on Newport, revealed his opposition to the activities of the local Chartists because of their 'lawless abandonment' though he was in sympathy with the Charter. He preferred instead:

Appeals to the reason and conscience of the legislature and the nation [and] unceasing efforts to enlist the sympathies of the population in the cause of the oppressed; and especially by a *passive* obedience to bad laws, and moral resistance to the encroachments of unconstitutional power.²⁴

Thomas Thomas not only taught his church members how to respond to bad laws and to make democratic decisions, he also encouraged them to share responsibility in the life of the church. Women were accepted as members in Baptist churches but they could not become deacons in the nineteenth century. Deacons were engaged in far more than arranging the financial affairs of the church, paying the minister's salary or keeping important documents, like the registration certificate for marriages to be solemnised in the chapel under the new Marriage Act for the first time.²⁵ Thomas Thomas shared leadership with the deacons even in the worship in the chapel. Deacons were involved in reading lessons and praying in church services, superintending and teaching in Sunday School, and visiting people who applied for membership or had lapsed from attendance. They visited chapel members who had been bereaved and needed help from the money that the chapel kept for the relief of people in distress. Thomas encouraged all church members to share their gifts in the service of the church. Female members were included in the visiting teams whose work was extended to a general 'superintendence of the members' after January 1841. The delegation of duties and leadership to

²⁰ Minute Book, 7 August 1836.

²¹ Minute Book, 7 December 1873.

²² Minute Book, 16 August 1836; *Pontypool Free Press*, 16 November 1867.

²³ Minute Book, 16 November 1839.

²⁴ Thomas Thomas, *The Civil Duties of Christians: a sermon occasioned by the late outrages at Newport Monmouthshire, preached at the English Chapel Trosnant, Pontypool* (London 1839), 24.

²⁵ Minute Book, 9 January 1838.

church members encouraged responsibility and ownership and gave confidence to members as they became involved in activities outside the chapel.²⁶ The church was outward-looking and generous from the start. It had a Sunday School of thirty that had more than doubled by 1840, formed after church members had canvassed the area. Money was collected to finance the Sunday School as well as the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) and the Baptist College, whose foundation stone had been laid in August 1836.²⁷

The building fund for the new chapel had been started with £15 in the Pontypool Savings Bank in January 1839. By 1840 Mr. William Willams Phillips, at his own request, had been joined by the second deacon, Mr. Charles Davies.²⁸ The arrival of Charles Davies proved beneficial to the plans for the new chapel. He was at first reluctant to accept the position of deacon at Crane Street, but he became a key leader in the life of the church while he settled down as an ironmonger in Pontypool as well as being a brazier and tin-plate worker, employing twenty-three men in his business. He lived with his family in very respectable Upper George Street, next door to William Conway, with whom he worked closely and to whom, through his wife, Rebecca, he was related by marriage.²⁹ Charles Davies came into his own at the regular church meeting in January 1842, when Thomas reminded the members that they must make decisions about building a new chapel. Davies proposed the appointment of a committee to help him to carry out the work. The committee included William Conway and nine local businessmen.³⁰ Without the experience of Charles Davies and his committee, Crane Street Chapel might never have been built. On 15 September 1845 Thomas Thomas reported to the church meeting that the committee had negotiated with the owner, Mr. John Griffiths, the sale of an eligible site in Crane Street on the Blue Boar Field. The whole church meeting agreed to purchase the ground which was surrendered to Mr. Charles Davies on behalf of the chapel Trustees.³¹

The new chapel

The church that moved to Crane Street in 1847 was the continuation of the one that began in Trosnant in 1836 and moved half a mile up the road to an impressive new building. The opening of Crane Street Chapel was marked by special preaching services between 7 and 11 April 1847. On Wednesday evening, 7 April, the first two sermons were in Welsh. More than half the population of Pontypool spoke Welsh in 1847, though most aspired to be bi-lingual. The language of the chapel was English but, until 1857, it belonged to the Welsh Baptist Association. On Thursday, 8 April, preachers in English included Rev Micah Thomas of Abergavenny and Rev B. Parsons of Ebley, Gloucestershire. Parsons also preached on the following Sunday, but he was assisted by four local Baptist ministers from Ponthir, Caerleon and Newport, as well as Dr. Cox and the Welsh agent of the Baptist Mission Society and, of course, Thomas Thomas.³²

The above details show the care that was taken in the arrangements for the launching of this important new chapel on the people of Pontypool. The first services were all well-attended and the first one thousand pounds of the total cost of £2,200 had been raised by the end of the services. On

²⁶ Minute Book, 20 September 1836, 27 November 1837, 9 January 1838, 4 January, 22 July 1841, 29 January 1844, 15 September 1845, 30 June 1868, 8 January 1871, 26 October 1873; Thomas Thomas, *The Inaugural Address at the Annual Session of the Baptist Union, April 1872* (London, 1872), 6.

²⁷ Minute Book, 8 November, 13 November, 1836, 24 January 1839, 1 March 1841.

²⁸ Minute Book, 27 January, 20 August 1839, 17 September 1839.

²⁹ TNA HO 107/2449, 34, Trevethin, Pontypool; Gwent Record Office, 218D567/11.

³⁰ Minute Book, 31 January 1842.

³¹ Minute Book, 15 September 1845.

³² Minute Book, April 1847. *Monmouthshire Merlin (MM)*, 3 April 1847.

the 17 April the *Monmouthshire Merlin* reported that a meeting had been held ‘in the new English Baptist chapel Pontypool’ on the previous Tuesday to form a literary society or Mechanics’ Institute. Thomas Thomas was the chairman of that first public meeting at Crane Street in a cause for which he continued to show concern. Unlike most Nonconformist ministers at the time, Thomas Thomas was publicly involved in matters outside his own church from his arrival in Pontypool in 1836.³³ It was not therefore surprising that the first meeting in the new chapel was concerned with extra-mural activities.

The cause of adult education was merely a sideline to the heated debate over education in which Thomas Thomas and his associates were involved in 1847. These years were not only the ‘hungry forties’; in Pontypool they were the frantic forties. Public meetings had been held in Newport and Pontypool to debate the proposals of the Education Committee of the Privy Council for more state-funded education. The very same issue of the *Monmouthshire Merlin* that reported Thomas’s meeting about the Mechanics’ Institute, also reported the petition sent from Pontypool to Lord John Russell, ‘headed by the Lord Lieutenant of the County (Capel Hanbury Leigh) and other respectable and wealthy inhabitants of the Parish of Trevethin’ in favour of the Minutes of Council. The same *Monmouthshire Merlin* reported the petition of sixteen clergymen of the deanery of Abergavenny claiming to represent eighty-thousand people in supporting the education proposals. The Monmouthshire Baptists would certainly have disputed that.³⁴ State-funded schools were anathema to those Nonconformists who were voluntaryists because they believed in the voluntary principle: churches and schools should be supported only by voluntary contributions and not by government grants.

The battle-lines were being drawn. That same issue of the *Monmouthshire Merlin* reported the public meeting held in Pontypool in opposition to the government education scheme and the resolutions passed unanimously at that large meeting at Tabernacle Baptist Chapel, Pontypool with Charles Conway in the chair.³⁵ The British School of the voluntaryists had been open in Pontypool since 1843, providing day-school education for three hundred pupils, with no government support. It was strongly supported by Thomas Thomas, William Williams Phillips and William Conway. Significantly, the school’s opening had brought to Pontypool Thomas Brooks Smith to be its headmaster for the next forty-eight years. As well as being the Registrar for Marriages in Pontypool, he was also the Sunday School superintendent at Crane Street and later President of the Sunday School Union in Pontypool and Crane Street’s Choirmaster.³⁶ There was thus a clear association between Crane Street Chapel and the British (Nonconformist) School at Pontypool.

Relations with the Established Church

The leaders and members of Crane Street Chapel were newcomers to the town of Pontypool. The parish of Trevethin, which included the small town, had been dominated by the Hanbury family for centuries. The Hanburys gave their support to the Established Church. This section will

³³ *MM*, 17 April 1847. J.E.B. Munson, ‘The Education of Baptist Ministers, 1870–1900’, in *The Baptist Quarterly* (26), July 1976, 320. There seems to have been an earlier Mechanics Institute in Pontypool which did not survive. See G.S. Kenrick, *The Population of Pontypool and the parish of Trevethin, situated in the so-called ‘disturbed districts’; its moral, social and intellectual character* (London, 1841).

³⁴ *MM*, 17 April 1847.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 17 April 1847

³⁶ E.J. Smith, *A Useful Life: Memorials of the late T.B. Smith* (Pontypool 1892), 50–54, 64 & 68–69. *PFP*, 4 December 1891; Church Minute Book, 3 June 1855, 25 September 1870, 1 January 1871; *Kelly’s Directory of Monmouthshire 1871*, 84.

show something of what happened when the incoming Baptist tide hit the rocks of the Hanbury establishment in the Parish of Trevethin.³⁷

When the Bishop of Llandaff came to consecrate the rebuilt parish church at Trevethin in July 1847, the *Monmouthshire Merlin* was most interested in the gift of £500 from the Lord Lieutenant, Capel Hanbury Leigh. As John Newman observed, ‘The Hanburys of Pontypool Park used it (Trevethin parish church) as their estate church’.³⁸ Hanbury Leigh’s first wife, Molly Anne (Mackworth) died childless in June 1846 while the men of the Pontypool estate were removing the coffins from the family vault in Trevethin church to transfer them to a deeper vault in the north transept. Hanbury Leigh was away from Pontypool until the end of April 1847. In August, aged seventy-one, he married his second wife, Emma Elizabeth Rous, aged thirty-two. Two daughters were born in 1848 and 1850 followed by the long-awaited son and heir on 14 May 1853. John Capel Hanbury was born in London. There was much rejoicing when the news reached Pontypool and ‘a committee was soon set up to plan and carry out suitable festivities’. The committee of fourteen local men was headed by Joseph Firmstone who, with Edward Dimmack and John Thompson, ironmasters from Staffordshire, had just acquired the lease on the Hanbury ironworks which had been making a heavy trading loss.³⁹

Festivities in celebration of the birth of John Capel Hanbury in 1853 were fulsome and were reported as a full-scale public event. The *Merlin* declared that ‘The House of Hanbury Leigh’ returned to Pontypool on 9 June 1853 for the celebration of the birth of their son and heir. All the shops in Newport and Pontypool closed on that day and special trains were provided from Newport to return there at 11 p.m. Sports were held in Pontypool Park and a large ox was roasted on a spit in the market and taken in procession to the Park where it was alleged to have fed – not five thousand – but twenty thousand.⁴⁰

The various trades associated with the Pontypool iron works held their own meeting of about 1,500 workmen to decide to send two men from each trade to march in procession and present an address to the Lord Lieutenant. Capel Hanbury Leigh responded with thanks for their presentation and he expressed his sorrow at relinquishing the conduct of the ironworks. The Mayor of Newport, six councillors and the Clerk of the Council also paid their respects. There was no Mayor or Council in Pontypool. The Lord Lieutenant promised to build a town hall to commemorate his son’s birth after an address delivered by Dr. Edward Phillips J.P. who had presided over the proceedings.⁴¹

These details of the festivities have been given to emphasise the portentous nature of the events. The first address to be presented to the Lord Lieutenant was signed by 3,878 children and presented by Richard Greenway, a local solicitor, on behalf of the four hundred children of the Pontypool Town (National) School, one hundred and twenty children who attended the Infants’ school financed by the Lord Lieutenant himself, and children from the Church, Wesleyan, Primitive and Calvinistic Methodists, Independent, Congregationalist and Welsh Baptist Sunday schools in Trevethin parish. The children, described as a ‘fine assemblage of the rising generation’, all marched in procession, four abreast, down Clarence Street Pontypool to Park House, led by their Sunday

³⁷ R.Hanbury-Tenison, *The Hanburys of Monmouthshire* (Aberystwyth, 1995), 208,234 & 259.

³⁸ *PPF*, 10 July 1847; John Newman, *The Buildings of Wales, Gwent/Monmouthshire* (Cardiff, 2000), 580.

³⁹ Richard Hanbury-Tenison, *The Hanburys of Monmouthshire* (Aberystwyth,1995), 258–262 & 269–270; *MM*, 27 May, 10 June 1853.

⁴⁰ *MM*, 17 June 1853. *Hereford Times*, 15 June 1853.

⁴¹ *MM*, 27 May, 10 June 1853.

school superintendents and the Ebbw Vale band. The Sunday School of Crane Street Chapel was not there.⁴²

At the regular church meeting at Crane Street on 30 May 1853, Thomas Thomas had drawn attention to the ‘character of the approaching demonstration in honour of the birth of the heir of Pontypool Park’, and the invitation sent to the Sunday Schools to attend the event. After discussion, three resolutions were carried unanimously expressing surprise and regret at the character of the proceedings and the attempts to secure ‘the countenance and attendance of the Sunday Schools in the neighbourhood’.⁴³

The church meeting said that it yielded to none in its respect for the public position and private worth of the Lord Lieutenant of the County, but it emphatically condemned the ‘degrading and demoralizing sports and amusement’ contemplated on this occasion: they tended to ‘degrade the common people and to counteract the efforts made for their intellectual and moral improvement’. The proposed celebrations were considered to be out of harmony with the age, dignity, character and private feelings of the Lord Lieutenant. They would involve ‘an absurd and reckless waste of a large amount of money’, which would be better spent on ‘some lasting memorial of the auspicious event’, honourable to the family and permanently beneficial to the town’s inhabitants. The meeting’s main objection was that the proposed celebrations were ‘incompatible with the spirit and claims of the Christian religion’ because of their excessive ‘revellings’.⁴⁴

In conclusion, the meeting entreated the superintendent and teachers of the Sunday School of Crane Street Chapel to decline the invitation to join the proposed procession. This they did. Thomas Thomas and Charles Davies, the deacon, were requested to ‘wait on Mr. Dimmack (the works manager) with these resolutions’, which they did. Such a decision was not easy in the face of so much general and almost unanimous rejoicing in an event which urged congratulations and whole-hearted celebration. The refusal of Crane Street Sunday School to participate must have demanded great courage and discipline by the teachers and members in complying with the entreaty. They faced much public criticism for their action.

Armed with the resolutions of their own meeting on Monday, the leaders of Crane Street sought the support of ‘a meeting of teachers and friends of Sunday Schools’ on Tuesday evening (31 May) in the Town School, with Mr. William Wood, a local chemist in the chair. The resolution of Thomas Thomas, seconded by a Primitive Methodist Minister, Rev. J. Warn, and carried unanimously, recommended

the teachers of the Sunday schools in the district, respectfully to decline the invitation of the Pontypool Committee; and that a Bible, to be purchased with a penny subscription of the teachers and scholars, be presented to the Lord Lieutenant for the infant heir, at a convenient time, when all the schools shall assemble for the purpose, and have such a treat and entertainment as may be deemed most suitable to the occasion.⁴⁵

A committee was set up to carry out the objects of the resolution. It met two days later and unanimously agreed to communicate the resolution ‘immediately’ to all the schools in the district. The committee also agreed to publish the resolution with the reasons for their objections in the local press. The published announcement appeared on page eight of the *Monmouthshire Merlin* of 3 June

⁴² *MM*, 10 June 1853.

⁴³ Minute Book, 30 May 1853.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *MM*, 3 June 1853.

1853, six days before the planned event and too late to change the arrangements; children were already looking forward to games followed by ‘some thousand buns with wine’.⁴⁶

Whether the resolutions of the Crane Street Chapel meeting, communicated so politely to Mr. Dimmack by Charles Davies and Thomas Thomas, in any way inspired the Lord Lieutenant’s offer to provide Pontypool with a town hall, will never be known. The resolutions expressed fear that the children of the Sunday School might become affected by the indulgent extravagances of the celebrations in the Park. There was a resistance to the idea that the Sunday School of Crane Street Chapel should fall in behind activities planned elsewhere and not in keeping with their highest purpose. The Lord Lieutenant’s authority in civic matters was not in doubt, but he did not have the right to direct the activities of Sunday schools. The proposed festivities were viewed as a waste of money at a time when Pontypool British School was refusing government grants. The Lord Lieutenant’s money was being given to the parish church at the same time as a Church rate had been demanded from Nonconformists in the Parish of Trevechin and distraint made on their goods for their refusal to pay the rate.⁴⁷ The members of Crane Street Chapel stood their ground on religious principles against the authority of the only local government that they had in Pontypool at that time.

Thomas Thomas looked back on the event nearly fifteen years later at the celebration of the paying off of the debt on Crane Street chapel. Thomas remembered that:

The pastor and officers and teachers of this congregation did not object to the demonstration itself—none more cordially approved of its object, or felt and manifested a more sincere respect for the character and position of the late Lord Lieutenant and his family, or had greater reason to do so. But they could not appear to sanction low and demoralizing sports utterly inconsistent with the spirit and purposes of Sunday schools.⁴⁸

Thomas then went on to say what he could only have known from insiders at Pontypool Park, probably through William Williams Phillips, his senior deacon, who had died in 1861.

We knew too, they were not really approved in high quarters, but were obtruded by the subordinates of the Company and others who had no sympathy for the higher objects which we had in view. The course we then took subjected us to a good deal of animadversion and reproach; but we look back upon our protest with entire satisfaction, and believe that our conduct on this occasion must commend itself to the judgment and conscience of intelligent and Christian people.⁴⁹

With hindsight it seemed to Thomas that the demonstration against the festivities in the Park in 1853 was justified.

Development and growth

Crane Street Chapel had continued to be part of the Monmouthshire Welsh Baptist Association which celebrated its bicentenary in Pontypool in 1853. Crane Street invited representatives from other English Baptist churches in Monmouthshire to attend that event so that a separate English Baptist Association for the county could be formed. The Monmouthshire English Baptist Association was

⁴⁶ *MM*, 3 June 1853.

⁴⁷ See Arthur J. Edwards, ‘Religion and Society in Monmouthshire, 1840–1880’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, Cardiff University, 2016) Chapter 2.

⁴⁸ *PPF*, 16 November 1867.

⁴⁹ *PPF*, 16 November 1867.

inaugurated at Crane Street in 1857 with Thomas Thomas as its first president.⁵⁰ Crane Street Chapel was important to this growing network of churches that increased from eleven to thirty-two in the two decades after 1857.

By 1853 Crane Street Chapel was already having an impact beyond its size. The Religious Census of 1851 had shown it to be numerically the smallest of the seven Baptist churches in the Parish of Trevechin as well as the most recent to be built. On that Census Sunday the Baptists headed the list for attendances at worship in Monmouthshire. In most cases the number of people attending services (*gwrandawyr*) far exceeded those who were the members of the chapels (*Aelodau/aelodaeth*). This was not so at Crane Street. Its membership by baptism or dismissal from other churches was about one hundred and twenty in 1851. The number of people who attended the two services in Crane Street on Census Sunday was no more than 160. Attendances at Tabernacle Welsh Baptist Chapel in Crane Street numbered 366. At Trosnant Welsh Baptist Chapel there were 313 attenders, while at Zion Chapel Trosnant there were 431. Pysgah Welsh Baptist Chapel, Talywain, had 474 attenders that day, and at Noddfa Chapel, Abersychan, there were 232 attenders. This number was considerably reduced because of the stagnation in Abersychan iron works.⁵¹

Crane Street Chapel however had a growing membership: by 1864 there were 185 members. The settled ministry of Thomas Thomas was effective. On Census Sunday Charles Davies had claimed that the numbers attending the chapel that day were smaller than usual because the pastor was absent.⁵²

The numerical strength of the Nonconformists was certainly an argument used in favour of greater religious and social freedom and was a case for disestablishment. Thomas Thomas used the argument himself.⁵³ Yet in his own style of church leadership numbers were not important. On the contrary, they were counterproductive if they indicated lack of commitment.⁵⁴ More than once Thomas insisted that the membership roll of Crane Street church should be revised because members had been absent for some time or had moved too far away from the chapel to be able to attend services on Sundays.⁵⁵

Ten years after the great demonstration in Pontypool Park, a prize essay in Abersychan Eisteddfod recorded the membership of the Dissenting churches in the Parish of Trevechin in 1863 as 2482 in twenty-seven churches. The seven Baptist churches had a total membership of 954, but the distribution of members had changed since 1851. The Welsh Baptist churches were smaller because services in the English churches were becoming more popular. The verdict of the Eisteddfod prizewinner on Crane Street chapel in 1863 was that

Its progress had been rapid and its influence great among the trading portion of the community. A Sunday School has been held in connection with the chapel since its foundation.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Church Minute Book, 27 May 1853, 24 June 1857.

⁵¹ *The Religious Census of 1851, vol. 1, South Wales*, I.G. Jones and D. Williams (eds.) (Cardiff 1976), 72–81.

⁵² *Monmouthshire English Baptist Association, Report of Meeting at Ebbw Vale, 14/15 April 1868*, 7; *The Religious Census of 1851, vol. 1, South Wales*, 77.

⁵³ Thomas Thomas, *The Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control* (London 1862), 8.

⁵⁴ T. Thomas, *Inaugural Address at the Annual Session of the Baptist Union* (London 1872), 5–6.

⁵⁵ Minute Book, June 25 and 30 1855, 29 January 1867.

⁵⁶ *PPF*, 16 December 1865.

Brynmor Pierce Jones, historian of the Baptists in Gwent, described Crane Street as one of the ‘gentlemen’s chapels’ because it was designed by an architect. He also described it as ‘the forum for major issues to be discussed in front of its middle class and professional membership’ at its ‘week night society’.⁵⁷ Canon E.T. Davies had a similar view:

The Baptists made a shrewd move when they moved their theological college from Abergavenny to Pontypool in 1836 and in the following year they were able to build a chapel for an English congregation at a cost of £2,000 as the result of middle class leadership.⁵⁸

We have seen that it took the first members a decade to acquire a site to start building their chapel in Crane Street. The debt of £2,200 was not paid until 1867. By that time the chapel was too small, and the members turned with determination towards its enlargement, which included the galleries they had long anticipated for the accommodation of ‘hearers’ at the Sunday evening services.⁵⁹

How middle class was Crane Street church? Middle class leadership of the church has been mentioned earlier. The church’s membership changed over the forty years after 1836 as members were admitted, often as teenagers, by baptism, or transferred their membership by letters from other chapels, or had their membership transferred from Crane Street by similar letters as they moved out of Pontypool. Crane Street made an effort to keep an accurate list of its members, which was often revised, but there were still people associated with the life of the chapel whose names are not on the list of members, to say nothing of the hundreds of people who were simply attenders at its services.⁶⁰ The middle class was very small in Pontypool in the mid-nineteenth century. A significant thesis of 2003 includes Pontypool in its description of the growth of the middle classes in three small towns in south Wales during the forty years after 1850. The evidence for any development of the middle class in Pontypool had to be extended well into the first decade of the twentieth century.⁶¹

The Church Minute Book and the separate Crane Street church Register for the years 1836–1881 reveal that there were 190 members over that period, including seventeen Baptist College students who became members by invitation after 29 January 1861. Of the remaining 173 members it is possible to identify about 120 with some certainty. Only fifty-three of those were males in spite of its description as a ‘gentlemen’s chapel’. It is certainly true that Crane Street Chapel had some professional and middle class leadership from the start. Situated where it was in Crane Street, surrounded by shops and close to the market that opened in 1846, it is not surprising that Crane Street Chapel was associated with shopkeepers. It is also true that skilled tradespeople featured among its members, as the local eisteddfod essayist observed in 1863.⁶² Shopkeepers, tradespeople and their wives accounted for about a third of the church’s membership. That they were outnumbered by working class members challenges the assumption that they were all middle class, but an analysis

⁵⁷ Brynmor Pierce Jones, *Sowing Beside All Waters* (Gwent Baptist Association 1985), 95–96 & 103. A wide range of religious, social and political subjects was included in the lectures at these mid-week meetings.

⁵⁸ E.T. Davies, *Religion and Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Llandybie, 1981), 15.

⁵⁹ Minute Book, 15 September 1845, 30 June 1868, 11 September 1870; *FPF*, 16 November 1867. See letter of Mary Thomas below.

⁶⁰ Gwent Archives D 3598.7.1, Church Membership Register.

⁶¹ Julie Light, “...of inestimable value to the town and district?” A study of the urban middle classes with particular reference to Pontypool, Bridgend and Penarth c. 1850–1890 (unpublished Ph.D. Swansea, 2003).

⁶² *FPF*, 16 December 1865.

of Crane Street's membership certainly belies any assumption that Baptists represented only poor people.⁶³

Over the years the occupations of the same church members changed as their fortunes improved. There was a concern in the church for those members who were experiencing financial hardship, and male and female members were appointed to administer the fund for the relief of members in need.⁶⁴ There were clearly fluctuations in trade according to the state of industrial markets and these changes also affected Crane Street church. The members failed to pay the very generous annual stipend of £200 allocated to Thomas Thomas's successor in 1875 because of the state of local trade at that time.⁶⁵ It did meet that figure a couple of years later, and there were many chapels in south Wales where the stipend was much lower. Some of the chapel members clearly became more prosperous over time.⁶⁶

Most of the fifteen members of the all-male building committee in 1871 were local shopkeepers and tradesmen. There was also a ladies' committee of twenty-three, mostly consisting of wives, sisters and daughters of the men's committee, which organised domestic affairs and teas to raise money to relieve the debt on the building, and notably to arrange for the two-hour tea-party at Crane Street for 150 people to mark the retirement of Thomas Thomas from the pastorate in January 1874. The ladies then presented to his wife, Mary, 'a very handsome time-piece, bearing a suitable inscription'. Mary Thomas did not belong to the ladies' committee, but her niece, companion and house-keeper after 1867, Miss Anne David, was a member.⁶⁷

Mary Thomas was an essential part of the life of the Baptist College as well as of Crane Street chapel, not least as wife and mother, supporter and encourager, but also because for more than thirty years she was in charge of the domestic life of the Baptist College as well as being the longest surviving member of Crane Street Baptist church. Scholars have recognised how little we really know about the backgrounds of Nonconformist ministers in the nineteenth century. The same is true in any detail of the composition of Baptist churches, and that is a major reason for examining the church at Crane Street in some detail. The pastor's wife was a key figure in that community, though the records, in true Victorian fashion, made her invisible.⁶⁸

We learn most about Mary Thomas from her few remaining letters and the few letters that were sent to her surviving son, Thomas Henry Thomas after her death. One old student of the Baptist College reminded T.H. Thomas that 'Your mother was very much liked as you know'.⁶⁹ In a letter that Mary Thomas wrote to her son in 1860 she spent most time telling him about his father's activities. He had been to Madeley to officiate at an old student's wedding. He had gone to Llantwit Major to make arrangements to set up an English Baptist church there. Then he was going to Cardiff 'collecting for the College'. Mary Thomas went on to describe life at Crane Street Chapel:

⁶³ Working class members included iron, coal and tin workers, agricultural labourers, gardeners, railway workers, dressmakers, basket-makers, shop assistants and servants; M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 2 (Oxford 1995), 323; Kenneth D. Brown, *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales 1800–1930* (Oxford 1988), 29; Mark Rutherford, *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane* (London, 1887, reprinted 2007), 99.

⁶⁴ Minute Book, 26 November 1855.

⁶⁵ Minute Book, 12 April 1875; 20 May 1877.

⁶⁶ Minute Book, 27 January 1880; T.M. Bassett, *The Welsh Baptists* (Swansea, 1977), 284–287.

⁶⁷ Minute Book, 8 January 1871, 29 January 1874.

⁶⁸ Matthew Cragoe, *Culture, Politics and National Identity in Wales 1832–1886* (Oxford, 2004), 173 & 178.

⁶⁹ Christabel Hutchings (ed.), *The Correspondence of Thomas Henry Thomas* (South Wales Record Society, Newport, 2012), Doc 542.

Attendance at the chapel is still good, but people are in a fix about the galleries. They are afraid that the money cannot be had. They are going to have a meeting on Thursday about it. I sincerely hope that it will be done, for I have no doubt but that they would be filled in the evening.⁷⁰

So it proved to be, but ten years were to pass before there was enough money to provide the galleries. The chapel then had to arrange for the visitors in the galleries to be supervised and provided with hymn-books.⁷¹

When the clock was presented to Mary Thomas in January 1874 she was too ill to attend the ceremony. Her husband received it and replied on her behalf. In presenting her sincere thanks for the gift he praised her good qualities as a wife and her help 'in enabling him to discharge his arduous duties'.⁷² Even in the liberal and reforming social outlook that was brought to Pontypool through Crane Street Chapel, Mary Thomas did not move far beyond the article on womanhood written by Dorothy Rees in *Y Tywysydd a'r Gymraes* in July 1862:

Pa le ei chylch? Cartref..Yr unig ffordd i ni gael chwaraeteg ydyw bod ein cylch fel benywod yn ostyngedig a llafurus a glawedd a duwiol...Ceisiwn dduwioldeb fel y prif beth.

[Where is her place? Home...The only way in which we can ensure fair play is that our role as women is submissive and hard-working and pure and godly...Let us strive for godliness above all else.]⁷³

The women of the chapel had an opportunity for social fellowship as well as developing their skills. They never became deacons and their opportunities for making their voices heard outside the chapel were few. The establishment of both the ladies' and the building committees in 1871 reflects not only the settled nature of the chapel community but also the growing social importance of these families in the public life of Pontypool.

The church in the world

Before the chapel was built in Crane Street its members had become involved in social and political affairs, but this involvement became more frequent as the century progressed. Thomas Thomas led the chapel members to share his concern for the poor through his involvement in the Anti-Corn Law League in the 1840s.⁷⁴ This was followed by involvement in the work of the Complete Suffrage Union and the branch of the CSU that he pioneered in Pontypool. Thomas chaired a successful meeting of 800 people in Tabernacle chapel, Pontypool, on 25 October 1843 when the official lecturer of the CSU found ready listeners for the sentiments he was expounding.⁷⁵ Support for both the CSU and the earlier Church Rate Abolition Society in Pontypool was soon absorbed into the Anti-State-Church Association, which became the Liberation Society in 1853. The Pontypool branch of the

⁷⁰ Cardiff Central Library, MS. 4.432.

⁷¹ Minute Book, 24 January 1875.

⁷² Minute Book, 29 January 1874.

⁷³ Sian Rhiannon Williams, 'The True 'Cymraes': Images of Women in Women's Nineteenth Century Welsh Periodicals', 80, in *Our Mothers' Land, Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830-1939*, Angela V. John (ed.) (Cardiff, 1991).

⁷⁴ Thomas Thomas, *A Proper Consideration of the cause of the Poor, a test of righteous character. A discourse designed to advance the objects of the Manchester Conference, delivered at Pontypool, 2 September 1841* (London, 1841).

⁷⁵ *Nonconformist*, 1 November 1843.

Liberation Society had two dozen members in the 1860s, compared with fifteen in Newport. Most of the Pontypool members belonged to Crane Street Chapel.⁷⁶ Meetings of the society, the South Wales committee of the society and later of the County Liberal Association were held at Crane Street, chaired by Thomas Thomas or William Conway. The extension of adult male suffrage was much debated at the meetings and in 1872 Thomas Thomas supported the cause of women's suffrage in Pontypool.⁷⁷

Crane Street church willingly co-operated with other churches on matters of adult education, public health, public assistance in times of accident or distress and in non-doctrinal religious matters. Thomas preached and attended religious services outside his own denomination as well as giving support widely to Baptist churches where his leadership was greatly respected.⁷⁸ He worked with the Vicars of Trevechin and Panteg as a Vice-President of the Working Men's Institute; he attended meetings of the Scripture Readers' Association with the same people, and spoke in favour of the association's work. Thomas contributed to the Literary Association he helped to establish, and he assisted with relief for the poor in a time of local distress in January 1861.⁷⁹ In that same month he attended the opening of the new Temperance Hall in Pontypool, and delivered the inaugural address at the opening of the Temperance Hall in Tredegar.⁸⁰ Thomas had a prominent place in the meeting of the South Wales Total Abstinence Association that was held in Newport in September 1859.⁸¹ As far as Crane Street Chapel was concerned, its members could include publicans as long as they didn't open for business on Sundays. Communion wine at Crane Street was alcoholic until Thomas's offer to pay for unfermented communion wine was accepted in 1864. When Thomas retired as their minister ten years later, Crane Street church voted to continue his practice.⁸²

Conclusion

This article has sought to show the significant place occupied by Crane Street Chapel in the religious, social and political development of Pontypool in the middle of the nineteenth century. The important leadership of its minister, Thomas Thomas, was shared with the Baptist College and it was diffused leadership of necessity and through conviction. The two institutions were inseparable, but the chapel presented the more accessible face in society. Both institutions developed that essential network of relationships that contributed so much to the programme of Liberal reform that helped to achieve Nonconformist ambitions.

Crane Street Chapel provides clear evidence of the successful organisation of a Baptist church in industrial Monmouthshire. The way in which leadership was shared between minister, deacons and members, male and female, provides a picture of a harmonious and dynamic dissenting church community.

The chapel's place in the social and political development of Pontypool arose from its democratic government which gave its members confidence to participate in public protest over the raising of Church rate and against the enforcement of social conformity to events which, however

⁷⁶ Liberation Society, A/LIB/385.

⁷⁷ *Nonconformist*, 12 November 1862; *PPF*, 12 March 1859; 22 November 1872; 11 March 1881.

⁷⁸ See list of sermons by Thomas Thomas and places where they were preached, NLW MSS 21924 A and B. Reports of annual meetings of MEBA, Newport Library M000,286.1. Thomas was President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, 1872–73.

⁷⁹ *PPF*, 23 April, 19 November 1859, 19 January 1861, 17 December 1864.

⁸⁰ Evan Powell, *History of Tredegar* (Tredegar 1884), p.71.

⁸¹ *PPF*, 4 July 1840, 1 October 1859. Thomas Thomas, *A Discourse on Ephesians V: 18–20* (Cardiff 1850).

⁸² Church Minute Book, 31 March 1863, 4 August 1864, 27 August 1867.

worthy, compromised their integrity. Crane Street's example of peaceful resistance encouraged other churches and promoted greater co-operation in matters of mutual concern.

The style of its leadership must be accounted the main reason for the success of Crane Street Chapel in the mid-nineteenth century. This insisted upon uncompromising respect for the integrity of its Christian principles and the consciences of its members. There is no escaping the fact that the use of English in all its services anticipated future developments in Pontypool as surely as its democratic structure.

MAESRUDDUD TRANSFORMED 1900–1914

By Graeme Moore

In his *History of Monmouthshire* Sir Joseph Bradney records that Maesruddud, near Blackwood (Fig. 1), was the seat of an ancient family.¹ Beginning with Conan ap William, who was in possession of the property in 1561, he traces the continuous succession of ownership through his male heirs for over three centuries to Edmund Williams (c. 1780–1850), who prospered from the land, as had his forebears, and from the coal deposits below. He passed on a modest fortune to his eldest son, William, who took good care of the estate, and when he died in 1871 he was succeeded by his younger brother, Edmund. When he passed away in 1895, unmarried and with no male heirs, the estate was jointly administered by his sisters, Mary Brewer (c. 1834–1913), a widow, who had returned to her family home following the death of her husband in 1887, and Margaret (d. 1902), a spinster who had remained at home at Maesruddud.² By then the house, which had served the family well for centuries, must have seemed very old-fashioned and inconvenient, especially to Mary's son, Edmund Williams Tom Llewelyn Brewer (1865–1945), who was destined to inherit the place. So, while his mother and his aunt managed the estate and the coal revenues, it was left for him to decide what to do with the house and between 1900 and 1914 he rebuilt it, creating in the process the house that we see today (Fig. 2). The transformation of the house, and the creation of the garden around it, is the subject of this paper.

Maesruddud House

Edmund Williams Tom Llewelyn Brewer was born in 1865. He was son of a retired ironmaster, Thomas Llewelyn Brewer (1812–1887), and his second wife, Mary Williams (1829–1913). He had grown up at Dan-y-Graig, a Victorian mansion near Newport, built in the 1840s, with extensive gardens and a small farming estate attached.³ He had been sent away to St Edward's School, Oxford, and from there went on to Oxford University. After graduating in 1890 he went to live in London where he worked as a tutor. In 1895 his aunt and his mother jointly awarded him an allowance of £1,000 annually for the rest of his life,⁴ which enabled him to live in comfort in London and to continue with his studies. In 1897 he was called to the bar.⁵

As a well-educated young man, with sophisticated tastes cultivated at Oxford and in society in London, Maesruddud would have seemed remote and out-dated. It was an ancient farmhouse, built in the vernacular style, and altered and enlarged by successive generations according to their changing circumstances. Farming was the traditional source of their prosperity, and there was a farmyard and a range of farm buildings on the east side of the house, to which the sisters had added

¹ Sir Joseph Alfred Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire, Volume 5: the Hundred of Newport*, Edited by Madeleine Gray. Cardiff: South Wales Record Society, 1993, 146–147.

² Abstract of Title, c. 1918 D4222, Harding Evans collection, Box 10, Gwent Archives.

³ Probyn, Margery, 'The Grounds of Dan-y-Graig', Christchurch, Newport', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, vol. XIV, 1998, 56–61.

⁴ Agreement dated 21 December 1895 D4222, Harding Evans collection, Box 10, Gwent Archives.

⁵ *Kelly's Handbook to the Titled, Landed & Official Classes for 1911*, London: Kelly's Directories, 1910, 254.



Fig.1. 'Maesruddud House and the Favourite Horse of Margaret Williams' Father', Reproduced with permission of Newport Museum and Art Gallery.

a new barn in 1898.⁶ Coal mining had greatly improved the family's fortunes in recent decades and there was every prospect of considerably more income to come in the years ahead, which would enable him to rebuild the old house. For this he employed the architect Edward Warren (1856–1937), who was well known in London society for his sympathetic work on old houses and for building in historic styles.⁷

Maesruddud was rebuilt in the fashionable neo-Tudor style, using the local Pennant stone. Work began with the east wing which was slightly enlarged, and given a new entrance and a substantial new bay to provide more light to the rooms above and below. Completion of this first stage in 1900 was marked by rainwater heads cast with the date. It was some years before work commenced on the larger south wing, which was rebuilt and extended to the west side, and completion of this second stage was marked by rainwater heads dated 1907.

⁶ Date-stone 1898. Their eldest brother, William, seems to have started the practice of dating built structures around the estate in the 1860s, including stone gate posts.

⁷ Chatterton, Frederick, *Who's Who in Architecture*, London: The Architectural Press, 1926, 306. Warren's entry indicates that his country house work, including Maesruddud, was carried out in the period 1905 to 1913.



Fig.2. Maesruddud from the south-east.

In 1907 Brewer decided to add the Williams name to his own surname to create the Brewer-Williams name⁸ and he chose to make a display of this in the interior decoration. In the principal room in the south wing he installed a chimneypiece at the north end decorated with the Williams coat of arms that had been granted in the fifteenth century (Fig. 3). At the opposite end of the room he placed another bearing a new coat of arms created by quartering the Williams arms with those of the Brewer family, as he was entitled to do (Fig. 4). With the house transformed and the interiors complete, Brewer-Williams, as he now was, turned his attention to the garden.

The Garden at Maesruddud

A set of estate drainage plans dated on the cover, 1908, includes a key plan showing the extent of the house and grounds before the alterations and additions (Fig. 5), with its drive sweeping up around a lawn to the front door.⁹ Brewer-Williams had grown up with fine gardens at Dan-y-Graig,

⁸ Royal licence granted 29 June 1907.

⁹ The key plan showing the field layout, includes the barn built in 1898, and the house without the alterations completed in 1900.



Fig.3. Fire surround with Williams family coat of arms.



Fig.4. Brewer-Williams coat of arms.



Fig.5. Detail from the field plan of Maesruddud, c. 1900, from the original set of estate drainage plans of 1908, in the possession of Trevor Davies of Maesruddud Home Farm.

with extensive lawns studded with specimen trees and shrubs,¹⁰ but he was probably aware that fashions had changed since the grounds there had been laid out. He would have known that the appropriate setting for his new neo-Tudor mansion was a formal garden, and for expert advice on this he consulted Thomas Mawson, one of the most esteemed garden architects of the Edwardian era, and one of the few professional designers whose practice extended to South Wales.

Having made a name for himself as a landscape gardener in the Lake District in the late 1880s Mawson had gone on in the 1890s to design public parks around Britain, including Belle Vue Park, Newport, which was laid out on land given by Lord Tredegar, and opened by Lord Tredegar in

¹⁰ Probyn, Margery, 'The Grounds of Dan-y-Graig', Christchurch, Newport', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, vol. XIV, 1998, 56.

1894. In the late 1890s when demand shifted from landscape gardens to formal gardens, which were beyond his capabilities, he had gone into partnership with the architect Dan Gibson to provide the architectural designs that were wanted.¹¹ When the partnership ended in 1900 he produced a manual, lavishly illustrated with examples of work done with Gibson, and largely on the strength of this book he became widely known as a garden architect.¹²

In the early 1900s Mawson's services were much in demand throughout the British Isles, including South Wales, where he designed gardens for colliery owners Sir Edward Watson, at St Mary's Lodge, Newport (1900); John Cory, at Dyffryn, St Nicholas (1907); and John Pyman at his home in Lavernock Road, Penarth (1908).¹³ Brewer-Williams may have seen examples of his work or heard good opinions of him from contacts in London or South Wales. Mawson was an Honorary Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects and a member of the Art Workers Guild, and as a member of both organisations himself Edward Warren would certainly have known him, and would have been more than happy to work with him.

Mawson's usual practice was to work from the plans and surveys supplied by the architect and in this case, since the design he published in 1912 shows a much larger house, it would seem that the original intention may have been to rebuild the existing house and then to enlarge it to create a house almost double the size of the original (Fig. 6). The plan for a larger house was not adopted possibly because Brewer-Williams's circumstances changed in 1909, when he married Etienne Dunbar (c.1879–1960), and rented a property in London which would become the couple's main home. Mr and Mrs Brewer-Williams may have decided that the existing house at Maesruddud was not big enough to serve their purposes, but they continued with the garden work largely as planned (Fig. 7).

A new drive aligned east-west was laid out to the north of the old one leading through an avenue of Cedars and Rhododendrons to a new forecourt on the level of the house. Here a carriage turn was set amongst lawns and framed by trees and shrubs. Steps led up on the north side to a terrace walk on a level above the forecourt, with a pavilion at the east end, and up again to a wrought-iron gateway leading into a walled kitchen garden. There had been a walled garden at Dan-y-Graig where the Brewers had enjoyed a much greater selection of fruit and vegetables than the Williams' of Maesruddud,¹⁴ and the new walled garden would enable them to have fresh produce here as well. High walls on three sides provided shelter and support for climbers inside and out, and glasshouses on the north wall provided further shelter for vines. A low wall on the south side allowed the cold air to drain out and visitors to look in. The pavilion, probably designed in Mawson's office, was cleverly placed to allow views up into the walled garden and down to the forecourt.¹⁵

Having decided not to extend the house to the east a lawn was laid on the site and planted with conifers, including a Monkey Puzzle. This was probably not recommended by Mawson who was adamant that 'the Monkey Puzzle should never be planted except in collections as a curious

¹¹ Moore, Graeme, 'Thomas Mawson and the Early Development of his Architectural Style', *Occasional Papers, volume 4*, Cumbria Gardens Trust, 2007, 64–69.

¹² Mawson, Thomas H., *The Art and Craft of Garden Making*, London: Batsford, 1900.

¹³ Mawson, Thomas H., *The Life and Work of an English Landscape Architect*, London: The Richards Press, 1927.

¹⁴ Probyn, Margery, 'The Grounds of Dan-y-Graig', Christchurch, Newport', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, vol.XIV, 1998, 56 & 58.

¹⁵ This pavilion is intact and in good repair, but it is almost completely obscured by the growth of trees and shrubs around it.

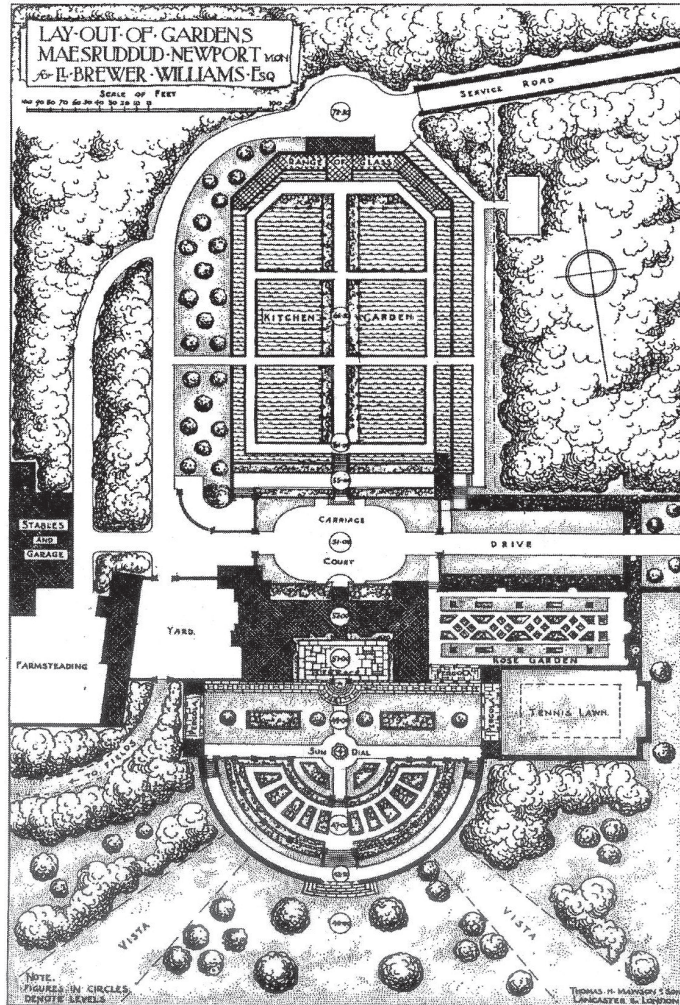


Fig.6. Thomas Mawson's plan of the garden at Maesruddud, from the *Art and Craft of Garden Making* (4th edition), 1912.

tree'.¹⁶ Brewer-Williams had grown up with a Monkey Puzzle at Dan-y-Graig and it was probably his choice.¹⁷ Beyond this lawn it was decided not to create the elaborate parterre shown on the plan, or the tennis court planned. Instead the area to the east was planted with woodland trees which have grown up to provide shelter from the east winds.

The main ornamental gardens were laid out below the house where the ground was levelled to create a series of garden terraces progressing southwards down the slope, with lawns decorated with

¹⁶ Mawson, Thomas H., *The Art and Craft of Garden Making*, 4th edition, London: Batsford, (1900) 1912, 289.

¹⁷ Probyn, Margery, 'The Grounds of Dan-y-Graig', Christchurch, Newport', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, vol.XIV, 1998, 56. The Monkey Puzzle in the east lawn at Maesruddud was felled in about 2009. I am grateful to Trevor Davies for this information.

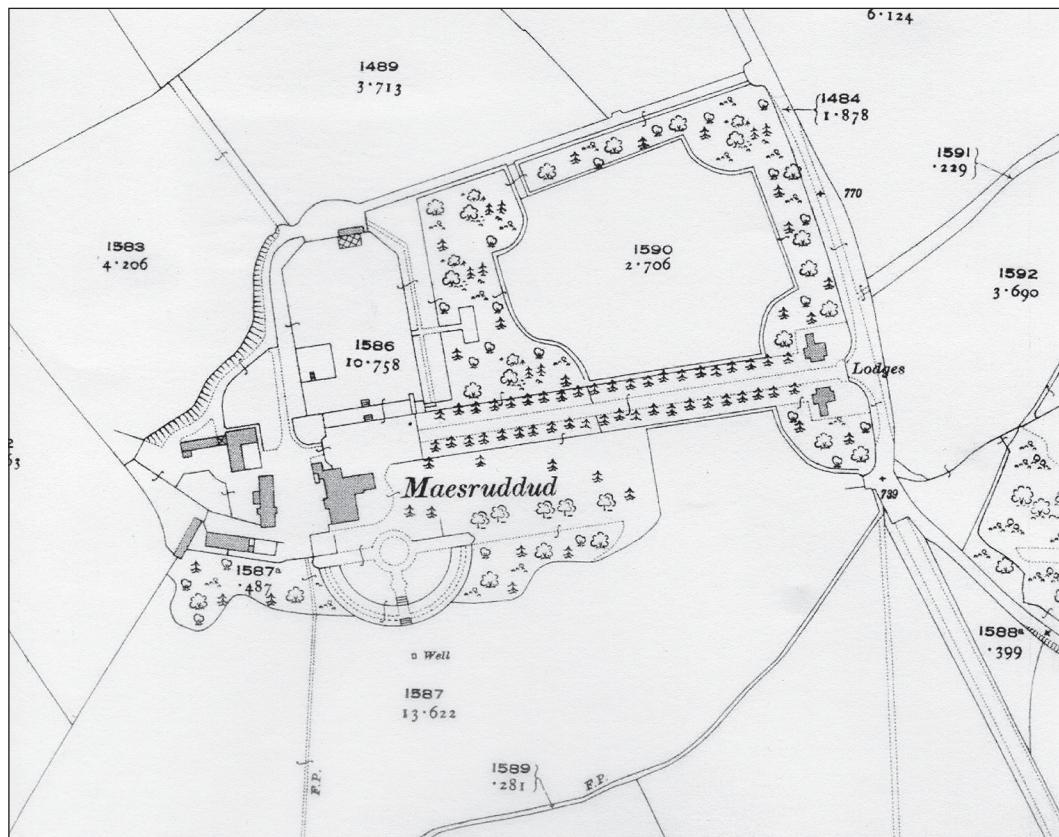


Fig.7. Detail from the Ordnance Survey map of 1920 showing the house and garden at Maesruddud. Courtesy of Bargoed Library.

flower beds. Flights of steps between the levels were all aligned with the centre of the forecourt and the gateway into the walled garden above to create a strong north to south axis through the garden (Fig. 8). While the upper terrace was square with the house, the two levels below were bowed out into wide semi-circles that showed off the valley beyond. Steps went down from the lowest terrace to a broad grass walk which followed the contour on both sides back towards the house, with views into the valley over a low box hedge planted on the parapet. Below, steps went down again through a pair of oak gates into the former paddock which was transformed into a landscape garden (Fig. 9). Here, scots pines were planted in clumps strategically placed to create vistas radiating out from a sundial in the centre of the garden above (Fig. 10).

Mawson was very pleased with this scheme. In his memoirs he wrote that the garden at Maesruddud was 'a fair criterion of my ideal of the nature and extent of a garden at this time'.¹⁸ He had been busier than ever with work at this time and busy moving his head office from Windermere to Lancaster and recruiting staff. At the same time he was engaged in the on-going debate about the

¹⁸ Mawson, Thomas H., *The Life and Work of an English Landscape Architect*, London: The Richards Press, 1927, 141.



Fig.8. Looking from the garden to the forecourt and the steps into the walled garden beyond.



Fig.9. The oak gates leading out from the bottom of the garden into the paddock below.



Fig.10. The remains of the clumps of pines that framed the views into the valley.

influence of Italian garden design on British gardens and lecturing and publishing articles on the subject.

On the question of design he felt that generally the display of foreign influences was not appropriate for British gardens. He had visited Italy and admired Italian gardens,¹⁹ but in a lecture to members of the Royal Horticultural Society on 1 September 1908 he admitted that:

‘Although I am strangely susceptible to such magnificence and profundity that the Italian gardens weave round spectators, I must confess that my compass, so to speak, always swings round to the homelier quarters, beloved by the true Briton, and the quiet beauty which old England bespeaks.’²⁰

He drew on the English garden tradition, not realising perhaps, just how much it had been influenced by the gardens of the Italian Renaissance. Certainly, Maesruddud, with its symmetry, the broad radius of its terraces, and the outward embrace of the landscape beyond, showed this Italian influence.

Things got easier for Mawson when he was joined in the business by his sons, Edward in 1911, and John in 1912, who had both trained as architects. Increasingly from 1911 he devoted himself

¹⁹ Mawson, Thomas H., ‘Garden Architecture’, *Architectural Association Journal*, vol. xxiii, 1908, 177.

²⁰ Mawson, Thomas H., ‘Garden Design – Comparative, Historical, and Ethical’, *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, vol. xxxiv, 1908, 370.

to promoting the firm at home and abroad, while his sons dealt with design and the management of the business. The garden at Maesruddud must have the distinction of being one of the last gardens designed by his own hand.

Conclusion

In his memoirs Mawson had expressed some surprise that he had been called upon to create a garden in such an inauspicious location. He complimented his client on his decision ‘to live in the neighbourhood and in the old family home, with all its disadvantages’²¹ not realising that, since he had not inherited the property outright on his uncle’s death, Brewer-Williams had little choice but to stay. He flattered the architect for investing the house ‘with a definite architectural character’, but reserved the highest praise for his own contribution to the place when he recorded that “having regard to its locality it is rather like a jewel stuck into a lump of lead”.

But while the major coal owners chose not to live in the coal field, it was not unusual for the smaller colliery owners like Brewer-Williams to live in the area. In taking on his uncle’s name and his arms he demonstrated his affinity with his mother’s family, and he continued their tradition for public service locally by serving as Justice of the Peace, Deputy-Lieutenant of the county of Monmouthshire and, in 1908, as Sheriff. His fine new house and garden in its prominent position in the landscape served to reinforce his status. He added to this outward display by building a handsome gateway and a fine pair of lodges at the entrance to the property, again designed by Edward Warren, each with a cartouche in the gable inscribed with the date, 1912.

In the following year, when his mother died at the age of seventy-nine, Brewer-Williams at last inherited the estate. At that point he gave up the lease of Dan-y-Graig and divided his time between Maesruddud and his home in London. In 1914 a new garage and coach house was built beside the house, as shown on Mawson’s plan, in a rustic timber-framed Tudor style, which served as an eye-catching feature at the end of the drive. The outbreak of war brought a halt to further work, but soon after the war a wall was built around the yard to the west of the house to screen the farm from view. The coming of the motor car had meant that it was no longer necessary to have horses ready at the door and this yard now became an ornamental courtyard, with a wall-fountain on the west side, and a gate in the south wall leading out onto the garden terraces.

After the war falling agricultural incomes prompted Brewer-Williams, like other landowners, to sell off cottages and other properties on the estate, and to make economies. By the early 1930s life in the country had lost its allure for him and his wife, and with no near relatives to consider he began to reduce his commitment to the area. Valuable paintings and antiques were placed with the Newport Museum and Art Gallery, first as a loan and then as a gift,²² and Maesruddud was left unoccupied for extended periods. When Brewer-Williams died in 1945 he left all his property to his wife, who spent still less time there and, when she died in 1960, she left the house and the residue of her estate to Dr Barnardo’s charity. It changed hands several times before being converted to a hotel and renamed Maes Manor, but there were no drastic changes to either the house or the garden.

While it might be regretted that a fine old gentry house was lost during the transformation described, the mansion that emerged is a fine example of Edward Warren’s work, and the garden must be one of the best remaining examples of Thomas Mawson’s work. House and garden were

²¹ Mawson, Thomas H., *The Life and Work of an English Landscape Architect*, London: The Richards Press, 1927, 140.

²² List of 190 items loaned to Newport Art Gallery D4222, Harding Evans collection, Box 10, Gwent Archives.

made to be seen and experienced together, and together they form a rare example of Edwardian taste in the South Wales valleys.

Acknowledgements

This paper is based on a talk given to the South and Mid-Glamorgan branch of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, at Maes Manor Hotel, on 18 September 2016. I am grateful to the Chair, Elaine Davey, for inviting me to talk to her members. I am grateful also to Dan Jones, Manager of Maes Manor Hotel, for access to the house and garden, and for assistance in the preparation of the illustrations; to Trevor Davies of Maesruddud Home Farm, for the loan of the drainage plan of 1908, and for sharing his local knowledge with me; and to this journal's anonymous reviewer for constructive comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

FROM WORKHOUSE TO WAR HOSPITAL

NEWPORT SECTION OF THE 3RD WESTERN GENERAL HOSPITAL 1915–1920

By Peter Strong

Between 1915 and 1920, Newport workhouse, known locally as Wooloston House,¹ now St Woolos Hospital, was taken over by the War Office as a section of the 3rd Western General Hospital, with its headquarters in Cardiff. Very little has been written about the work of the hospital during the Great War. As a consequence, its important contribution to the town's war effort is not widely known.

Writing a history of Wooloston House War Hospital presents a number of difficulties. The hospital records do not seem to have survived and any material that does survive, such as issues of the 3rd Western General magazine, tends to concentrate on the Cardiff Section. While there are numerous published memoirs from doctors and nurses who worked in Casualty Clearing Stations and hospitals overseas,² accounts from staff and patients in base hospitals within Britain are less common and there are none for Wooloston House. The prime exceptions are the memoirs of Ward Muir, an orderly at the 3rd London General Hospital (where the war artist Richard Nevinson also worked), the letters of Stanley Spencer, the war artist, which give a detailed account of the miserable time he had as an orderly at the Beaufort War Hospital in Bristol and Vera Brittain's memoirs of life as a VAD nurse in the 1st London General Hospital, Camberwell.³

In these circumstances, the writer is heavily dependent upon local newspaper reports. These normally only covered those aspects of the work in which hospitals came into direct contact with the public or which were visible beyond the confines of the hospital walls, notably the transfer of patients from railway stations to hospitals and the public provision of various kinds of assistance. The newspapers normally tell us very little of treatments, ward routines or the conditions in which patients and staff lived and worked.

Wartime newspapers have been accused of falsifying news in order to present pro-war propaganda. While this was, on occasions, true of national newspapers and of the nationally syndicated material printed in the local press, locally sourced news was rarely if ever 'fake'. Nevertheless, local papers, including the *South Wales Argus*, strongly supported the war and consistently tried to present war news in a positive light. As a result we tend to get a relentlessly 'cheerful' view of the hospital with little mention of the suffering and pain. Such reports weren't necessarily written for the purpose of propaganda but served much the same purpose:

¹ The spelling varies between Wooloston and Woolaston in different sources. The *South Wales Argus*, street directories and official records from the time, such as the minute books of Newport Board of Guardians, consistently used Wooloston, while a map of 1851 even uses Woolleston. Wooloston seems to have crept into usage, perhaps through confusion with the Gloucestershire village. Wooloston will be used here.

² For a recent example, see Hallett, C.E., *Nurses of Passchendaele* (Barnsley, 2017).

³ Muir, W., *Observations of an Orderly* (London, 1917); Glew, A. (ed.), *Stanley Spencer, Letters and Writings* (London, 2001), 57–67; Brittain V., *Testament of Youth* (London, 1933), 205–289. For an account of the harsh treatment of patients in a military hospital see West, A.G., *The Diary of a Dead Officer* (London, 1919), 42–43. Thacker, T., *British Culture and the First World War: Experience, Representation, and Memory* (London, 2017) has useful material on the experiences of Stanley Spencer, Vera Brittain and Richard Nevinson as nurses in hospitals in Britain.



Fig. 1. St Woolos Hospital, formerly known as Wooloston House.

Praise of hospitals as models of efficiency, economy and comfort shared a common root with propaganda that sought to mask the horrors of wartime life to the end of maintaining mass support for the conflict.⁴

In spite of these difficulties, it has been possible to piece together an account of the work of the hospital, although the reader will appreciate that there remains much that we don't know.

By 1914, Britain had been preparing for the eventuality of a major war for over a decade. Yet the scale and ferocity of the Great War meant that, although crucially important, these preparations proved inadequate and fresh measures had to be introduced once war broke out. The Second Boer War (1899–1902) had revealed numerous shortcomings in Britain's military preparedness, not least in its medical and nursing services. As a result, various enquiries were conducted, committees appointed, and reports written. These culminated in the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act of 1907 and a series of associated measures, known collectively as the Haldane military reforms, after Richard Haldane, the Secretary of State for War in the Liberal Government. These reforms created the Territorial Force (TF) and included provision for the creation of a Territorial Section of the Royal Army Medical Corps – RAMC (T) – made up of male doctors and orderlies, trained through their

⁴ Reznick, J.S., *Healing the Nation: Soldiers and the Culture of Care Giving During the Great War* (Manchester, 2004), 43.

county Territorial Associations, and a Territorial Force Nursing Service (TFNS), made up of female nurses. Just as the Territorial Force was created to augment the regular army in the event of war, so the TFNS would assist the work of the regular army nurses of the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service. TFNS nurses had to be unmarried and fully trained in civilian nursing, having served at least three years in approved hospitals, but received no specific military training, although matrons spent seven days every other year undergoing training in military hospitals. By 1913, 2,117 TFNS nurses were enrolled ready for mobilisation, with the numbers increasing to 7,117 during the course of the war. Of these 4,837 served in home hospitals.⁵

In addition, under the 'Scheme for the Organisation of Voluntary Aid in England and Wales', 1909, the British Red Cross Society and Order of St John formed Voluntary Aid Detachments to provide auxiliaries to augment the work of the RAMC(T) and TFNS, with female VADs providing nursing and kitchen staff while male VADs provided orderlies, storemen and transport services.⁶ As well as assisting in the large military hospitals VADs would be the mainstay of the numerous small 'cottage hospital' style 'Red Cross Hospitals', properly known as Auxiliary Hospitals, which would be created for convalescence. By 1914, 80,000 VAD members had been recruited and trained in 1,811 female and 543 male detachments. Newport's first Red Cross VAD was formed in 1911, with its headquarters in the Education Offices in Charles Street, and comprised 20 'ladies', some of whom were offered additional training sessions on wards at the Royal Gwent Hospital.⁷

Before the war, the regular RAMC hospitals totalled only 7,000 beds. Western Command, which included south Wales, had no large military hospitals, merely a number of small depot and garrison hospitals, totalling 336 beds. In the event of war 23 new base hospitals staffed by the RAMC(T) and TFNS were to be created across the UK in previously identified schools and public buildings, thus adding another 12,000 beds. It was planned that each would have 528 beds and be staffed by 91 nurses and 20 medical officers. The only such hospital planned for Wales was the 3rd Western General Hospital in Cardiff.⁸

With the outbreak of war in August 1914, the plan was put into effect and the staff mobilised. By the end of the month 19 of the UK base hospitals were open, with the other four by the end of September. The 3rd Western General Hospital in Cardiff opened on 16th August. Pending conversion of the school buildings, the initial nucleus was the King Edward VII Hospital (later renamed the Cardiff Royal Infirmary), where 104 of the 281 beds were allocated to the military. Miss Elizabeth Montgomery Wilson, matron since 1891, also became principal matron at the new hospital. She was an experienced military nurse, having been temporarily released from her duties in Cardiff to serve in the Second Boer War (1899–1902). Four Cardiff Schools were quickly converted: Splott Road (surgical unit) with 145 beds; Albany road (surgical unit) with 156 beds, Ninian Park and the Municipal Secondary School at Howard Gardens with 155 medical beds. On 7th September Howard Gardens also became the administrative headquarters. A teacher-pupil centre in the city was taken

⁵ McPherson, W., *History of the Great War based on Official Documents: Medical Services General History* Vol. I (London, 1921), 1–41.

⁶ Cohen, S., *Medical Services in the First World War* (Oxford, 2014), 5–6.

⁷ Jones, R., *History of the Red Cross in Monmouthshire (Gwent) 1910–1918* (Pontypool, 1988), 12; Brady, S., 'Nursing at the King Edward VII Hospital, Cardiff, during the First World War' in Borsay, A. (ed.), *Wales c. 1800–2000: Public Service and Private Ambition* (Cardiff, 2003), 112–3; Cohen, *Medical Services*, 11.

⁸ MacPherson, *History of the Great War*, 71–2. At the start of the war only 2,000 of the 7,000 military hospital beds were occupied. The 1st Western was in Liverpool and the 2nd Western in Manchester.

over to provide accommodation for 70 nurses. 91 nurses from King Edward VII Hospital were allocated to the new units.⁹

The hospital was under firm Scottish command. The commanding officer was Colonel David Hepburn, a native of Kinross and graduate of Edinburgh University Medical School, who since 1903 had been Professor of Anatomy and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at University College Cardiff. Hepburn seems to have been a highly popular figure, being described variously as possessing ‘geniality and fairmindedness’ and showing ‘quiet dignity, unassuming manner and sincerity of purpose’. His second-in-command, registrar and adjutant was fellow Scot Major Ewen Maclean, another Edinburgh graduate, who before the war had been senior gynaecologist at King Edward VII Hospital.¹⁰

Meanwhile, preparations were being made in Newport. The Royal Gwent Hospital placed ‘The Friars’, an adjacent building (now a Postgraduate Medical Education Centre), at the disposal of the military, while by mid-September the Red Cross had set up convalescent hospitals for servicemen at Llanwern Park and Brynglas House.¹¹

In earlier conflicts there had been relatively little need for large military hospitals within Britain, partly because since 1815 Britain’s wars had been fought hundreds of miles away – the Crimea 1854–6, the Boer War 1899–1902 and various other colonial wars – and because the state of medical care and knowledge meant that few of the sick and wounded would be able to reach home shores alive for treatment. During the Great War most of the fighting by British troops took place much closer to home, in France and Belgium, while improvements in treatment close to the battlefield, and improved transport, including specially adapted hospital ships and trains, meant that a much higher proportion of sick and wounded troops could return to ‘Blighty’ alive.¹²

The first large scale evacuation of British troops from France arrived in Britain on 4th September 1914. The nature of many wounds presented major challenges. Wounds from machine guns or shellfire could easily lead to gas gangrene, making amputations necessary, while the lack of modern antibiotics meant that it took a long time for major flesh wounds to heal, leading to lengthy hospital stays. During the war 41,050 British servicemen lost limbs, 1,833 were blinded and 1.2 million received wounds which were sufficiently serious to entitle them to a pension.¹³

Although the First World War was the first major conflict in which deaths from wounds exceeded those from disease, there were still many soldiers who fell sick. Gastric problems were particularly common, while the hardships of military service sometimes ‘exacerbated hidden illness’. Effective screening for tuberculosis, a highly infectious disease, was not available, meaning that it spread easily amongst troops.¹⁴

These factors, along with the continuation of the war and the high casualty rate, meant that it soon became clear that the existing arrangements would not be adequate. By the end of 1914 the

⁹ *Western Mail* (WM) 12 Aug, 9 Sept 1914, 27 Dec 1915, 2 Oct 1939; Brady, ‘Nursing at King Edward VII Hospital’, 110.

¹⁰ *The Bulletin, Magazine of the 3rd Western General Hospital*, October 1917, 87; *The Leech*, Medical Students Magazine, quoted in Roberts, A., *The Welsh National School of Medicine, 1893–1931: The Cardiff Years* (Cardiff, 2008), 220; www.yba.llgc.org.uk, www.rse.org.uk, accessed 16 July 2017.)

¹¹ *South Wales Weekly Argus* (SWWA), 19 Sept 1914.

¹² Hay, I., *One Hundred Years of Army Nursing* (London, 1953), 27.

¹³ Anderson, J., *War, Disability and Rehabilitation in Britain* (Manchester, 2011), 44–5; Cohen, *Medical Services*, 51.

¹⁴ Anderson, J., *War, Disability and Rehabilitation*, 44 & 66.

number of beds in TF hospitals had risen from 12,000 to 17,000 and means were being sought for further expansion.¹⁵

Various ‘quick fix’ methods of expansion were tried through the use of ‘huted hospitals’ such as the one built in the grounds of the military hospital at Netley near Southampton and ‘tented hospitals’ such as that in the grounds of Trinity College Cambridge. Nevertheless, it was clear that more permanent buildings would need to be acquired by taking over additional existing properties. The original War Office mobilization plan, which provided for 20,000 beds to be available by October, was extended to provide 50,000 beds. In May 1915 Lansdowne Road and Kitchener Road schools in Cardiff were requisitioned and a plan was developed for the covering over of the tennis courts and pleasure grounds adjacent to the Howard Gardens section, but this was dropped in favour of opening new sections at Neath and Newport, raising the capacity of the 3rd Western General Hospital from 560 beds to 2000 by the end of 1915.¹⁶

Initially, the plan was for Newport to follow the system used in Cardiff and elsewhere by using local schools. In March 1915 the Board of Education wrote to the Mayor of Newport asking for enough schools to be vacated to allow for between 500 and 1000 beds. Newport Education Committee agreed to cooperate with the scheme but asked for the number of beds to be limited to 500 in order to minimise the disruption to the education of the town’s children.¹⁷

This plan, however, was dropped following a letter from the Local Government Board to Newport Board of Guardians asking for use of Newport Union Workhouse and Infirmary (Wooloston House). At a special meeting on Saturday 27th March, the Board decided that:

...the buildings of the Workhouse should be offered to the War Office ... subject to such arrangements as might be made for the transfer of the whole or any portion of the inmates to other institutions on such terms that the ratepayers should suffer no loss. No inmate will be removed who is – in the opinion of the Medical Officer – not physically fit to be removed and whose health would be endangered by such a removal.

The decision was duly telegraphed to the Local Government Board and in due course Major Maclean visited the site to check its suitability.¹⁸

The workhouse had been built in 1837–8, with an infirmary added in 1869. The main building was rebuilt in 1902–3 and so was relatively new at the time of the Great War. The name Wooloston House was adopted as a less intimidating name for the workhouse from that of a nearby building that had been the register office for recording births, marriages and deaths and had been purchased by the Poor Law Guardians in 1898 for use as an office for the Clerk to the Guardians. The name was well known to the people of Newport and the surrounding area. According to the *Western Mail*, when members of the 1st Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment, decided to give local names to trenches they

¹⁵ MacPherson, *History of the Great War*, 73. By 1917 the figure had risen to 48,000.

¹⁶ Cohen, *Medical Services*, 51; Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 46; WM 15 May 1915.

¹⁷ Minutes of Newport CBC Education Committee 18 March 1915, Gwent Archives (GA) A100M 17.2.

¹⁸ SWWA, 3 April 1915; GA CSW/BGN/M2/1 Newport Board of Guardians Special and Emergency Minute book 1915–1920. The Board of Guardians were responsible not just for the town of Newport but also for other communities within the Newport Poor Law Union. These included, for example, Risca, Machen and Magor. This was to cause some difficulties in 1919 when Newport Corporation wanted to use Wooloston House for housing the town’s homeless.

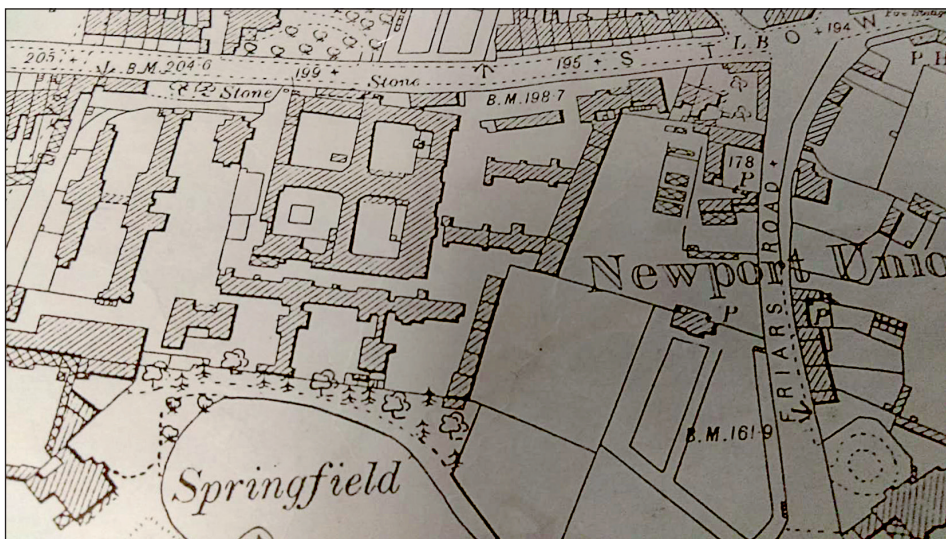


Fig. 2. Woolston House (Newport Union Workhouse). O.S. Map, 1921.



Fig. 3. Colonel David Hepburn, Commanding Officer, 3rd Western General Hospital, combined sections (reproduced with permission of the Wellcome Library).



Fig. 4. Major Ewen Maclean, Second-in-Command, 3rd Western General Hospital, combined sections (reproduced with permission of the Wellcome Library).

occupied, one was christened Woolston House. The Newport section of the 3rd Western General Hospital was therefore often referred to locally as Woolston House War Hospital.¹⁹

In April, the Guardians began making preparations for the transfer of 381 inmates to workhouses in Cardiff (120), Merthyr (64), Abergavenny (30), Pontypool (60), Bedwellty (60) and Chepstow (47). The Poor Law Schools in Caerleon (later renamed Cambria House) were converted into an infirmary for the 196 sick inmates. The Guardians were assisted in this process by the sharp drop in the number of people seeking admission, from an average of 355 per fortnight in 1914 to only 61 in the fortnight at the end of March 1915.²⁰

While the main building and the infirmary at Woolston House were taken over by the military, the Guardians retained use of the Receiving Ward, Springfield Sanitorium in the workhouse grounds, the laundry and some workshops.²¹

Recently renovated workhouses had been identified by the War Office as likely sites for new military hospitals since their layout and facilities, including dormitory wards, kitchens, electricity, landscaped gardens and recreation rooms, meant that relatively little needed to be done to adapt them. Nevertheless, a considerable amount of 'plumbing and fitting' was necessary and a sub-committee of the Board of Guardians was appointed to organise the adaptations on behalf of the War Office and to obtain tenders from local traders. With Colonel Hepburn stressing that preparation of the hospital was 'a matter of great urgency' detailed negotiations took place on the conversions needed both at Woolston House and Cambria House and, above all, on responsibility for payment.²²

On each floor of the main building of the workhouse a basic kitchen was created, each with a gas supply, so that food or drink could be prepared for patients during the night. Lighting was improved and more baths installed. In the adjoining workhouse infirmary less structural work was needed, but the nurses' dining room was turned into a second operating theatre, while their kitchen and pantry were converted into an X-ray room and photographic developing centre. The main building and the infirmary were to be connected by a newly erected covered way. The coach house doors were enlarged to allow access for motorised ambulances.

Following the adaptations, the hospital had a capacity of 714, later increased to 732, making it the single biggest self-contained unit of the 3rd Western General Hospital. It comprised 50 wards in the main building and thirteen in the infirmary, with each ward accommodating between ten and 24 patients, plus a number of small rooms for two or three men.

Given that by no means all the patients were confined to bed, particularly in the later stages of their recovery, it was important to provide recreational facilities. To this end the dining room was converted into a recreation room and a reading and writing room, the former with its own makeshift stage built upon trestles. The rooms were provided with billiard and bagatelle tables, plus seating

¹⁹ www.workhouses.uk, accessed 20 Apr 2017; WM 8 Apr 1915, 18 Sep 1919; Peeling, B. (Ed.), *The Royal Gwent and St Woolos Hospitals* (Abertillery, 1998), 48 & 53.

²⁰ SWWA, 10 Apr 1915, 22 May 1915; WM 15 Oct 1915; GA CSW/BGN/C/25 Newport Board of Guardians, Miscellaneous papers relating to the military occupation of Woolston (*sic*) House, 31 Mar 1916. Cambria House was originally built as an Industrial Training School for poor pupils. It had fallen into disuse by 1902. After the war it fell into disuse again before being used from 1937 as a home for Basque Child Refugees from the Spanish Civil War.

²¹ GA (GA) CSW/BGN/M2/1 Newport Board of Guardians Special and Emergency Minute book 1915–1920, 1 May 1915.

²² Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 46; SWWA 23 Oct 1915, GA CSW/BGN/M2/1 Newport Board of Guardians Special and Emergency Minute book 1915–1920, 19.5.16.

areas with books, magazines and games. A curtain across the dining room created a separate space for the officers' mess.

Furniture and beds were lent to the military authorities by the Guardians, but since most of the beds were only 2ft 6in wide, these were rejected and replaced by those that met the military standard width of three feet. To cope with the insatiable demand for tea, two 100 gallon urns and a 50 gallon copper kettle were ordered.

Once the conversions were complete, the buildings were made available for military use on 14th September 1915. The military authorities had wanted an opening ceremony but this was rejected by the Board of Guardians.²³

Although Major Maclean commented that Newport Board of Guardians had given 'nothing but whole-hearted and patriotic co-operation' there was occasional friction. Shortly after the hospital opened, the Guardians expressed concern over 'suggested alterations' in the chapel. This prompted a somewhat robust response from the Venerable Charles Green, Archdeacon of Monmouth, challenging the Board's right to intervene and stressing that religious liberty determined that there would be a need for every religious body to be 'free to conduct its worship on its own lines, using and arranging the furniture according to its own rules and customs, without any interference from any external body.' The Archdeacon went on to remind the Board that Woolston House was now a military hospital and that, consequently, 'the military authorities will certainly introduce into the buildings whatever furniture or apparatus they deem necessary without consulting the Guardians.'²⁴

Inevitably, some of the disagreements were over money, with the Guardians trying to ensure that all costs fell upon the War Office and not a penny on local ratepayers. In 1917, for example, the Guardians asked for the military authorities to meet the cost of painting, but only managed to recoup one third of the cost since, whereas the buildings had only been under military occupation for two years, no painting had been done for six years. There were also prolonged discussions over contracts for the hospital laundry to be done in the workhouse's own facility rather than through commercial laundries. The Guardians, perhaps with an eye to making savings after the war, argued that this would necessitate the purchase of new machines since the old ones 'would not stand the strain'.²⁵

Major James Wilson, who had previously served with the Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa during the Boer War and was a medical officer at the Pembroke and Haverfordwest Infirmary, was appointed commanding officer at Woolston House, under the overall command of Colonel Hepburn and Major MacLean. Two house surgeons, Lieutenants Williams and Bowen, RAMC, were appointed and Captain D E Thomas took charge of the X-ray department. Several local doctors who had been working in the Cardiff Section were transferred to Newport. Lieutenant Colonel Octavius Edward Bulwar Marsh LRCP (Edin) of Clytha Park Road had practised in Newport since the 1880s. In 1904 he had been President of the South Wales and Monmouthshire branch of the British Medical Association and was an active member of the local Conservative Party, serving as a town councillor. Major Morrell Thomas FRCS, LRCP was a nephew of Sir Abraham Garrod Thomas, the prominent local surgeon, philanthropist and (from 1917) Liberal MP for South Monmouthshire. He had worked at Guys Hospital, London before joining his father in general practice in Newport, then at the

²³ SWWA, 23 Oct 1915; GA CSW BGN/C/25 Newport Board of Guardians, Miscellaneous papers relating to the military occupation of Woolston (*sic*) House, 29 May 1915, 31 Mar 1916; CSW/BGN/M2/1 Newport Board of Guardians Special and Emergency Minute Book 1915–1920, 3 Aug 1915, 28 Aug 1915, 21 Oct 1915.

²⁴ *The Bulletin*, February 1917, 3; GA CSW BGN/C/25 Newport Board of Guardians, Miscellaneous papers relating to the military occupation of Woolston (*sic*) House, 2 Nov 1915.

²⁵ GA CSW BGN/C/25 Newport Board of Guardians, Miscellaneous papers relating to the military occupation of Woolston (*sic*) House, 20 Sept 1915, *passim*.

Newport and Monmouthshire Infirmary (later Royal Gwent Hospital). He joined the RAMC (T) on 30 December 1908 and was mobilised on 30 June 1915. Captain (later Major) William Jones Greer FRCSI, LRCPI had been born and raised in Ireland before coming to practise in Newport. They were joined by other Newport doctors, who were offered 12 month renewable 'contract commissions': Dr Charles Brooke Gratte, Dr Owen Willmott Morgan and Dr Robert James Coulter MB, RCB.²⁶

Most doctors devoted only part of their working time to the hospital. Colonel Hepburn in particular was extremely busy throughout. In addition to being in overall command of all the 3rd Western's various sites, he continued his duties as Dean of Cardiff Medical School, keeping up with his pre-war teaching commitments. Although based in Cardiff, he made frequent visits to Newport, not only to the wards but also to meet convoys of wounded men as they arrived and to participate in many hospital concerts. As so-called *à la suite* officers, local doctors on 'contract commissions' were able to continue with their private civil practices. This was often resented by full time RAMC(T) officers, who had been mobilised at very short notice in 1914 with little time to put their business affairs in order and arrange locums. A committee of enquiry in 1917 found that some doctors who were not on full time military service were enriching themselves by poaching patients from their serving colleagues. The committee also found that the system was wasteful with some *à la suite* officers working only one day a week in military hospitals while enjoying the privileges of a commission and army pay while continuing their civil work. There is, however, no evidence either way to suggest whether this was a particular problem in Newport.²⁷

In accordance with normal practice and upon the recommendation of Colonel Hepburn, Evan Davies, the master of the workhouse, was commissioned with the rank of Honorary Lieutenant and appointed as Quartermaster, on a salary of £200 p.a., later increased to £250.²⁸

Miss Katherine Gilchrist Wilson, matron at the Royal Gwent Hospital, was appointed matron of the new unit for the duration of the war, leading a team of 100 TFNS nurses and 40 nursing VADs. Newport Voluntary Aid Detachments also provided 'General Service' workers, plus equipment and materials for the workrooms in the new hospital and in the town, where they would be engaged in such duties as making up bedsheets and repairing or altering uniforms. Shortly before the hospital opened, the Rt. Hon. Eleanor Addams-Williams, Divisional Director of the Red Cross, made a public appeal for £1,000 towards the costs.²⁹

Charles Gower, Chief Constable of Newport, was appointed transport officer in charge of transporting the sick and wounded men from Newport railway station to the hospital, with the work being carried out by the Newport Corps of St John Ambulance Brigade, assisted by RAMC orderlies and occasionally by the fire brigade and, after it was formed in August 1916, members of the Monmouthshire Volunteer Regiment.³⁰

²⁶ Haverfordwest and Milford Haven Telegraph, 31 Jan 1900, 7 March 1900, 20 Feb 1901; WM 15 Oct 1915; *South Wales Evening Express*, 10 June 1904; Weekly Mail 27 Mar 1886; *South Wales Echo* 10 July 1888; <http://livesonline.rcseng.ac.uk/biogs/E004705b.htm>, accessed 29 May 2017; Johns Newport Street Directory 1917, 585/6. Major Wilson's eldest son, Lt Douglas Wilson of the 9th Welch was killed at Loos on 25th September 1915.

²⁷ Whitehead I., *Doctors in the Great War* (Barnsley, 1999), 67; Roberts, *Welsh National School of Medicine*, 48; MacPherson, *History of the Great War*, 151–2.

²⁸ SWWA 23 Oct 1915; GA CSW/BGN/M2/1 Newport Board of Guardians Special and Emergency Minute book 1915–1920, 19 May 1915. Davies was paid his civil salary rather than as a lieutenant.

²⁹ Jones, *Red Cross*, 71; WM, 15 Oct 1915, 19 Oct 1915; SWWA, 20 Oct 1915.

³⁰ WM, 5 Aug 1916, 31 Mar 1917. The Monmouthshire Volunteer Regiment was formed for home defence, playing a similar role to the Home Guard in World War Two.



Fig. 5. Katherine Gilchrist Wilson, Matron, 3rd Western General Hospital, Newport Section (reproduced with permission of the Wellcome Library).

Immediately prior to the hospital opening, there were 45 RAMC(T) men, who acted as orderlies, drivers, technicians and clerks, in billets in the town while the War Office had taken over three properties in Caerau Crescent – Pencraig, Englefield and Pannylan – to convert into accommodation for 120. The family firm Griffiths and Sons, which ran ‘a large clothing factory in Newport and had outfitting shops at Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and other towns in South Wales’ made a large house available for use by medical officers who did not live locally.³¹

The 100 nurses of the Territorial Force Nursing Service, with a number of VAD Red Cross nurses, were to be accommodated at St Woolos Schools, Stow Hill. From 14th June 1915, the pupils were moved to the Higher Elementary School on the other side of Stow Hill, where they would attend lessons on a shift system, attending either in the morning (8.45–12.30) or in the afternoon (1.30–5.15) on alternate weeks. A great deal of work needed to be done to convert the school buildings. This was done on behalf of the War Office by the Borough Architect, Mr C.E. Ward, using local firms. Central heating was installed and galleries which surrounded the classrooms were removed. The two upper floors were converted into sleeping cubicles by erecting wooden panels while the ground floor was converted for use as a dining hall, nurses’ sitting room, kitchen, sculleries, maids’ dining room and general stores. The school caretaker plus around ten maids and cooks were to be employed to look after the building and its occupants. Newport Corporation offered free transport on

³¹ WM, 2 Sept 1916; Johns Newport Directory 1917 shows Major Wilson, Commanding Officer at Woolston House, living at 24 Stow Park Gardens, a property owned by J and J Griffiths.



Fig. 6. St Woolos Schools, Stow Hill, home to Woolston War Hospital nurses 1915–1919.

its trams for nurses travelling to work, a fact which led Colonel Hepburn to complain that the same facility wasn't being offered in Cardiff.³²

Nursing VADs who had enrolled before the war had received basic training, with many being awarded proficiency badges in Home Nursing and First Aid, although they did not receive the same level of training of regular nurses of the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service or the Territorial Force Nursing Service, while those who flooded in after the war started had even less training and initially were given only basic domestic duties. Those VADs who worked on full time contracts were paid £20 per year which, even once free board and lodging and a laundry allowance were taken into account, was considerably less than they could have earned in local munitions factories.³³

As time went on, however, the shortage of professional nurses meant that VADs were called upon to perform more duties previously restricted to professionals. In some places this led to friction, as in Cardiff:

³² Gwent Archives A100M 17.2 Minutes of Newport CBC Education Committee; Gwent Archives GEA 280/02 St Woolos Boys School Log Book; SWWA 23 Oct 1915; WM 27 Dec 1915.

³³ <http://www.redcross.org.uk/en/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War>, accessed 31 Jul 2017.



Fig. 7. Postcard, thought to be from Woolston House War Hospital (reproduced with permission of Newport Past, www.newportpast.com).

Much of the friction between nursing VADs and trained nurses was caused by what was considered the former's challenge to the professionalism of the latter, especially because of the disparity in their civilian social status. VADs were mostly from a 'protected environment', whilst many nurses were from middle and lower class backgrounds... They (trained nurses) argued that they had worked hard for their status, only for it to be usurped in some cases by VADs of higher civilian social status.³⁴

In addition, a number of civilian staff were taken on. The Board of Guardians agreed that two of the workhouse staff, Henry Brown and Thomas Cherrington, along with eight inmates would remain to help in the boiler house, engine shed and telephone exchange. In September 1915 two 'temporary women cooks' were recruited. Although four candidates applied for the posts, only two arrived for interview, perhaps indicating that with recruitment into the war industries, female staff were increasingly difficult to find. Both were appointed: Mrs Martha Rose (aged 33), the first cook, would be paid £40 year year and Miss Florence Price (aged 23), the second cook, £35, with each also receiving accommodation, food and washing, valued at a further £36. They would be responsible for cooking for the matron, medical officers and patients. RAMC orderlies presumably had their own army cooks.³⁵

There was a high turnover of nurses and orderlies. From 1915 orderlies aged between 19 and 39 were encouraged to volunteer for overseas duty, while with the introduction of conscription in

³⁴ Brady, S., *Nursing at the King Edward VII Hospital*, 113 & 117.

³⁵ GA CSW/BGN/M2/1 Newport Board of Guardians Special and Emergency Minute Book 1915–1920, 4 June 1915, 28 Sept 1915; WM, 8 Sept 1915.

1916 those who were fit enough were increasingly 'combed out' for overseas service. As a result most orderlies were over age or unfit for overseas service, including some who had previously been wounded. The hospital magazine frequently noted transfers of orderlies from the training depot at Blackpool to receive basic hospital training, replacing batches of men who went to Blackpool to prepare them for being sent overseas. Similarly, experienced TFNS nurses and VADs were recruited to go overseas.³⁶

The hospital officially opened on 25th October 1915. The first 'convoy' of patients from overseas arrived on Tuesday 16th November, bringing a party of men 'direct from Gallipoli' by hospital ship to Southampton and thence by train. At this time, the home hospitals were under severe pressure, with October having been the highest month yet for admissions in Cardiff, largely as the result of 1,210 troops arriving from Gallipoli and the Mediterranean. As the ambulance train pulled into Newport station at 2.25 p.m, it was met by a party led by Colonel Hepburn, Major Maclean and Chief Constable Gower and a fleet of vehicles including the hospital's own ambulance, the borough ambulance and eleven cars loaned by local residents. 142 men were 'detained'. All but one were 'walking wounded', so there was little need for the 24 members of the St John's Ambulance Brigade Auxiliary Stretcher Section and the four or five RAMC orderlies from the hospital, along with policemen and railway workers who were in attendance.³⁷

The scene was described by the *South Wales Argus*:

As the train approached the station it was noticeable that several of the men had their heads out of the windows, which encouraged the hope that there were not many stretcher cases ... This hope was abundantly justified, as, out of the whole party, only one had to be carried. The rest were able to walk. Several limped, and one had his hand bandaged. Several had the appearance of having come straight from the trenches. Their boots were clogged with mud, and their clothes had an untidy appearance ... Nineteen of the cases were Colonials – 17 Australians and two New Zealanders, suffering from the after effects of enteric. 29 Britishers were suffering from enteric, and there were 26 convalescent dysentery cases. The rest were suffering from a variety of illnesses of a more or less minor character.³⁸

Upon arrival at the hospital they were met by the medical staff and orderlies:

The men of the Welsh RAMC(T) attached to the ... hospital were lined up just inside the gates, and as the motor conveyances drove up they escorted the men to the C and D blocks ... In a few cases the men looked very weak and ill, a few appeared to be wounded as well as ill; in one case a man had to be carried; and there was one stretcher case. The RAMC men helped the patients by carrying the packs of the weaker ones, and immediately on arrival they were given medical attention.³⁹

According to the *Western Mail*, one of this first batch of patients had become a minor celebrity:

The distinction of being the youngest soldier in Gallipoli is claimed by Harold Martin, Carisbrook, Isle of Wight, son of an Army Scripture Reader. The youngster celebrated his seventeenth birthday

³⁶ *Bulletin*, August 1917, 77 & 79.

³⁷ WM, 17 Nov 1915, 27 Dec 1915., SWWA, 20 Nov 1915. Hospital trains normally detained at a new platform built at the Devon Place siding, at the rear of the station, where a new roof was built – C.T. Clissett (Ed.), *War Organisation in Monmouthshire*, Ministry of Information 1919 (Newport Reference Library), 32.

³⁸ SWWA, 20 Nov 1915. The term 'enteric' seems to have been used generically for a range of gastrointestinal conditions.

³⁹ SWWA, 20 Nov 1915. Remarkably, the *Argus* gave the names and medical condition of each patient.



Fig. 8. Staff at Woolston House War Hospital 1918
(reproduced with permission of Newport Museum and Art Gallery).

in the trenches in Gallipoli with his regiment, the Isle of Wight Rifles, and is now in hospital in Newport, Mon., wounded in both legs. In a letter his mother says the big Australians wanted him to transfer to them as a regimental mascot, and the sailors on the destroyers desired to keep him as a lucky charm.⁴⁰

He was joined a few weeks later by an even younger patient:

Among the wounded who have arrived at the Western Hospital, Newport (Mon.), from France is Rifleman F. Stamps, of the London Regiment. He has not been wounded, and looked the picture of health, but has been sent home, much to his disappointment, because he is only 16 years of age, although he would easily pass for 22.⁴¹

The War Office had initially hoped to be able to send men to hospitals close to their homes but this proved impracticable. As Colonel Hepburn told the *Western Mail*:

It should be explained that the wounded and sick are collected at the base hospitals at the coast without any reference at all to the segregation of regiments; they are simply accommodated in the order they arrive. In the same way they are placed on board ship, and again when they are landed in England it is purely a matter of chance to which hospital they are sent. Each hospital train is filled up and packed off to a particular part of the country without the men being grouped off according to their regiments or in deference to their wishes. The fact that some of the men reach their native places is purely a stroke of luck.⁴²

As it turned out, of the 140 men on the first trainload admitted at Newport, only four came from Welsh Regiments. Of the 9,000 patients admitted to the whole hospital (Cardiff, Newport and Neath sections) by December 1915, 5,019 came from the British forces on the Western Front, 2,032 were British troops from the Mediterranean theatre (mainly Gallipoli). 365 were Australians, 88 New Zealanders, 230 Belgians and 1,269 from postings within South Wales and Herefordshire. Luckier than most was Sergeant F. Ellis of the Somerset Light Infantry, who arrived at Woolston House in 1916. Being from Bath, he was not far from home. Even more luckily, according to the *Bath Chronicle*, as the train carrying Sergeant Ellis to Newport passed through Bath, his wife looked

⁴⁰ WM, 23 Nov 1915.

⁴¹ *Western Daily Press*, 13 Jan 1916.

⁴² WM, 14 Apr 1915.

out of her window to see him waving to her. Shortly after, a letter from him was thrown out of the train onto the platform at Bath Station and subsequently delivered to her.⁴³

By mid 1916 most of the men admitted from Gallipoli had moved on, with convalescent cases distributed to auxiliary hospitals around the county, and it was reported that there was plenty of space at the hospital. The Battle of the Somme (July-November 1916), however, meant that it became virtually full. 6th July saw the greatest number of arrivals in the UK from hospital ships – 10,112 – for the whole of the war, with the number for the month reaching 121,160.⁴⁴ Three hospital trains within a week arrived in Newport in early July, with 657 men being admitted:

On Sunday 133 were admitted, and late on Thursday night an ambulance train arrived containing 184 men, 88 of which were not cases of a serious character, while nearly all the remaining cases will require surgical treatment. This (Friday) morning the arrivals numbered 340. Happily, few of these required to be carried, but all were suffering from shrapnel and gunshot wounds. An abundant supply of motor cars, ambulances and motor vehicles was speedily obtained, most of them being readily placed at the disposal of the authorities by tradespeople and others... Few of the men belong to local regiments ... The highest praise must be accorded to the work of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, who were present in large numbers on each occasion...

Practically all the men bore decided evidence of having come from the trenches. This was so, as the men had been travelling since Sunday. They came from the neighbourhood of the Somme and their clothing and boots were mud-covered. Though only a few of them had to be carried, many of them were heavily bandaged about the head, and dozens had an arm in a sling.⁴⁵

In addition to the three trains mentioned above, others arrived on 16th July (261 men) and 26th July (240 men). Amongst the wounded arriving in Newport in July was Lance-Corporal Harold Sutton, son of John Sutton, Labour M.P. for East Manchester, who had been wounded in the face. Another was an Australian, Lionel Allen (real name Lionel Dearman) who, although only 18 (having lied about his age to enlist), had already been evacuated to Britain once before, having been wounded at Gallipoli in 1915. The sequence of events following his wound gives a good indication of the nature and speed of the ‘chain of evacuation’ that brought patients to hospitals such as Woolston House. On 22nd July he had been shot in the left shoulder during the Australian assault on the village of Pozieres. He was admitted to the No. 2 Field Ambulance Advance Dressing Station later that day and the following day (23rd) to the South Midland Division Casualty Clearing Station. The next day (24th), he transferred by ambulance train to no. 3 Stationary Hospital, Rouen. On the 25th he left France by hospital ship for Southampton and on the 26th was admitted to Woolston House – just four days after being wounded. After almost three weeks in the hospital he was discharged (14th August) and sent on leave, returning to duty at Perham Downs, Wiltshire, on 31st August, a sequence that had lasted less than six weeks. It was, however, another year before he was back in the trenches of the Western Front.⁴⁶

The *Argus* did its best to minimise any demoralising effects of its reports by pointing out that ‘considerable sacrifice’ was ‘only to be expected’ and by stressing the cheerful nature of the

⁴³ WM 17 Nov 1915, 12 Dec 1915; *Bath Chronicle*, 30 Sep 1916.

⁴⁴ MacPherson, *History of the Great War*, 106.

⁴⁵ SWWA, 15 Jul 1916.

⁴⁶ WM, 17 Jul 1916, 27 Jul 1916; *Liverpool Daily Post*, 11 Jul 1916. For further details of Allen’s colourful career, see: www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=3355 accessed 5 August 2017; www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1989266 accessed 5 August 2017.

wounded men and making some points about the ongoing battle which were a long way from the full picture:

The spirit of the men was certainly remarkable. One man was the proud possessor of a German helmet, which he displayed prominently. Another had a German cap and refused a tempting offer to dispose of it... In conversation the men spoke in the highest terms of the splendid work of the British artillery. One said 'we have had a terrible time, but our men fought fine. I think we shall finish it now. We've been waiting for it, and, compared to Loos and some other battles, the casualties have been slight.' ...One poor fellow with shades over his eyes was stated to have lost the sight of one eye. 'That's better than losing the two', was his observation, made in that spirit which is typically British.⁴⁷

Similarly, accounts from the wounded were seized upon by the press to provide stories that would bolster support for the war:

TEUTONIC TREACHERY. A soldier, in hospital at Newport, asserted that he and his comrades of the Welsh Regiment had more than once seen Germans holding up one hand and shouting 'Mercy', but with the other hand manipulating a machine-gun. 'I have seen them do that at 50 or 60 yards range', he said. 'Yes, and I have seen some of them bringing machine-guns on ambulances,' interposed a comrade.⁴⁸

The Battle of Arras (April 1917) led to another spike in admissions. 202 sick and wounded men, including 13 Canadians, arrived on 15th April, 138 on the 19th and 137 on the 27th. Even after two and a half years of war crowds were still turning out to cheer them as they passed through High Street in trams on their way to Wooloston House.⁴⁹

Once again, the local press was eager to use testimony from the patients, who were, it was assumed, fresh from the front, to demonstrate that the war was being won:

The men chatted freely about recent happenings at the front, and in their manner there was a sincere note of both enthusiasm and optimism. One declared, 'The bombardment was the heaviest I have experienced since the beginning of the war.' Another said, 'We have got the weight of them this time.' Another, explaining the reasons for the comparably light casualties, said it was due to the barrage and curtain fire. The men had nothing but the highest praise for the British artillery and the organisation of the bombardment. He said that so perfectly was everything arranged that at the end of the big bombardment the artillery were as plentifully supplied with shells as when it began.⁵⁰

The reference to the plentiful nature of artillery shells can be seen as a direct attempt to motivate the munitions workers at home, an approach that had been very apparent in the famous *Battle of the Somme* film that had been shown around the country in 1916.

The casualties from Arras meant that the hospital was virtually full again. With fresh offensives planned, the 700 beds at Wooloston House were proving insufficient. As a result, in August 1917, Newport Barracks on Barrack Hill (now known as Raglan Barracks) was converted from a cavalry

⁴⁷ SWWA, 15 Jul 1916.

⁴⁸ WM, 18 Jul 1917.

⁴⁹ WM, 16 Apr 1917, SWWA, 21 Apr 1917, 28 Apr 1917.

⁵⁰ SWWA, 21 Apr 1917.

barracks into a further 300 bed extension to the 3rd Western General, under the command of Captain Herbert Connop RAMC(T), yet another Edinburgh graduate.⁵¹

There are indications that the nature and seriousness of the cases admitted to Newport changed between 1915 and 1917. Whereas the first trainload to arrive, in October 1915, contained only one 'stretcher case' (out of 142) and only 'a few' of those arriving in the early stages of the Battle of the Somme needed to be carried, in a hospital train arriving with 200 men in November 1916, during the later stage of the battle, 50 of the 200 men were stretcher cases. There were only five 'sitting cases' among the 117 men who arrived on 24th March 1917, the rest being 'cot cases'. Half of the 200 men detained in Newport on 15th April 1917 and all of the 138 on 19th April were on stretchers. The train bringing 205 men from the Battle of Messines Ridge in June 1917 was said to contain 'a large number' of 'serious cases necessitating amputation'.⁵²

Local newspapers from around the country sometimes reported on individual patients, giving some information about the nature of the work carried out at Newport:

CARNOUSTIE SOLDIER HAS LEFT ARM AMPUTATED. Private George Soutar, whose parents reside at the Cottage, Carnoustie House, Carnoustie was wounded in both arms on 3rd September, and now lies in hospital in Newport, Monmouthshire. His left arm has been amputated. He was previously wounded on 21st December, 1914. Private Soutar, who is 21 years of age was in training with a Territorial battalion when war broke out. He went to the front in November, 1914. Previous to the outbreak of war he was employed in Taymouth Engineering Works, Carnoustie. Two brothers are in the army and one in the navy.⁵³

IN HOSPITAL AT NEWPORT: Relatives on Tuesday visited Private Albert Porch, of the Royal Fusiliers, who is lying wounded in hospital in Newport, Mon. ... Private Porch has been twice disabled by wounds, besides being invalided from Gallipoli. He is suffering from severe wounds to the shoulder, which are very troublesome, though one in the leg is progressing. He was much distressed to hear that his younger brother, Sapper Ralph Porch, of the R.E., had died of wounds in the Balkans. Ralph played centre to his brother the wing, in the St. Stephen's Rugby team. Their father Mr. Porch, 22, Claremont Buildings, is one of the oldest employees of the Midland Railway Co. Bath.⁵⁴

One patient, who arrived in Newport amongst a trainload of British soldiers in January 1918, attracted attention by dint of the fact that he was a German prisoner-of-war.⁵⁵

Not all patients arrived in large groups in ambulance trains or direct from overseas, as can be seen from the example of Lance Corporal John Beet, of Mount Street, Abergavenny. As a reservist with the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, he had been mobilised in August 1914 and had disembarked in France on 11th February 1915. Ten days later, while in the trenches near Ypres, he was struck by a mortar shell which fractured both legs just above the ankle. The next day he was admitted to the 81st Field Ambulance Advanced Dressing Station behind the lines and then to a Casualty Clearing Station. On 23rd February he was admitted to the General Military Hospital at Boulogne, where he spent almost two weeks before being evacuated by hospital ship to the UK, embarking on 7th March and being admitted to the 2nd Eastern General Hospital, Brighton, the following day, where

⁵¹ SWWA, 1 Sep 1917, 5 Jan 1918. There was a separate unit for military tuberculosis cases at Beechwood House.

⁵² SWWA 20 Nov 1915, 15 Jul 1916, 7 Nov 1916, 31 Mar 1917, 21 Apr 1917, 17 Jun 1917.

⁵³ *Dundee Courier*, 14 Sep 1916.

⁵⁴ *Bath Chronicle*, 21 Oct 1916.

⁵⁵ WM, 22 Jul 1918.

he remained for 20 months. On 2nd November 1916 he was transferred to Newport where he spent another six weeks before being transferred to Mairdiffe Court Auxiliary Hospital, near Abergavenny, for convalescence (16th December 1916). He finally left Mairdiffe Court on 30th April 1917 and was discharged from the army as medically unfit on 11th May. The whole process had taken over two years. It indicates that while it was not normally possible to send patients direct from the theatre of war to hospitals near their homes, some attempt was made to transfer them when possible.⁵⁶

Not so fortunate was Penry Morgan, who had worked at Cwmbran colliery. He had been a reservist and had been in France since 1914, serving with the 2nd Battalion, Grenadier Guards. On 12th March 1915 he was hit by a shell during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle and evacuated to hospital in London. His wife was able to bring his daughter, who had been born after he had left for war, to visit him in London, where he 'said that he had read in the papers that a military hospital was being opened in Newport, and that soon he would get permission to be transferred there.' It was not to be; he died in hospital in London on 31st March.⁵⁷

The local press gave very little information about day to day life in the hospital wards, treatment rooms, kitchens, stores etc. In 1917, however, the hospital began to publish a magazine, *The Bulletin*, which was sold to patients, staff and members of the public. Although it dealt mainly with the Cardiff sections, much of what was written applied equally to all sections of the hospital and it does provide some details specifically about Newport. With articles and cartoons produced by patients and staff, it seems to have been fairly typical of the magazines published by most military hospitals. It has been claimed that:

Much of the content of these publications ... provides testimony of the repressive nature of the hospital regime ... conveys the soldiers' resistance to this regime and its routines ... and to their view of being a unique community of sufferers enduring harsh treatments, aggravating visitors and other daily activities.⁵⁸

Certainly *The Bulletin* draws attention, particularly through humour and self-mockery, to some of more mundane and less pleasant aspects of hospital life and gives the best, albeit somewhat questionable, glimpse 'behind closed doors' but it may be going too far to see it as representing 'resistance' to a 'repressive' regime.

There are, however, some suggestions of the authoritarian nature of the routine in an article on 'A Day in Hospital' by 'Sapper', when he complains of the 5 a.m. wake-ups, delivered in true military style, not by a 'smiling Sister' but through a knock on the door by an orderly shouting 'Come on now, wake up! Blimey! Are you going to sleep all day?', while breakfast, at 6.30, was announced 'in a voice that would turn a Drill Instructor green with envy.' Fit patients would then clean the wards before, at 10.00, there was 'bandaging and dressing of wounds' followed by a cup of tea before the medical officers' rounds at 11.00 and 'dinner' at 12.00. Time was spent on occupational therapy, including making articles which could be sold at local flag days to raise money for 'comforts', while most patients spent much free time playing draughts and cards or swapping stories of military exploits ('yarn-spinning'), usually to the sound of a gramophone. 'Supper' was at 7.30, followed by recreation and lights out. Medical treatments were known, army style, by numbers, such as the ubiquitous 'No. 9' – a laxative pill, allegedly handed out indiscriminately by

⁵⁶ www.facebook.com/KSLI.Battlefields.tours/posts/937549392924894:0, accessed 22 March 2016.

⁵⁷ *Pontypool Free Press*, 9 Apr 1915.

⁵⁸ Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 71.

medical officers. Since patients commonly played Bingo to pass the time, this gave rise to the call 'Number 9, doctor's orders':

Each member of this unit is well acquainted with the strong 'action' of the celebrated No. 9, but perhaps, after all, this is the only way the unit will get a good 'clearing out.' It was interesting to note that several members of this unit, who were not feeling well in the early morning, came from the Board Room 'A1' after being interviewed by the M.O's. No. 9 evidently has a good effect on some orders'.⁵⁹

The hospitals were under pressure to get wounded or sick men back in a fit state as soon as possible so that, where possible, they could be returned to active service. Not surprisingly, as *The Bulletin* suggests in its usual satirical house style, the men were often less than keen to go:

The honesty of our men was remarkable, you can understand that in a hurried medical examination certain defects might be overlooked by the examiner, but here comes in the honesty referred to, as our men, with every desire to lighten the work of the examining Medical Officer, themselves pointed out their defects in detail and with much vehemence.⁶⁰

Staff as well as patients used the magazine to air their grievances. The following verse, entitled 'Sister' and apparently written by an RAMC orderly, gives us some impression of what an orderly's life was like:

Orderly! Orderly! Where have you been?
I've waited five minutes or more;
No! No! That's enough! I don't want to hear,
Or you'll give me excuses galore.

Hark! Some man is calling; Go to him at once-
Come here, boy, I've not finished yet!
Wash the breakfast things up just as soon as you can,
Then there's all the clean linen to get.

The 'stores' must be brought up before ten o'clock,
There's polishing, too, to be done,
The globes must be dusted, the cutlery cleaned,
Come! It's time all these jobs were begun.

Ward Seven needs dusting, so dust it at once,
'Number Eight' is much worse in Ward Two;
Just watch him! And then there is Jones in Ward Five,
Don't leave him whatever you do.

⁵⁹ WM, 19 Aug 1918; *Bulletin* No. 2, Mar 1917, 33–34; www.wakefieldlhs.org.uk, accessed 24 April 1917.

⁶⁰ *Bulletin* No. 2, Mar 1917, 48–9 & 55.

There are three to be bathed, and five for X-ray,
 Get the 'transfers' all ready by two-
 There's the Captain come now! I will see you again,
 And tell you what else you can do.

(Lance Corporal H.M.)⁶¹

VADs felt equally under pressure with a constant round of 'feeding our hungry men or listening to the complaining ones... bed-making, temperature-taking, bandaging...'. Orderlies and VADs alike were made well aware of their lowly status, with the latter enduring a routine of 'meekly hearing a recount of our misdeeds' while the former were subject to tongue lashings from their NCOs.⁶²

Another article in *The Bulletin* also gives us an insight into relationships between male orderlies and females when General Service VADs were brought in to work in the hospital stores and offices. Again, using a 'tongue in cheek' tone and reflecting male attitudes of the day, it talks of the ... consternation amongst the khaki section when the rumour first started of women 'helpers' in the various stores and offices of the hospital, and alarming were the prophesies made of what would be the result ... but also of the 'excitement', with one NCO declaring that ' "he did not care a hang" how the VAD worked as long as she was worth looking at'. Nevertheless, the arrival of the "'wanted to do their bit"' contingent of the weaker sex' led to changes in behaviour:

The first few days were passed in almost complete silence with a noted absence of the normal 'Army' language, and, in place of this, very studied politeness. That feeling has, to a certain extent, now disappeared and has been replaced by a spirit of 'comradeship'.

The girls are certainly good sports. Several of the NCOs ... have now taken the plunge and have become engaged It is no uncommon thing now to see a furniture catalogue on full display, and discussions take place on 'how much it costs to furnish a home', in which the superior knowledge of the VADs is much appreciated...⁶³

The workhouse had its own chapel, which was utilised for Sunday services for men fit enough to leave the wards, with Anglicans worshipping from 9.30–10.30 a.m. and Non-Conformists from 4.45–5.45 p.m.⁶⁴

Patients were allowed visitors, with ordinary visiting times being from two until four on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. The local 'Comforts Committee' provided financial assistance to relatives who could not afford the rail fares. Comments from soldiers in a number of different hospitals indicate that visitors were not always entirely welcome and Newport seems to have been no exception. A 'review' written and presented by RAMC staff at the hospital in March 1917 included a section commending 'the imperturbable and stoical philosophy of our wounded heroes when subject to remorseless bombardment of queries from a curious but well-meaning public'. Three types of visitor were identified: 'the "good" old man with the tract, the amorous "flapper", and the obtuse relative'. Some visitors were, however, very welcome. In 1917 the *Daily Mirror* carried a photograph of Miss Marjorie Wagstaff who came in every Thursday and Saturday to shave patients.

⁶¹ *Bulletin* No.1, Feb 1917, 16.

⁶² *Bulletin* No.1, Feb 1917, 12 & 17.

⁶³ Corporal P E B W, *Bulletin* No 1, Feb 1917 19–20.

⁶⁴ SWWA, 23 Oct 1915.

No doubt the presence of this 'fair barber' (presumably a reference to her appearance rather than her abilities) did much to help raise morale.⁶⁵

Like all such hospitals, Woolston House depended heavily on support from local members of the public. This was not only a means by which the lives of the patients could be made more comfortable and interesting, but it also played a role in allowing many civilians to feel that they were contributing to the war effort:

The culture of caregiving became the focus of intense public pride, a means by which those who remained at home to experience the war in their own way could articulate support of the conflict and its heroes.⁶⁶

Foremost amongst those meeting and greeting troops from the ambulance trains were Mrs Nina Railton of Goldtops and Mrs Rose Cullimore of Fields Park, unpaid volunteers who turned out, often at very short notice and at any hour of the day or night, to serve refreshments, including cigarettes, coffee, lemonade and grapes at Newport Station and, if required, helping the men off the trains. By the end of the war they had helped to greet 20,000 men.⁶⁷

Even before the hospital opened, £580 had been raised from public subscriptions to buy a motor ambulance, which members of the public were invited to inspect at the hospital, while the Great Western Railway Company adapted some of its vehicles for use as ambulances. Further ambulances were donated as the war went on, including two from the combined efforts of the Boy Scouts, Church Lads Brigade and Boys Brigade, who raised much of the money by collecting waste paper, and one each from Newport Master Butchers' Association and Newport Chamber of Trade, plus two from Major John Beynon of the Coldra. By the end of the war 12 motor ambulances had been donated for use in Newport. Those kept at the hospital were maintained by an NCO and drivers from the Army Service Corps. Motor cars were also loaned for carrying 'sitting cases', although this became more difficult as restrictions on the use of petrol were introduced, and less necessary as the system became more organised, so that by 1917 specially adapted trams were being used. It is claimed that by the summer of 1916, the operation had become so efficient that they were able to transport a group in a record time of fifteen minutes.⁶⁸

Gifts donated to patients were co-ordinated through the Red Cross, which had premises in Commercial Street. This helped to ensure fair distribution to the different units and to check that gifts were appropriate. Colonel Hepburn had previously complained in relation to the early days of the Cardiff sections that this had not always been the case:

As regards books and magazines, I would respectfully point out that such gifts should be clean and not hopelessly out of date. A great deal of literature has already been sent to the hospital in a condition which makes it impossible to place it in the wards, and of a kind that makes it more suitable for the nursery than for grown-up readers.⁶⁹

Collections in cash and kind were organised through flag days, amongst neighbours, in factories, schools and even aboard ships in Newport docks. The ladies of Woodville Road were particularly

⁶⁵ SWWA, 17 Mar 1917, *Daily Mirror*, 9 Jan 1917.

⁶⁶ Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 5.

⁶⁷ SWWA, 21 Apr 1917; www.redcross.org.uk; *Newport Year Book 1919*, 217.

⁶⁸ WM 13 Sep 1915, 17 Jul 1916; SWWA 17 Jun 1917, 28 Apr 1917, Clissett, *War Organisation in Monmouthshire*, 32 & 35–36.

⁶⁹ WM, 8 Sept 1914.

active; during 1916 they were making weekly donations of cakes and fruit while similar gifts came from 'the Jewish ladies of Newport'. A gift of a hundred baskets of strawberries from Newport fruit dealers, supplemented by an anonymous donation of six dozen pots of cream must have been particularly welcome. For a 'Welsh night' held to celebrate St David's Day in 1917:

The Welsh ladies of the town baked 7,000 Welsh cakes, and also provided 2,000 'Dewi Saint' cigarettes, 2,000 apples, 2,000 oranges, and a number of hampers of grapes. These 'goodies' were made up in bags, one being placed in (*sic*) each man's bed.

Other donations included writing pads, postcards, envelopes and playing cards.⁷⁰

Aware that 'it is very rare indeed to find a soldier who does not enjoy a smoke', the *South Wales Argus* set up a fund to buy cigarettes for troops, including those at Woolston House. 50,000 cigarettes and 50 pounds of tobacco were distributed every month. Sir William James Thomas, a director of the Great Western Railway and well known as a supporter of local hospitals, personally gave 10,000 in a single donation.⁷¹ These gifts proved very popular, as the *Argus* reported:

That the men appreciated these attentions was manifest. 'Thank God for a Woodbine', was the heartfelt expression of one of the Tommies, and there is no question that he voiced the opinion of all his comrades.⁷²

Even at this stage, some of the harmful effects of tobacco were known, but, as Major Maclean told a conference in December 1915, medical officers at 3rd Western General did not feel it advisable to ban smoking:

There was no doubt that excessive cigarette smoking was a great temptation to the men in the hospitals and outside. It was the considered opinion of expert physicians that excessive smoking was one of the effects that delayed the return of large numbers of men to the fighting line. Having said that, he appealed to his hearers not to let them run short of cigarettes at the 3rd Western General Hospital. We, said the speaker, will teach them to smoke in moderation. Disorderly action of the heart from which many men from the front suffered, was in many cases due to excessive smoking.⁷³

Schools contributed in a number of different ways. Durham Road School sent 'scores' of magazines. To celebrate Empire Day 1916, children from Newport's Central Council School sent 4½ dozen eggs, 150 cigarettes and a hamper of fruit. Elementary school boys taking lessons at the Panteg-Pontymoile Handicraft Centre devoted their time to making crutches and splints for the hospital, delivering 120 and 194 respectively during the 1916/17 school year. Pupils at Maindee Cookery School occasionally made scones which they took to the hospital, until shortage of margarine forced them to stop, while girls at Spring Gardens School were kept busy darning socks for the patients. Just before Christmas 1918 girls from St Woolos School:

⁷⁰ SWWA, 22 Jan 1916, 9 Sep 1916, 3 Mar 1917, 10 Mar 1917; WM, 8 Jun 1916, 2 Apr 1917, 19 Aug 1918.

⁷¹ SWWA, 17 Apr 1916, 15 Jul 1916, 28 Apr 1917; Clissett, *War Organisation in Monmouthshire*, 26.

⁷² SWWA, 28 Apr 1917.

⁷³ WM, 8 Dec 1915.

...were taken up to Woolston Hospital this afternoon and about 30 shillings worth of cigarettes were distributed amongst the wounded. Both the men and the children seemed to enjoy their little talks and we left them hoping this would be the last Christmas we would find them in hospital.⁷⁴

To help relieve the boredom of hospital life, frequent trips were arranged. In December 1915 Mr W J Orders JP announced a scheme by which cars and charabancs would be made available on a daily basis or as required for 'recuperation drives'. The patients would be accompanied by an orderly who was meant to ensure that they did not consume alcohol or unsuitable food. Before restrictions on supplies of petrol severely limited such trips in 1917, about 500 men had been taken on such drives, with the Wye Valley being the most common venue⁷⁵

In February 1916, the Cardiff Empire treated 2,500 soldiers from the various sections of the 3rd Western General (including 250 from Newport section) to a special show. On Easter Monday 1917, patients from Woolston House were among 350 soldiers from local hospitals, including the Royal Gwent Hospital, The Friars, Llanwern House and Portskewett Red Cross Hospitals, who were transported by St John Ambulance Brigade to Rodney Parade for a rugby match between Monmouthshire and a Welsh Military XV from Kimmel Park, followed by 'a fine tea' and a concert. In April 1917, as a result of local donations, a cinematograph machine was installed, with weekly showings.⁷⁶

Prominent amongst those who organised activities for the Newport patients was Mr. J. W. Hunt of the well-known firm of Newport auctioneers, Newland, Hunt, and Williams. In October 1916, for example, he persuaded Raglan Farmers' Association to raise money to take 250 'heroes of the Somme' by special train and charabanc to Raglan castle, where they were entertained by the Monmouthshire Reformatory brass band, given cigarettes, fruit and other gifts. He also gained permission from the Board of Guardians to construct a skittle alley in the hospital.

The fund raising continued even after the armistice with, for example, Pill Harriers, who had raised thousands of pounds for local charities during the war, donating a further £400 to the Woolston House Comforts Fund as a result of a series of rugby matches held over the 1918 Christmas period.⁷⁷

Concerts for men fit enough to attend were a regular feature of hospital life, with up to 200 a year being held. They were clearly very popular, with up to 500 men reportedly packing a hall with a capacity of 200. Many of the concerts were organised by Mr George Boots, a local marine-store dealer and veteran rugby forward, who led the local Wounded Soldiers and Comforts Fund Committee. Having made over 350 appearances for Newport RFC, captaining the team in 1903/4 and gaining 16 caps for Wales between 1898 and 1904, he was a well-known and popular figure in and around Newport and was no doubt able to use his position to the advantage of the fund.⁷⁸

The concerts reflected the fact that patients came from different parts of Britain. In 1917, for example special events were held on Burns Night, St David's Day, St Patrick's Day and St George's Day. Along with recitations such as 'The Night Before Agincourt' scene from Shakespeare's Henry V and Kipling's 'Gunga Din', songs and tunes included wartime classics such as 'The Long, Long Trail', Welsh songs such as 'Men of Harlech' and national anthems of allied countries. A notable

⁷⁴ Gwent Archives A110/C/3169 *Newport Borough Council War and Military File for Schools 1914–22*; WM, 29 Jul 1917; Gwent Archives GEA 280/06 – St Woolos Girls School Log Book, 19 Dec 1918.

⁷⁵ WM, 24 Dec 1915; Jones, Red Cross, 41; Clissett, *War Organisation in Monmouthshire*, 23.

⁷⁶ WM, 9 Feb 1916, SWWA, 14 Apr 1917. Monmouthshire won the game, scoring six tries without reply.

⁷⁷ WM, 6 Oct 1916; GA CSW/BGN/M2/1 *Newport Board of Guardians Special and Emergency Committee Minute Book 1915–1920*, 30 Sept 1916; SWWA, 11 Jan 1919.

⁷⁸ www.blackandambers.co.uk; WM, 30 Nov 1915, 3 Nov 1917.

'turn' at the St Patrick's Day concert in 1917 involved Father Hickey, 'that clerical humourist' of St Mary's Roman Catholic church, Newport, who 'told yarns, sang comic songs (and) engaged in battles of wit with that humorous and sympathetic Scot, Colonel Hepburn'. Some concerts included 'turns' by professional performers who had been appearing at Newport's Empire and Lyceum theatres, including on one occasion Marie Lloyd. On occasions, concerts were used as an opportunity to present medals which had been awarded to patients.⁷⁹

'Turns' reflecting life in hospital were particularly well received, especially when they employed the 'grim humour' that helped patients and staff alike to come to terms with the situations they faced. One 'review' written and performed by RAMC men in March 1917 featured a sketch in which:

...the ward surgeon had been prevailed upon to perform an actual amputation in full view of the audience... The operating surgeon with a butcher's knife and steel slung at the belt, a carpenter's saw and a mallet as the delicate instruments employed.⁸⁰

As in all hospitals, efforts were made to make Christmas a special time. On Christmas Eve 1917, patients decorated the wards and Captain Hunt, one of the medical officers, dressed as Father Christmas, distributing presents. On Christmas Day, the mayor visited several wards and the men were given a 'hearty dinner of turkey, plum pudding, mince pies and fruit', provided for them by Newport Red Cross. In the evening the staff gave a concert in which the star turn, no doubt much appreciated by the men, was 'a troop of sisters, staff nurses and VAD nurses, dressed as pierrots and pierrettes'. A further concert was held on Boxing Day, a whist drive on the 27th, a cinema show on the 28th and yet more concerts on the 29th and New Year's Eve. The normal work of the hospital continued, however, and even on Christmas Day a convoy of 136 men – mainly sick rather than wounded – was received.⁸¹

Patients who were well enough were allowed out of the hospital and were very visible around town. Being easily identified in their 'hospital blue' uniforms, they received much attention. Although there were initially fears that this would lead to negative comments from members of the public, the reverse was generally the case, with the men treated as heroes and enjoying privileges such as being allowed into 'places of amusement' at half price. The following anecdote from Newport, which may or may not be true, suggests that the attention wasn't always welcome:

Scene: Commercial Street

(A wounded soldier, and a woman accosts him, as follows):-

Woman: are you from Woolston house?

Soldier: Yes.

Woman: Are you wounded?

Soldier: No.

Woman: What are you there for then?

Soldier: Sick.

Woman: Oh, you was wounded then.

Soldier: No I wasn't; I was sick.

Woman: That's funny – you wasn't wounded and you are sick. Well, what made you sick?

⁷⁹ SWWA, 22 Jan 1916, 17 Mar 1917, 24 Mar 1917, 7 Apr 1917, 28 Apr 1917, 19 May 1917; Clissett, *War Organisation in Monmouthshire*, 32.

⁸⁰ SWWA, 17 Mar 1917.

⁸¹ SWWA, 29 Dec 1917.

Soldier: Oh, a bomb dropped out of a Zeppelin and gave me 'Bomb Dysentery'.

Woman: Goodness – that must be a new sickness – I never heard of 'Bomb Dysentery' before.⁸²

One problem faced by the authorities was the tendency of members of the public to buy drink for wounded soldiers. In August 1915, Sir Henry McKinnon, commander of the Western Division, which included South Wales, had banned the sale to, and consumption of, alcohol by any wounded soldier who was a patient in any military hospital within his division (although the ban did not apply to officers). Under the Defence of the Realm Act it was also illegal for other people to buy drinks for wounded soldiers.⁸³

Major Maclean told a Temperance conference in Cardiff that he was convinced that alcohol was a real problem for his patients, particularly when they were discharged from the military hospital, with its strict discipline, to the more relaxed regimes of the auxiliary hospitals:

...people should know that for these men, after their strenuous existence and hospital treatment, to be subjected to the influence of alcohol could be nothing other than detrimental to their physical condition; yet good ladies and gentlemen in charge of the auxiliary hospitals had the greatest difficulty in keeping men from the utterly unfair temptations thrown at them. He wished to ask people to refrain from this example of false patriotism and give these men to whom he referred a chance.⁸⁴

It is clear from the extent of social and recreational activity at the hospital that while many of the minor cases were moved on to auxiliary hospitals within two or three days others faced long stays at Woolston House. The great majority of patients made a recovery – many sufficiently to be returned to their units, others only partially, leading them to be allocated duties within the UK or to be discharged from the forces as medically unfit.

The hospital took pride in its low death rate, which, according to Colonel Hepburn, was only 0.4% for the Cardiff, Newport and Neath sections combined.⁸⁵ The bodies of most of those who died in the hospital were taken to their home communities for burial. No official list has been discovered of those who died as patients of the hospital. Occasionally, however, death notices, funeral reports, or 'In Memorium' advertisements in newspapers from their own localities identify soldiers who died at Woolston House. The following appeared in the *Fife Free Press* on 12th August 1919:

In loving memory of my dear husband, George Williamson, 121327 Royal Engineers, who was wounded 6th July, died 10th August 1916, at 3rd Western General Hospital, Newport, Mon.

Sapper George Williamson, a 36 year-old former stonemason, had been severely wounded during the battle of the Somme when a shell shattered his leg, and he received gunshot wounds in the face and neck. When it became clear that he was unlikely to survive, his wife was summoned to Newport to be with him. Sapper Williamson's body was duly taken to his home area and he was buried with full military honours at Bennochly Cemetery, Kirkcaldy.⁸⁶

On 30th July 1916, Alexander Scott of the Black Watch, aged 20, who had been severely wounded by shrapnel, died of gas gangrene. He was buried in his home town of Lochgelly, Fife.

⁸² Clissett, *War Organisation in Monmouthshire*, 28; *Bulletin*, Mar 1917, 47.

⁸³ WM, 28 Aug 1915.

⁸⁴ WM, 8 Dec 1915.

⁸⁵ WM, 13 Aug 1917.

⁸⁶ *Fife Free Press and Kirkcaldy Guardian*, 12 Aug 1916.

Similarly, in May 1917, the *Aberdeen Evening Express* reported the death in Wooloston House of 20 year-old Private Alexander Brechin, 1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders. He was buried at Allenvale Cemetery, Aberdeen. Later in the year, a fourth Scottish soldier died at Wooloston House. Private John Leckie, aged 21, of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, ‘a goodly youth of uncomplaining spirit’, died following an operation. He was buried in his own village of Kippen, near Stirling. Although he was the 28th man from the village to die in the war, he was the first to be buried locally and his funeral was a huge public occasion with even the local schoolchildren lining the route.⁸⁷

Able Seaman Walter Ward, aged 36 of the Royal Naval Reserve, died in the hospital on 17th November 1917. He was buried in Sudbury, Suffolk. On 28th December 1918, over a month after the war had ended, Lance Corporal James Blackbourne, of the 10th Battalion, Essex Regiment, died as a result of the gunshot wounds he had received at Bullecourt Wood near Arras in September. He had previously been awarded the Military Medal ‘for great gallantry while working a Lewis gun’. He was buried in the churchyard in the village of Barkstone, Lincolnshire, where his parents ran ‘The Stag’ public house. The last person to die in the hospital was yet another Scot, Private W Cobban aged 25, of the 9th Royal Scots, who died on 10th March 1919 of pneumonia following influenza. He was buried at Rosebank Cemetery, Edinburgh.⁸⁸

Some, however, were buried locally. In December 1915, Newport Council’s cemetery committee set aside plots of ground at St Woolos and Christchurch cemeteries for men dying in local military hospitals where relatives had not made any arrangements. One of those buried in St Woolos was Corporal William H Groom. At the age of 51, he was too old to serve overseas and so became a member of the Royal Defence Corps, which was responsible for duties within Britain such as guarding prisoner-of-war camps and places of importance such as ports and railway junctions. He died at Wooloston House on 16th June 1917. Also amongst the patients buried in St Woolos were Private A D Clargo of the South Wales Borderers (died 27th October 1917) and 43 year old Lance-Sergeant Edward Saunders of the Rifle Brigade (died 27th September 1918). Funeral services were normally carried out by Rev D H Griffiths, Vicar of St Woolos, or Major Rev R F Williams, chaplains to the hospital. In 1917, children from St Woolos and Clytha schools began to put flowers on the graves of those men who had no relatives in the area.⁸⁹

In the closing months of the war, with the fighting proceeding at continued intensity and no clear end in sight, Wooloston House was turned into a specialist surgical hospital dealing with military orthopaedic cases. In addition, Springfield House in the grounds of the hospital, which was being used as a sanatorium for civilian tuberculosis cases, would be given over to disabled soldiers. Plans were drawn up and tenders sought for a range of structural alterations, including the building of a gymnasium for use in physiotherapy. With the war coming to an end, however, these plans were shelved and the hospital began to wind down.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ *Hamilton Advertiser*, 6 Aug 1916; *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 28 May 1917; *Stirling Observer*, 1 Dec 1917.

⁸⁸ *Suffolk and Essex Free Press*, 5 Dec 1917; *Grantham Journal*, 18 Jan 1919; *Dundee People’s Journal*, 15 Mar 1919.

⁸⁹ SWWA, 10 Mar 1917, 7 Apr 1917, 23 Jun 1917; Gwent Archives A110/M/18.1, Newport CBC *Parks and Cemeteries Committee Minute Book* 17 Dec 1915; www.cwgc.org, accessed 21 Aug 2017. I am grateful to Richard Frame for pointing out these names. The deaths referred to in this article represent only a sample.

⁹⁰ Gwent Archives, CSW/BGN/M2/1 *Newport Board of Guardians Special and Emergency Committee Minute Book 1915–1920*, 1918 *passim*. Plans to establish an American naval hospital at the Coldra were also abandoned.

Between August 1914 and August 1920, 2.7 million sick and wounded troops had been evacuated from overseas to Britain for hospital treatment. By September 1918, 86 ambulance trains had been received at Newport (compared to 326 at Cardiff and 42 at Neath). The 3rd Western General (combined sections) had become the third biggest general military hospital in Britain, having 7,000 beds at its disposal (including auxiliary hospitals) and receiving 60,000 patients. Around 20,000 of these had been patients at Woolston House.⁹¹

Woolston House War Hospital was formally demobilised on 1st September 1919 and vacated on 26th January 1920. With the departure of the nursing staff, the children of St Woolos Schools returned to their old premises on 2nd February 1920, with the older pupils sharing a floor and continuing the half time system for another three months until sufficient furniture had been delivered. The headmaster of the Boys School reported that ‘the children were greatly delighted in returning to their old premises’ even though ‘the majority have left in the interim period ...’.⁹²

With Newport facing an acute housing crisis, the hospital buildings were temporarily converted into flats before becoming a workhouse and civilian hospital once more. During World War Two it served as a reception hospital for wounded service personnel while continuing as a community hospital. It became part of the NHS in 1948, was renamed St Woolos Hospital in 1949, and was fully incorporated into the Royal Gwent Hospital in 1997.⁹³

Colonel Hepburn had been awarded the Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) in 1917 and went on to become the first Dean of the Welsh School of Medicine. He died in 1931. Major Maclean became its first professor of obstetrics and gynaecology and gained distinction as a pioneer in improving the training of midwives. He was knighted in 1923 and died in 1953. Elizabeth Montgomery Wilson, principal matron, continued as matron at Edward VII hospital before retiring in 1923. She died in 1939⁹⁴

There is much about Woolston House War Hospital that remains unknown and reliance on sources that tend to put a positive spin on its work means that some of the darker aspects of hospital life may have not received as full a coverage in this account as they deserve. Recent historians portray military hospitals as not merely places of healing and recovery but also of brutality and coercion, where patients were subjected to painful and sometimes unnecessary procedures carried out by doctors who didn’t always have sufficient training or experience and aimed solely at returning men to the front as soon as possible. Patients were not only expected to bear their pain stoically, and without complaint, but to remain resolutely ‘cheerful’.⁹⁵

In the absence of memoirs or other uncensored testimony from patients at the hospital, it is difficult to judge how far such a portrayal is true of Woolston House. The Commanding Officer of the 3rd London General Hospital in Wandsworth, for example, was determined to run an institution that ‘should not resemble a military establishment but rather a “harbour of refuge”’.⁹⁶ As far as can be determined, it seems that Colonel Hepburn and Major Wilson ran the 3rd Western General

⁹¹ MacPherson, *History of the Great War*, xiii; WM, 6 Sep 1918; Clissett, *War Organisation in Monmouthshire*, 32.

⁹² Clissett, *War Organisation in Monmouthshire*, 32; Gwent Archives GEA 280/02 – St Woolos Boys School Log Book, 2 Feb 1920.

⁹³ *BMA Journal*, 31 Oct 1987, 1149; Peeling, *Royal Gwent Hospital*, 44.

⁹⁴ *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 10 Mar 1931; *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, <http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s8-MACL-JOH-1865.html>, accessed 5 Aug 2017; WM, 2 Oct 1939.

⁹⁵ Carden-Coyne, A., *Politics of Wounds: Military Patients and Medical Power in the First World War* (Oxford, 2014).

⁹⁶ Carden-Coyne, *ibid.*, 23.

along similar lines and that whatever grim realities remained hidden behind its walls, the Newport section ran successfully, achieved a great deal and was dear to the hearts of the local community. It represented a major part in Newport's involvement in the Great War and, as such, deserves to be widely recognised.

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- Gwent Archives (GA) CSW/BGN/M2/1 Newport Board of Guardians Special and Emergency Committee Minute Book 1915–1920.
- Gwent Archives A100M 17.2 Minutes of Newport CBC Education Committee .
- Gwent Archives GEA 280/02 St Woolos Boys School Log Book.
- Gwent Archives GEA 280/06 St Woolos Girls School Log Book.
- Gwent Archives A110/M/18.1 Newport CBC Parks and Cemeteries Committee Minute Book
- C. T. Clissett (Ed.) *War Organisation in Monmouthshire*, (Ministry of Information, 1919. Newport Reference Library).

NOTES FROM THE ARCHIVES: THE ORIGIN OF THE MAA BADGE.

By Christabel Hutchings

Many of you may be in possession of an MAA Badge. The association still has a few badges left but members rarely purchase one and even more rarely wear one at association meetings. Recently, documents were rediscovered which relate to the original badge, created in 1935 when our association was called the Monmouthshire and Caerleon Antiquarian Association (M&CAA).

Past minute books reveal that Major FitzRoy Richard Somerset, 4th Baron Raglan (1885–1964), was the instigator of the original badge. Following the death of his father in 1921, he retired from the army and returned to his ancestral home at Cefntilla Court near Usk. He became an important figure in the county and was notably Lord Lieutenant of Monmouthshire.¹ He was interested in subjects varying from folklore to science and architecture and co-authored the important volumes, *Monmouthshire Houses*, in conjunction with Cyril Fox, who became the Director of National Museum Wales in 1926.² Lord Raglan was also an important member of the M&CAA and had been involved in the handover of Caerleon Museum from the Association to the National Museum on 14th July 1930. His name is on the deed of transfer. His relationship with the National Museum increased after 1947 and he finally became president from 1957–62.³

On 6th June 1935 Lord Raglan moved that,

A badge shall be issued to every member of the Association & these badges should be worn at all Field Meetings, a limited number of which will be reserved for visitors introduced by members & application should be made to the Secretary with a fee of 2s 6d.

On 8th August 1935 a minute added,

Consideration was then given to the design of the proposed badge & it was resolved that Lord Raglan, Mr W.A. Gunn & the Hon. Secretary should bring forward some concrete scheme in time for the second Field meeting.⁴

The Hon. Secretary at the time was J.R. Gabriel who lectured in history at Caerleon Teacher Training college in Monmouthshire, but the minutes and documents do not suggest he was directly involved. The main organisers were Lord Raglan and William Alexander Gunn who was Curator of Newport Museum and Art Gallery from 1913. However, W.A. Gunn does not appear to have been on the M&CAA committee before 1934, but he had been a member of the Association since 1920. He is listed as a member of the Caerleon Excavation Committee which was involved in the excavation of the amphitheatre under the direction of archaeologist Tessa Verney Wheeler whose husband, Dr. R.E. Mortimer Wheeler, co-authored its publication despite having abandoned the daily supervision

¹ *South Wales Argus*, 14 September 1964.

² Fox and Raglan, *Monmouthshire Houses* (three volumes). First published by the National Museum of Wales – Welsh Folk Museum, 1951–54. 2nd Edition Reprint, Merton Priory Press Ltd., (1994). These important volumes can be accessed in the MAA Library.

³ National Library Wales, Welsh Dictionary of National Biography, for Cyril Fox and Lord Raglan <http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s2-SOME-RIC-1885.html> and <http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s2-FOX0-FRE-1882.html> (accessed 1st Dec. 1917). See also M&CAA minutes, 1929–42.

⁴ *Ibid.*

of the excavations in order to take up his new post in London.⁵ W.A. Gunn held a position of importance in the county as Newport Museum had received the Tredegar Collection of artefacts from Caerwent in 1916.⁶ This collection had been excavated by the Caerwent Excavation Committee and the fact that Gunn was Newport Museum's first professional Curator must have been a factor in the donation. He had previously worked at Liverpool Museum and was responsible for building and developing the Newport collections, improving the Museum's record keeping and securing the support of many local benefactors. Towards the end of his career, Gunn became Director of the Museum and Art Gallery and retired in 1946, after 33 years of service.⁷

The Association's archives reveal that correspondence took place between Lord Raglan and William Gunn concerning the design of the new badge. Lord Raglan suggested that the coat of Arms of Howel ap Iorwerth, known as Sir Howell of Caerleon, would be suitable and had given a reference for the arms in Bradney's *A History of Monmouthshire*.⁸ Armed with this reference William Gunn produced a design and sent copies to Lord Raglan for his approval. The Arms of Howel ap Iorwerth were an apt choice. In 1158 Howel inherited Caerleon Castle from his father Iorwerth ap Owen. In 1171, he was dispossessed by Henry II, but accepted a knighthood from him in 1172 and regained the Castle. In 1175 he founded Llantarnam Abbey.

The final minute concerning the badge was dated 14th May 1936 and stated, that the new badge rule had been read and considered and it was unanimously decided to adopt it and include it with Rule VII. Thus members attending the annual field meetings were obliged to wear a badge. The badge was to be brooch-size and Lord Raglan wanted 300 manufactured. Also it was decided to purchase the die so they could produce more if required. William Gunn obtained two estimates, one was from a London firm, The Metal Gravure Co Ltd, and the other from Messrs Johns. Only the estimate from the London firm has survived. They could provide 300 badges at a cost of 1s 8d each and the die was an extra 55s.⁹ It would be wonderful if one of our members had a copy of this original badge in their possession, but at least we have documents which provide information about the origin of the MAA badge and the role of Lord Raglan and W.A Gunn in bringing it to fruition.

⁵ In 1922, when R.E. Mortimer Wheeler, who had been Keeper of the Department of Archaeology at the National Museum of Wales, was made Director of the museum. Wheeler left in 1926 to take up a post at the London Museum. See Hawkes, J. *Mortimer Wheeler, Adventurer in Archaeology* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson), 1982, 99.

⁶ Boon, G., 'Archaeology through the Severn Tunnel: the Caerwent Exploration fund, 1899–1917' in *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, Volume 107, 1989, 5–26.

⁷ Newport Museum and Art Gallery, 'A Professional Museum (panel 4)', Notes from 'The 125th Anniversary Exhibition, 2013', with grateful thanks to Oliver Blackmore, Collections and Engagement Officer.

⁸ Letter from Gunn to Lord Raglan 19th August, 1915. See also Joseph Bradney, *A history of Monmouthshire from the coming of the Normans into Wales down to the present time.*, Vol. 3 pt.2, 190.

⁹ Letter from to W.A Gunn from The Metal Gravure Co Ltd, 30th August 1935.



MONMOUTHSHIRE & CAERLEON ANTIQUARIAN ASSOCIATION

Proposed Badge (actual size).
Gules, three towers triple-towered argent.

Design based on the arms of Howel ap Iorwerth,
called Sir Howel of Caerlleon.

1" x 3"



Saturday a little heavier
308 Lord Raglan
Keep die if possible or then may be required.

MONMOUTHSHIRE & CAERLEON ANTIQUARIAN ASSOCIATION

Proposed Badge, - Scale, actual size
Brooch form.

Design, - gules, three towers, triple-
towered argent.

(Gules - scarlet vermilion as sketch.)
(Argent - white.)

The design is based on the Arms of :-
Howel ap Iorwerth called Sir Howel
of Caerlleon.

No. 1.

REVIEWS

Rhianydd Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales c.1200–1547*. Boydell Studies in Medieval Art and Architecture. Boydell and Brewer, Suffolk, 2017. Hardback, ISBN: 978-1-783272-64-8, 226 pages; 4 colour, 48 black and white, 9 line illustrations, £60. An e-book version of this title is available (ISBN 9781787441637).

The church monuments of Wales have received far less study and celebration than their English counterparts, which is an odd situation given that many of the families they commemorate were part of the same interconnected society as their cousins in the English counties of Severnside. This elegant and well researched book goes a long way to rectify this situation. Biebrach, after a short contextualizing introduction and overview of the current state of research, examines her subject through four chapters looking at the patrons and their social status; the material of which the memorials were made and the craftsmen who fashioned them; the motivation and spiritual quest of those who commissioned them; and then the secular aspirations which also motivated them. Fascinating to me is the final chapter that describes how the stones and effigies have fared and suffered (and, frankly, some still do) since the Reformation.

This is a historical academic study that analyses the monuments and what they tell us about their contemporary society, rather than one that describes the monuments in detail themselves. It is, thus, a very different animal from Gresham's book on the slabs and effigies of north Wales of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Biebrach continues her analysis from Norman to Reformation, thereby facing the difficulty of explaining the near collapse of the industry in south Wales after the mid fourteenth century. England, too, suffered from the aftermath of the plague that had so devastating an impact on the wealth of the upper echelons of society and thus their capacity to commission monuments, but the added upheaval of the Glyndwr years and perhaps the fickle nature of fashion seems to have affected Wales more profoundly.

It is not an easy subject to tackle. The destruction of monuments, theft of the more valuable brasses, early iconoclasm and later neglect both of the monuments themselves and the churches within which they stood, the movement of monuments from their original positions, desecration of inscriptions and specific features, especially those connected with appeal for prayers for the dead, have all doubtless skewed the results of any study of extant monuments and made interpretation difficult; this has resulted in a lot of 'uncertain' categories on all Biebrach's analytical graphs. Surprising is the fact that some monuments have disappeared in relatively recent times since the mid-19th century. Biebrach, as Gresham did before her, suffers from the lack of petrographic analysis of many of the stones. But, while acknowledging these difficulties, she certainly makes the best of it; we leave the book impressed by the quality, variety and artistic achievement manifested by the south Wales monuments, and better informed about how these monuments can help us understand the medieval mind as it developed through three and a half centuries.

The specialist will be grateful for this analysis, as, indeed, will the general reader. It would have helped the latter category, and the archaeologist, had there been a gazetteer itemizing the 370 monuments that apparently were the basis of the study, thereby assisting those inveterate visitors of sites who find studying these monuments in the stone, so to speak, irresistible, or excavators who would like to find parallels for their own discoveries. The discursive nature of this book makes it difficult to know the source and whereabouts of many of the extant monuments more generally referred to. The churches that house the named monument are familiar. Larger collections at Abergavenny (recently magnificently conserved and studied as part of the repair programme at

the priory church), Ewenny, Brecon, St David's and Trellech, all important places in the medieval period, are predictable enough, but we are drawn to the smaller, less well-known examples housed in remoter Llangwm, Llansannor and Stackpole for example, probably connected to a single aristocratic family. There are doubtless more to be discovered, especially from the ruinous monasteries recently excavated, such as Haverfordwest, or still awaiting excavation.

The book is attractively produced with, mostly, black and white photographs well chosen to illustrate points made in the text, and adequate in quality. Errors are very few and minor in importance – though the hapless Sycill, after all her hard work on the magnificent Butler tomb in St Bride's Major, might have relished her name being spelled consistently throughout. But this is a learned, thoughtful and comprehensive analysis of an understudied subject and we are grateful to Biebrach for bringing the subject so alive that our visits to our churches, cathedrals and monasteries in Monmouthshire and further afield will be hugely enhanced.

Siân Rees

Mary Hopson, *The Roman Catholic Burial Ground and Former Church at Coed Anghred, Skenfrith, Monmouthshire*, (Custom Books, 5 Cheselden Road, Guildford, GU1 3SB, 2007; £12 plus postage). Pbk., typescript, 192 + 41 pp., illus.

Despite the ten years which have elapsed since its publication, this meticulously researched work is very worthy of review. Recusancy had always been strong in the country parts of Monmouthshire, and by the mid-nineteenth century a need was felt for a permanent church for use by the remnants of three isolated Catholic congregations. The land, remotely located in the parish of Skenfrith, was given by Lord Southwell (1777-1860), and a prominent backer was William Constable Middleton of Middleton Lodge, Ilkley (1761-1847). Within his extended family was the antiquarian, Thomas Wakeman of the Graig (1791-1868), who provided a silver chalice and paten and other objects for the new church, which had, as *The Monmouthshire Beacon* reported, a 'castellated tower', with house and school-room attached. The church was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, with due solemnity, on 22 September 1846, and was registered for the solemnisation of marriages the following year. The author gives the fullest description of all this with verbatim accounts from the *Beacon* and elsewhere.

In this fine work, she is able to draw upon the extant register of births, confirmations, marriages and burials, performed at the church, and to give full details of many of the interments in the adjoining churchyard. These included the grave of the Revd. W. Ll. Woolett, of Monmouth connections, and one of the first Catholic chaplains to the Royal Navy which he served from 1856 to 1873. The author draws attention to much else, such as the Apostolic School briefly established at Coedanghred in 1880, a kind of pre-seminary for those destined for the missions abroad. We find reviewed also the former local Catholic churches of The Immaculate Conception, Dan-y-Graig (1869-1917) with its nearby cemetery, and of the short-lived St Joseph's Church, Grosmont (1906-1918).

Coedanghred church had itself closed, sadly, at latest by 1910. In deciding in 1907 upon its closure, the author is able to report the reasons adduced by Bishop Hedley of Newport and Menevia (from 1881 to 1915): the Catholic farmers had largely disappeared; the average Sunday attendance was but seven persons; the financial difficulty of maintaining a priest, and of preserving the fabric; the loneliness for a housekeeper, and the absence of a railway station nearer than Monmouth.

Mary Hopson's work, with its wealth of background information, is a very important addition to the ecclesiastical history of our county, and she is much to be commended for bringing back to life a forgotten part of our heritage, for little, save the graves, now remains at Coedanghred. Its grid reference incidentally is: SO455198.

David H. Williams

FIELD EXCURSIONS AND OTHER ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES IN 2017

The MAA AGM: 6th May. The MAA Annual General Meeting was held at the Charles Williams Church in Wales Primary School, Caerleon. We were very sorry that Dr Rick Turner was not well enough to attend, but Dr Mark Lewis agreed to talk at short notice. His talk was on his recently published book, *The Fountains of my Story, Arthur Machen and the Making of a Museum*. He revealed the intimate involvement of Machen's grandfather and father in the establishment of the Caerleon Museum and how Machen's own fascination with the rich collection of Roman artefacts unearthed in the area exerted an influence on his imagination and writing. Ian Burge our former President presented Mark with a piece of carved stone for the Museum. Three new committee members were elected.

A visit to Runston Medieval Village: 25th May. On a beautiful sunny evening, members joined those of Cardiff Archaeological Society and spent the evening at Runston. The event was organised by Jeremy Knight, our president, and Chris Jones-Jenkins, one of our members. We were kindly allowed access to the site by the Wye Valley Archery Centre. The village was deserted in the late eighteenth century when the landlord allowed the buildings to fall into disrepair. David Leighton of RCAHMW states, 'The village reached its maximum extent in the Medieval period when around 25 buildings lay along a series of tracks, close to a village green, church and possible manor house.' The Norman chapel's chancel arch survives to its original height and early Romanesque windows confirm an early 12th century date. Dr Mark Lewis reported that a medieval seal of 12th–14th century date and pre-reformation crucifix figure were discovered in two nearby woods.

A visit to Hellens Manor and St Bartholomew's Church Much Marcle and St Mary's Church Kempley: 15th June. The present house is Jacobean and built of brick and its gardens have been developed to reflect the age of the building. The house is run by a trust which protects and maintains two houses of historic interest. We divided into two groups for the tour and were expertly shown around the house, which has a lived in feel and the visitors are invited to sit on the chairs. The tour began in the Stone Hall with its fire place bearing the Black Prince's crest and ended in the rooms prepared for a visit by Mary Tudor. Following an excellent lunch in the barn we moved on to St Bartholomew's Church where the Church Warden joined us and we saw, amongst others, the painted wooden effigy of Sir Walter de Heylon. We moved on to Kempley Church, a Norman Church now in the care of English Heritage. It was founded in the early 12th century by Hugh de Lacy and the magnificent 12th–14th century wall paintings were revealed when whitewash was removed in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Llangwm History Day: 1st July. The MAA hired Llangwm Village Hall as a base to explore the history of the area. The history day was supported by the MAA, Gwent County History Association and Llangwm History Society. The day consisted of lectures and forays into the locality. Hefina Rendle, chairperson of Llangwm History Society, welcomed us to the village and the day was much improved by the excellent PA system worked by Lyn Bennett, a member of both the MAA and the Llangwm Society.

The first lecture was given by Gwent's County Archivist, Tony Hopkins, who spoke about the John Gwin Common Place Book. Tony started with the background of the Gwin family and moved on to the contents which were randomly recorded. It contained things Gwin needed to remember and things that interested him. The Civil War had only one comment, but there was a lot about medicine

with some bizarre remedies. Gwin was church warden of St Jerome's Church and so there was much about Church affairs. The group then walked to the Church which is in the custody of the Friends of Friendless Churches. Here Professor Maddy Gray described the 9th century origins of the church with its wonderful carved rood screen and the 19th century rebuilding by J. P. Seddon in the 1860s. She explained the liturgical significance of the lay-out and how the laity would have experienced worship. She revealed that recent work by the Friends of Friendless Churches had discovered the tombstone of Joan Cradock and Elizabeth Gwin (the latter 'murdered in her own house').

After a ploughman's lunch prepared by our secretary and treasurer we visited the Baptist Chapel with Revd Canon Dr Arthur Edwards. Some of the members of the chapel came along to join us at this point. The chapel was built in 1840 and by 1851 the Baptists were the strongest denomination in rural Monmouthshire. In contrast to the separation of the priest and congregation in the Anglican Church, the congregation focused on the preacher with the open Bible before him. The Baptists encouraged democracy in their church government and women could vote on church matters but not preach.

Peter Strong then talked about the agricultural workers in Llangwm and the neighbouring parishes based on the evidence given to the Royal Commission on Women and Children in Agriculture, 1869. He explained that wages of 10 to 12 shillings a week were low, but higher than in many agricultural areas due to the proximity of industry. Women were paid half as much as men and children of ten and over were often sent to live away from home as servants and farm labourers.

Christabel Hutchings described the foundation of the National Society School in the village in response to the expected threat of non-sectarian education under the terms of the 1870 Education Act which was to establish a system of non-sectarian schools in areas where they were needed. She then looked at the contents of the early log books and admission books which illuminated the social history the area. She also drew attention to the punishment books for 1904–7 which were now available for study at Gwent Archives. The day was expertly summed up by the Chairman of the MAA, Alan Aberg, who thanked the speakers for their contributions.

A visit to St Teilo's Church at Llantilio Crossenny and Hen Gwrt moated site: 13th July.

The Revd Canon Dr Arthur Edwards was joined by the Revd Heidi Prince who, as Parish Priest, kindly allowed access to the church. Revd Canon Dr Edwards gave a talk on the cruciform church with its 14th century nave and Cil-Llwch chapel. The earliest relic was the Norman font. He pointed out and discussed the 'Green Man' carving in one of the squints that provided a view of the high altar. The group then looked at the fine Victorian stained glass and interesting graves. The church is important because St Teilo stayed in the vicinity on his visitations. In 1708–9 four great timbers, made from one tree, supported a ring of six bells. In 1978–9 two more were added. The staircase which gave access to the rood screen is visible, although the screen was removed during the Reformation.

After a short walk to Hen Gwrt moated site, Alan Aberg gave a talk about its history. He was ably suited for the task for he was the author of the introduction to the Council for British Archaeology's Research Report No. 17 on moated sites dated, 1978. Alan brought the site to life by describing the buildings that would have existed. It was probably a manorial site belonging to the Bishops of Llandaff in the 13th and 14th centuries and, later, a hunting lodge. Excavation in 1957 revealed occupation from the 13th century, with the moat being 14th century. Such high status structures were the homes of minor lords and well-to-do tenant farmers and may also have been part of outlying grange farms attached to monastic establishments. The sites were less common in Wales and in 1978, 136 Welsh sites had been identified. The moat was defensive, but also connected

to a series of fish ponds. After a hiatus in occupation in the 15th century substantial buildings were constructed and the site was used as a Park Lodge with occupation ceasing in the 17th Century.

The Annual Summer Lunch took place at the home of our secretary and treasurer: 6th August.

A visit to the Society of Antiquaries of London with Cardiff Archaeological Society: 6th September.

The visit was organised by our President Jeremy Knight and Chairman Alan Aberg. On arrival at Burlington House we were welcomed by the General Secretary, John Lewis, in the Meeting Room. The society was founded in 1707 and moved to Somerset House in 1875. The Meeting Room displayed a fine collection of paintings which included English sovereigns. The Library on the First floor was a magnificent space with upper levels of shelving above. Here, we were able to examine some documents from the Society's collection that related to Wales and had been chosen by Jeremy and Alan. We were particularly drawn to the Thomas Wakeman collection. Wakeman lived near Monmouth and had compiled histories of the seven hundreds of Monmouthshire. What we saw and heard gave only a taste of the Society's work and its collections. We were grateful to Alan and Jeremy who made the visit possible and the Fellows amongst our members were asked to pass on our thanks to the Society.

Frank Olding gave a talk on the book he had edited, 'The Archaeology of Upland Gwent': 14th

October. This talk took place in conjunction with the Friends of National Museum Wales, in the Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre of National Museum Wales at Cathays Park. The event marked the MAA grant towards the publication of the book. Many copies were sold following Frank Olding's excellent talk.

The MAA commemorated the Great War through two excellent talks: 10th November, the day

before Armistice Day. Richard Frame gave a talk on First World War graves during his walk around St Woolos Cemetery which was much enjoyed in the cold November sunshine. After tea and coffee at our secretary's and treasurer's home, Peter Strong gave a talk on St Woolos Hospital in the Great War. The building, which had previously been a workhouse, was known as Wooloston House. It was an enjoyable and interesting afternoon and thanks were given to our two committee members who gave up their time to disseminate their research.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Ann Benson was first a chemistry teacher and then an academic in the field of learning and assessment at the universities of Oxford, Bristol, and the Open University. She holds a masters and a doctorate in how assessment affects learning. Ann took early retirement to focus on garden and architectural history (MA Distinction, University of Bristol, 2012) and has since published history books and articles whilst continuing the fight for the conservation of Troy House, Monmouthshire. She is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, an Associate of the Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates and Leverhulme Emeritus Fellow, University of Cambridge.

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 is Chair of Gwent County History Association and of the Gwent Branch of the Western Front Association.

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.

Arthur Edwards is a Canon emeritus of Newport Cathedral. He retired as area Dean of Newport and Vicar of Caerleon six years ago. He left London University in 1966 with an M.Phil. degree in History and he was ordained in the Church in Wales in 1968. His publications include *Archbishop Green* (Gomer Press, 1986) and *Thomas Thomas of Pontypool* (Apecc Press, Caerleon, 2009). After researching the religious and social history of nineteenth-century Monmouthshire, he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Cardiff University in 2016.

Christabel Hutchings has researched the history of education in the nineteenth century, for which she was awarded an M.Ed. by Cardiff University. Furthermore she completed an MA in Celtic-Roman studies at the University of Wales, Newport; her dissertation was entitled 'Slavery and Status in Roman Britain'. In 2010, she was elected Honorary Secretary of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association. In addition she is also a member of the following committees; the South Wales Record Society; the Gwent County History; the Friends of Newport Museum and Art Gallery and the Friends of National Museum Wales. She has published articles in both *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* and *Morganwg*.

Jeremy Knight who was born in Caerleon, read archaeology at University College, Cardiff. For over thirty years, he was inspector of ancient monuments, whose wide area of responsibility included Monmouthshire. He has undertaken a major excavation at Montgomery Castle; written many guidebooks to monuments; and has published numerous articles. A major work, *The End of Antiquity*, was published in 2000 (2nd revised edit., 2007). He published *Civil War & Restoration in Monmouthshire* in 2005 and his book *South Wales from the Romans to the Normans – Christianity, Literacy & Lordship* was published in 2013. His most recent book, *Blaenavon: Iron Town to World Heritage Site*, was published by Logaston Press in 2016.

Mark Lewis was born and raised in Monmouthshire. His interest in archaeology was nurtured during family walks in the south of the county and whilst working on excavations at Trostrey and Caerwent. He read archaeological conservation and conservation at Cardiff University. There he was awarded a PhD for his research on humidity and iron corrosion which informed the preservation strategy for Brunel's ss Great Britain and now informs the preservation of museum artefacts and structures, such as the Severn Bridge, worldwide. Since 2000, Mark Lewis has been a curatorial officer and senior curator at the National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon, and from 2006–14 was also an archaeological conservator at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff. He was Chairman of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association from 2013–16. From 2013–17 he was Chairman of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, having been a Trustee since November 2008. In 2016 he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

Graeme Moore was born in Tiverton in Devon. He trained in horticulture at Cannington College, Somerset, and Writtle College, Essex, and studied art history and literature at Essex University. For over thirty years he has worked on landscape and garden projects in England, Scotland, and South Wales, combining his enthusiasm for gardening with his interest in art. He has published numerous articles on Victorian and Edwardian architecture and garden design, including several papers on Thomas Mawson's early career, and is currently working on a full-length study of the life and work of the architect and garden designer, Harold Peto (1854–1933). He is a former member of the council of the Institute of Horticulture and a member of the Association for Art History. He lives at Argoed, near Blackwood, in a house associated with the Meredith family, who built the Sirhowy tramroad.

Andy Seaman is a lecturer in early medieval archaeology at Canterbury Christ Church University. His research focuses on Wales and western Britain, and he has particular interests in settlements and the agrarian landscape, networks of power, and the early Church. He has published widely in these areas, including major articles on Dinas Powys hillfort and the 'multiple estate model'. He is currently engaged in a number of projects in South Wales, including the Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project Manifestations of Empire: Palaeoenvironmental Analysis and the End of Roman Britain.

Malcolm Thurlby was born in London and attended Watford Grammar School where, at the age of fifteen, the O-level Art course changed his life. One paper for the course was on the history of parish-church architecture, for which the textbook was Cox and Ford, *The Parish Churches of England*. The image of the south doorway of Kilpeck church in that book was so captivating that he realized that a career studying things Romanesque had to be pursued. Eight years at the University of East Anglia concluded in a PhD in 1976 with a thesis on 'Transitional Sculpture in England 1150–1240'. In that year he moved to Canada where he is now Professor of Medieval art and Architecture and Canadian Architecture at York University, Toronto. A Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries since 1987, he has published four books and over 170 articles on Romanesque and Gothic art and architecture and Canadian architecture, including *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales* (Logaston Press, 2006). His passion for things Romanesque and Gothic extends to beer and wine, fine food (eating and cooking), football (watching not playing), the Muppets, and rock music. He concurs with John Medley, Bishop of Fredericton, 1845–92, that 'some knowledge of church architecture ought, surely, to be part of every liberal education'.

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 book, *The Tudor Cistercians*, was published in 2014.

MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARIAN ASSOCIATION

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(AS AT 31 DEC. 2017)**

Aberg Mr & Mrs F A
 Adams Dr Sam & Dr Muriel
 Ambegaokar Dr Uma
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 Babbidge Mr A V
 Bailey Mrs Janet
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 Baker Mrs W H
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 Bassett Mr D G
 Bennett Mr Lyndon (Llangwm Local Hist Soc)
 Benson Mr Alwyne & Dr Ann
 Blackmore Mr Oliver & Ms Kate Iles
 Brabon Phillip & Dorothy
 Bissell Prof & Mrs A F
 Bond Mr Nigel Terence
 Brewer Mr R J
 Brown Mr & Mrs M
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 Burchell Mr Roger G G
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