

The Carmarthenshire Historian



Court Henry

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Edited by
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An Arcadian In Parliament

The Rise and Progress of William Williams, M.P.

By E. VERNON JONES

IN 1804 a Carmarthenshire youth of sixteen, encumbered only by a small bundle of spare clothing set out in Dick Whittington fashion to seek his fortune in London. There were those who thought he would soon be back, seeking the comforts of home after beating a disillusioned retreat from the chilling realities of an unfamiliar world, but they deceived only themselves, for they failed to appreciate the youth's determination to succeed, supported by a nimble brain and a natural aptitude for commerce. For win a fortune he did and a seat in the Court of the Common Council of the City of London to boot. He might even have become Lord Mayor—although his forthright independence might have been an impediment—had he not turned his attention in another direction, a path which was to lead into Parliament, where he became an influential member during a career there of twenty-seven years. Although he spent the whole of his adult life in England, he never forgot the land of his birth or his native language, but he deeply resented the squalid social conditions most of his compatriots were obliged to suffer. He believed that, given the 'blessings of education', the lot of the masses in Wales, as elsewhere, would improve and lead to more meaningful life. It was this conviction that led him to persuade the Government to set up an inquiry into the state of education in Wales, but the raging storm of controversy that followed was something that neither he nor anybody else could foresee.

The unwitting begetter of this controversy around the 'Treason of the Blue Books' (Brad y Llyfrau Gleision) and the victim of a furious backlash was William Williams. He was born on 12 February 1788 at Tredarren, a farmstead in the parish of Cynwyl Elfed a little over half a mile west of Llanpumsaint and set upon a slope overlooking the village and the Gwili valley in a secluded part of Carmarthenshire. The father was Thomas Williams, a yeoman farmer who married Esther Phillips of Gilfach-y-gestyn, a farm about three miles north-west of the village of Cynwyl Elfed. Of their seven sons and five daughters five died young. William was the fourth child. His only formal education was received at the week-day school held in the gallery (since removed) of the parish church in the village across the fields. A fellow pupil here was David Owen, son of the village bootmaker and church sexton; later he was to

achieve more than a local distinction as a journalist with a piquant pen, which he used under the name of 'Brutus' and it is from his writings that we are able to suspect that William Williams was anything but a robust child. When he wrote, in *Brutusiana*, a volume of his collected writings, of the 'weakly one' who was carried back and forth to school by his schoolmates, he was probably referring to young William.¹ Even so, he was tall like his three surviving brothers; indeed these sons of Tredarren were 'a race of giants, the shortest being six feet and two inches high, and the tallest four inches more'.²

When he was about twelve years old William was ready to take his first independent steps into the outside world, which he took in the direction of Carmarthen, where he was apprenticed to a shop-keeper named Phillips, perhaps a relative of his mother. His apprenticeship completed, he felt confident that he was well enough equipped to stake his ability on London's wheel of fortune and at the age of sixteen set out for the Metropolis. How he made the journey is not recorded, but in view of his limited means—thirty shillings was all he had in his pocket—it is likely that he walked a great deal of the way.

Of his business career in London there is tantalizingly meagre information, which may be quickly stated. It started with a lowly position in a wholesale cotton warehouse in Bread Street. He must have applied himself to his duties in a way that won the entire satisfaction of his employer and he quickly advanced his position in the firm. Astonishingly, he learnt to speak French; how, is not known, but studious determination must have taken advantage of whatever opportunities presented themselves. As a result, when he was yet but twenty-one years old, he was promoted to a position which brought him £500 a year. This was a handsome salary, but it did not deter Williams from higher achievements. Somehow he was soon able to speak German and by the time he was twenty-four he was earning £1,000 a year in a job that took him to France and Germany as a representative of his firm. Such industry ensured him a partnership in the firm, of which he at last became the sole proprietor on the death of his colleague. When he left Bread Street is not known, but sometime before 1820 he was in business as a cotton

and linen warehouseman at 92 Watling Street, in the same neighbourhood. He was now firmly established in a highly lucrative enterprise, which involved extensive travel in Europe, Russia and the United States of America. In something like twenty-five years he had already acquired a fortune as a result of his diligence, industry and business acumen.

By what method did Williams acquire knowledge of foreign languages? Williams himself gives a pointer: 'A child who only understands Welsh should begin with a vocabulary of names of a variety of things in English, *with their meaning in Welsh* placed opposite in columns; then short common place dialogues on various subjects, and onward to sentences, etc., *but in all cases with the Welsh meaning appended*,—this is simply the system by which an English boy is taught a foreign language. A Welsh boy would make more progress in six months learning English, with such books, aided by a well-trained schoolmaster, than he would in six years in the existing schools. His intellect would, moreover, be expanded and sharpened, instead of being blunted and stupified by the present mode of mis-called "teaching", which literally consists of merely bad pronunciation of English words without any knowledge of, or even an attempt to explain their meaning'.³ His emphasis on the need to provide translations will be better understood when it is appreciated that Welsh children at that time were commonly taught to learn and recite passages in English without having the remotest idea of their meaning; usually, their teachers were just as ignorant of the language they were supposed to teach.

At the age of forty-five Williams decided to find a role in public life, which, being financially secure, he felt free to fill on his own terms. In September 1833 he was elected to the Court of Common Council of the City of London as a representative of the Bread Street Ward. His service in this field lasted only one term of three years, for in 1835 he was elected member of Parliament for Coventry and consequently he did not seek re-election in the City Ward in 1836. Even so, he was an energetic member of the Common Council who was concerned to expose corruption and bring about improved administration in the interests of the citizenry; above all he showed a flair for financial management which was quickly recognized by his appointment as chairman of the Revenue Committee. It was in this latter capacity that he distinguished himself in presenting the committee's report following an investigation into the Corporation's fiscal affairs.

1. Daniel Evans, *The Life and Work of William Williams, M.P.* (Gomerian Press, Llandyssul, 1939), p. 15. The author of this biography, from which the present writer has freely drawn, was a great-grandson of Williams's younger sister Beti; he became a figure in the public life of Sheffield.
2. *The Red Dragon*, 1883, p. 387.

3. *A Second Letter on the present Defective State of Education in Wales*, published by Williams in 1848 during the Blue Books controversy.



William Williams, 1788-1865

The Times (25 January, 1836), reporting the proceedings of the relevant meeting, recorded that there was 'a great sensation among the members'. In his report, of which *The Times* gave an account, Williams presented details of receipts and expenditure to expose a situation of 'so flagrant a kind as ought to consign the corporation of London to the same fate which had already befallen all the other corporations of England' (a reference to the changes brought about by the Municipal Corporations Act 1835).

Although Williams proved a severe critic of London's government, powerful traditionalist forces were able to hit back time and time again to ward off reform despite his criticisms in the House of Commons. In April of the same year, 1836, he repeated his view in the House that 'since other Corporations had been favoured with a measure of reform, there was no just cause why the City of London should be made an exception'. But it was not until many years after his death that the London County Council was established as a result of the Local Government Act 1888, although the Metropolitan Board of Works had been set up under an Act of 1855 to replace a host of authorities of different kinds.

Before the expiration of his only term as a member of London's Common Council Williams was already a member of Parliament, having been elected as one of the representatives for Coventry in January, 1835. His election address had announced that he stood for: 'Extension of the Franchise, Triennial Parliaments;⁴ Vote by Ballot; Abolition of all Sinecures and Pensions not merited by Public Service; Repeal of the Malt Tax, the Hop Tax, the Soap Tax and all other Taxes which press on the industrious and productive classes; Extension of the Blessings of Education; Extinction of Military Flogging and Naval Impressment; Revision of the Corn Laws with a view to their ultimate and total abolition; and the Promotion of such measures as will give relief to the ill-governed and deeply injured people of Ireland'. Whitley's *Parliamentary Representation of Coventry* described Williams, who advocated the free importation of corn and the protection of native industry, as 'a stout square man about 46 years of age, and apparently not to be overdone by a little labour. If he sets about reforming the public expenditure, as he promises, he will need all his strength, for the task is Herculean'.⁵

Williams was a Radical who stood for reform, but he never allied himself to any political party; on the contrary, he took early opportunity to point out that he was not a party man. One con-

4. Parliaments were then septennial.

5. Quoted by Daniel Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

sequence was that he was often on the losing side in the divisions of the House. An early instance came in June 1835 when, in support of George Grote's⁶ motion that parliamentary elections should be determined by secret ballot, he reminded the House that men were constantly obliged to vote contrary to their feeling and their opinion or what was right. 'Could there be anything more degrading', asked Williams, 'than that a man who had been given by the Constitution a right of voting for a representative should be controlled in the exercise of the right by a master or a tyrant of a landlord, and compelled to sacrifice his principle to his interest?' But the motion was heavily defeated and the plea was to remain unanswered until after William's death.

Important in Williams's parliamentary career was his association with Joseph Hume (1777-1855). Although Hume's mother was widowed early and left with a large family, which was not well provided for she afforded her children an education and Joseph was apprenticed to a surgeon-apothecary. He qualified as a surgeon and served the East India Company in India, where he amassed a fortune, which enabled him to return to England to pursue a political career. He was first elected as a Tory for Weymouth, but transferred his allegiance and ultimately became the champion of the Radicals. He represented a number of constituencies in turn, the last of which was his native Montrose. In its obituary *The Times* (22 February 1855) said he 'worked not for the Tories or Whigs. He laboured for his country—for the world at large', and described him 'as the unrelenting persecutor of sinecurists, drones, and old men pretending to do the work of the young in the State'.

Early in this association Williams supported Hume (then the member for Middlesex) by seconding an amendment during the 1837 session of Parliament, by which Hume sought an inquiry into the state of banking. In his speech Williams complained that the Bank of England had in the previous few years been increasing its issues far beyond its capacity 'to pay their engagements', with the result that there had been an advance in prices, dearer exports and a consequent decline in foreign trade. His speech earned the disapproval of the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Spring Rice), but it is of note that within a few years the Bank Charter Act 1844 limited the issue of notes not covered by bullion.

In the same session Williams seconded an unsuccessful motion for the repeal of the Septennial Act 1716, which extended the duration

6. A friend of Connop Thirlwall, Bishop of St. Davids, he became famous as the author of *The History of Greece*, published in 1846-7. See *The Carmarthenshire Historian*, Vol. XIII, p. 72.

of Parliament from three to seven years, a Whig move to avoid an election at a time when it was considered that the State was threatened with dangers from within and without. Williams denounced the Act as a violation of the constitution and 'an infraction of the Declaration of Rights' which had been carried much against the national will. But those with whom Williams associated himself repeatedly spoke in vain on this issue and decades were to pass before a constitutional crisis brought the Parliament Act 1911, which provided for quinquennial parliaments.

In 1838 (23 June) Williams took part in a debate which was to have far-reaching effects on the constitutional development of British territories overseas. There had been serious discontent against British rule among the inhabitants, mostly French, of Lower Canada, where insurrection had been quickly suppressed. To deal with the dangerous situation that ensued, the Government decided to send out Lord Durham as Governor-General, with special powers to investigate conditions there. This arrangement involved the temporary suspension of the Canadian constitution, a step which aroused the angry forebodings of Williams, as well as those of Hume, Grote and others. Williams reminded the House of the disaffection that had existed in the American colonies and brought about the War of Independence and expressed the view that the present measures would 'tend to produce so strong a feeling, so deep a sense of insult, that the people as a body would become disaffected to the mother country'. As it turned out, Williams and his colleagues need not have been apprehensive. Lord Durham, a man of great diplomatic experience, held advanced views which were generally in accord with those who felt like Williams, and his report became justly famous as the cornerstone of subsequent constitutional development in the British colonies. The Durham Report, a 'landmark dividing the constitutional histories of the first and second British Empires',⁷ was chiefly important because it recognised the need for conceding responsible government.

Williams's first participation in a Budget debate came in May 1838, when he took the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Spring Rice) to task for proposing to borrow £24,000,000 at a rate he thought was $\frac{1}{2}\%$ more than necessary, thus entailing a substantial loss to the public. Astonished at the Chancellor's apparent uncertain knowledge concerning financial matters, Williams proceeded to give him gratuitous instruction. Williams undoubtedly had a shrewd business

7. D. L. Keir, *The Constitutional History of Modern Britain* (Black), 3rd edition, 1946, p. 444.

mind and here he was applying his experience to matters of public finance with barbed incisiveness, a quality which earned him a reputation as an expert in this field.

But if he was a penny-pinching critic, as some thought him, at least he was a courageous and consistent one from whose eagle eye not even royalty could plead exemption, as instanced, in July of the same year, by his objection to an increased allowance to the Duke of Sussex (son of George III and uncle of Queen Victoria), and a year later (6 June 1839), to a vote of £70,000 for the building of stables at Windsor Castle. This was the year in which the annual grant of £20,000, started in 1832, for building new schools throughout England and Wales, was increased to £30,000. Soon (14 August), Hume and Williams alone objected to a proposal to exempt the parliamentary grant to the heirs of the Duke of Marlborough from the payment of annual duty; they were against hereditary pensions and the suggested exemption doubly offended their sensibilities. But they were a little more effectual early in the following year (27 January 1840), when they introduced an amendment to reduce the proposed grant of £50,000 a year to Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg (whose marriage to Queen Victoria was due to be solemnized on 10 February) to £21,000. Williams felt it would be an extreme waste in view of the distress prevailing, the miserable situation in which millions were placed and the reduced condition of merchants, manufacturers and traders. Speculating on how the money was to be raised, he suspected that if it were to be by way of a tax on some commodity used by the poor as well as the rich there would be no serious objection from the House; but if it were to be by means of a tax on property there would be a general outcry. Although their amendment was defeated Hume and Williams got a large measure of satisfaction when, later in the debate, Sir Robert Peel brought powerful influence to bear in securing a reduction to £30,000.

Williams frequently denounced the unjust burden of taxation which fell upon the working classes. On one such occasion he seconded a motion, by the Member for Oldham, seeking the repeal of the Corn Laws and taxes on the necessities of life which rendered them so dear that 'working people cannot command a sufficiency to supply their daily wants'. He claimed that some taxes 'pressed with four or five times more weight' on the poor than they did upon the rich. But even as he pleaded for a more equitable distribution of the tax burden as between the rich and the poor Williams challenged the House with the charge that they would never tax themselves 'so long as the poor man was shut out from the right of electing Members'. True to his forecast, the motion was lost.

At this time Williams was playing a significant part in the movement to serve adequate means for the effective promotion of the art of design and its application to industry. The Central School of Design for the purpose of giving instruction in the principles of design in relation to various industries had been set up at Somerset House under the Board of Trade in 1837, but when a vote of £1,300 for the School came before the House on 8 May 1840 Williams, although he was in favour of a grant, complained that the school was not of the least use. He deplored the country's backwardness among the manufacturing nations in this field and applauded the success of the government school of design at Lyons in France, which accounted for the superiority of the manufactures of that town. He contended that if a few hundred pounds a year were given for the support of schools in manufacturing towns to encourage the art of design infinitely more good would be achieved. His concern bore early fruit, for in the same year grants were made to establish schools in the more important cities. In time, his own constituents at Coventry would express their gratitude (in an Address presented to him in January 1848) thus: 'We are indebted to you, Sir, for our School of Design (as well as every other town in the country where one is established), an Institution we anticipate will be highly beneficial to our staple manufacture'. These were the institutions which were to develop into the Colleges of Art.

Parallel with this interest was support of the Mechanics' Institutes, which were set up all over the country on a voluntary basis to provide popular scientific education.⁸ The institute at Coventry had a design class attached to it, but its value was limited by its voluntary nature, a fact which prompted Williams to agitate for support out of public funds—in the first place for the chief manufacturing towns, namely Manchester, Glasgow, Coventry and Norwich. He believed that this would lay the foundations of important institutions, but he insisted that the scheme would have little success unless it were known that it received Government support.

During a noisy debate (August 1841) Williams again endorsed his refusal to be a party man when he spoke, unsuccessfully, in favour of an addition to the Address which sought an extension of the suffrage to confer on the working classes their 'just weight in the representative body'. There were frequent interruptions and when Williams rose to speak he voiced no surprise that this was so when the people's grievancies were under discussion. Defiantly, he announced that he had perfect patience to wait till the House would listen to

8. Mechanics' Institutes were set up in Carmarthenshire in 1839-40.

him. He protested that Ministers had no 'magic influence' to prevent members expressing opinions or preventing 'the House laying its feelings at the foot of the Throne'. He did not subscribe to the doctrine that the House ought not to express an opinion unless it was also the opinion of the Treasury Bench; on the contrary, he thought any Vote should express the opinion of the House.

In the general election of September 1841 the Tories were victorious and Sir Robert Peel formed his second Ministry, but Coventry chose Radical Williams and Ellice (Liberal) as its representatives.

Although he was a Churchman, Williams always opposed state aid for the Established Church. One such occasion came on 11 March 1842, when in vain, he expressed the view that it would be 'a great injustice to the people of this country' that they should be taxed to maintain three new bishoprics it was proposed to create in the West Indies.

Another of his strong objections, on which he often spoke in the House, was his opposition to income-tax measures, although in time he modified this to favour exemption for small incomes of less than £150 a year. When, in 1842, Peel proposed a temporary re-introduction of tax on incomes, which had been imposed by Pitt in 1798, many Whigs and Radicals, Williams among them, strongly opposed the measure and urged a property tax instead. Speaking in the debate, Williams thought it wrong that wealthy landed proprietors should be able to leave their accumulated fortunes to their heirs free of duty, while a poor man was obliged to pay heavy duty on a legacy of £50 or £100. But Peel won the day by claiming that the tax would be generally hailed as 'proof of the determination of the upper classes to bear their fair share of taxation', something which Williams and his colleagues were repeatedly demanding.

Williams was a Radical, but never a republican. Once, during a debate in consequence of an attempt on the Queen's life (30 May 1842), Sir Robert Inglis, the genial but hidebound Tory who had ousted Sir Robert Peel as member for Oxford University on the Catholic emancipation issue, cast doubt upon Williams's loyalty, an insinuation which Williams strongly resented. He denied Inglis 'exclusive loyalty and attachment to the Sovereign and institutions of the country' and avowed his own readiness to defend the Queen whenever she should be in danger.

The Rebecca Riots prompted Williams to state in the House

(28 July 1843) that there were no 'more peaceable or religious people than the Welsh' and if the Government adopted a conciliatory course there would be no difficulty in restoring tranquility. The Government had taken a wise course in sending a commissioner to investigate the grievances of the people, but he thought it better if the investigators were not connected with the police. He hoped that the prisoners taken in Carmarthen would be tried in their own county; if they were tried elsewhere the movement could not be put down without a military force in every village and in every farmhouse. The people of Wales were incensed against those whom they conceived to be their persecutors, but he was sure that if their grievances were redressed they would resume their usual peaceful habits.

When presented with a further chance (6 February 1844) to return to the attack on the unfair burden of taxation on the poorer classes and their lack of representation in Parliament, Williams supported a move to stop supplies until public grievances were remedied. He reminded the House that Lord John Russell had introduced the Reform Bill by saying that the people should send to the House 'their real representatives to deliberate on their wants and to consult their interests; to consider their grievances and to attend to their desires; to possess the vast power of holding the purse strings of the monarch, and to lay the foundation for most salutary changes in the well-being of the people'. Williams maintained that none of these things had come about since the passing of the Reform Act in 1832. On the contrary, only recently a petition signed by three and a half million people had protested that the House was not representative and that its acts were passed by interested parties. Of the six million adult population five million had no voice in electing members of Parliament, yet the House in its injustice threw upon the unrepresented five million at least two-thirds of the total burden of taxation. What, he asked, would the country be without those five million people? What would be the value of the land, the mines, the manufactures, the ships, the colonies, the commerce? Whence came the men for the Army and the Navy? All the resources which constituted the riches and power of the country were derived from those unrepresented classes who were complaining of the injustice inflicted upon them.

Protesting that it was altogether ridiculous to speak of a representative House of Commons that had been elected as a result of bribery and corruption on a grand scale, Williams condemned the whole tax system as 'partial and unjust'. Those who imposed the taxes always took care of themselves and the order they belonged to. The tax on land was only £1,100,000 or £1,200,000 out of a total

of £55,000,000. The taxes on the necessities of life were most unjustly imposed. Tea which sold at 10d and tea which sold at 5s. the pound paid the same tax of 2s.2d. per pound, so that the humble inhabitant of the garret, earning perhaps 3s. a week by sewing, and who could get scarcely anything but tea, paid five times as much duty as was paid in proportion 'by the occupants of the Treasury Bench opposite'. He spoke of other commodities in like vein. He repeated the claim that ten million people in the country lived on potatoes and oatmeal, the food of cattle; such a state of things could not continue.

The Prime Minister, Peel, demolished the argument in the eyes of the House by saying that Williams came forward, not as the advocate of household suffrage, but 'maintains that the right to possess the franchise shall be co-extensive with taxation'. If he (Williams) were saying that both the male and female portion of the community ought to be invested with the right to vote then 'I can only say that the hon. Gentleman comes forward as a more comprehensive Reformer than any that has hitherto appeared in this House'. Peel carried the day and maybe Williams was not quite so 'comprehensive a Reformer', but, with the decades, freedom broadened slowly down from precedent to precedent until universal suffrage was achieved as a result of the Representation of the People Act, 1928, when, ironically, women constituted the majority of the electorate.⁹

His contempt for rapacious privilege was vented in the House (24 June 1844) when a member, also a director of the Bank of England, condemned proposed restrictions on the Bank's activities as being neither necessary nor equitable. Williams retorted that it was to be expected that a member with an interest would object to 'any check upon those exclusive privileges which had so often brought difficulty and distress upon the people'. This time he was on the winning side and he thanked the Prime Minister (Peel) for the restrictive measure which had been introduced.

On the same day, Williams, speaking on the report of the Inspector of Prisons inveighed against a proposal to impose the horrors of solitary confinement on untried persons—presumed to be innocent until proved otherwise—perhaps for three, four or five months. He thought it inhuman and against the plainest dictates of common humanity. At the same time, he hurled a shaft at the magistracy, among whom he regretted that 'ignorance and malignity too often existed'.

9. D. L. Keir, *op. cit.*, p. 472.

Never afraid to challenge the over-privileged, however exalted, Williams once threw a gage before the Duke of Newcastle. The occasion concerned the sale to the Duke of 7,000 acres of common land which adjoined his Hafod estate in Cardiganshire. Williams described to the House (7 March 1845) what had happened following the sale of common land some years earlier. The purchaser, in defiance of a ruling by the Lord Chief Justice, had tried to remove nearly a hundred poor men who had settled upon it, erected cottages and brought the land into cultivation from a state of waste. The matter had been brought to his attention in 1832 and after he had caused ministerial investigation to be undertaken an amicable solution was arrived at.¹⁰ He promised the Duke that if he had any thoughts about behaving in a similar way in respect of the Cardiganshire land then he would assist the poor as he had in the earlier case.

Some days later (18 March) Williams denounced the continued imposition of the window tax as an impost on light and air. In his own constituency of Coventry people suffered extraordinary hardship and injustice from the way the tax operated. Many were engaged in weaving, which was carried on in the upper part of their houses and required a great deal of light, but whereas buildings used wholly for manufacture were exempt, dwellings partly used for manufacture were subject to tax on *all* windows. Although the appeal failed, the tax, which had been levied since 1697, disappeared in 1851, to be replaced by a tax on inhabited houses.

A decision which caused him pain, because it differed from the view of many people whose opinion he respected, related to a grant, considered by the House on 5 May 1845, to the National College of St. Patrick, a Catholic theological institution at Maynooth,¹¹ about twelve miles west of Dublin. He justified his support of the grant by referring to the large sums taken from Catholics and Dissenters, much of which was used in aid of the Established Church. Dr. Connop Thirlwall, Bishop of St. Davids also strongly supported the grant when it came before the House of Lords, but many Nonconformists were bitterly opposed. For Williams, the decision was a fateful one, which was to have an important effect on his parliamentary career.

As a result of an issue which Williams raised in the House of Commons, the year 1846 was one of cataclysmic significance in the

10. This indicates that Williams must have had a reputation as a champion of the oppressed before he was elected to public office.

11. This was the college visited by Pope John Paul II on 1 October 1979.

history of modern Wales. When he rose to speak on 10 March he could hardly have foreseen the public storm that was to ensue. His speech, one of the longest of the hundreds he made in the House, was delivered in support of his historic motion in the following terms: 'That a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty that She will be graciously pleased to direct an Inquiry be made into the state of Education in the Principality of Wales, especially into the means afforded to the labouring classes of acquiring a knowledge of the English language'.

Williams explained that he would have preferred the motion to have been put by a member representing a Welsh constituency so that local knowledge might more forcibly point out the 'great destitution of means' for educating the 'industrious classes'. He went on to say that the people of Wales laboured under a peculiar difficulty from the existence of an ancient language. The gentry and educated classes spoke English, as did the towns generally, while farmers, labourers and other inhabitants of the rural and mining districts spoke Welsh. He claimed that as it was the language of the poorer classes, important literary works had not for ages been produced in Welsh and scarcely had there been translated in the language any works in literature, the arts and sciences, especially mechanics, chemistry, agriculture and useful knowledge generally.

He went on to say that 'consequently although equally industrious with their English neighbours, the Welsh are much behind them in intelligence, in the enjoyment of the comforts of life, and the means of improving their condition. This is universally attributed by intelligent Welshmen, as well as Englishmen and foreigners who have been amongst them, to the want of an English education, which all the common people are most anxious to obtain; but the means afforded to them is lamentably deficient. In many parishes there are no schools; and where there are schools, it is common for the schoolmasters to be ignorant, uneducated men, and incapable of giving instruction'.

The inquiry called for would bring to light 'an extent of educational destitution in Wales that would call for the interference of the House and the Government'. He reminded the House that inquiries had been made into the state of education in every part of England, Scotland and Ireland; much valuable information had also been obtained from Inspectors of Factories, the Poor Law Commissioners, and Inspectors of Mines on the state of education in England, but only one parish in Wales had been visited and reported upon. Wales had been neglected in a marked manner.

Citing evidence gathered by others, Williams said there were 250,000 children under fifteen who ought to be receiving 'the blessings of education', but only 70,000 attended schools and the education that a large proportion received was so inferior as to be little better than nominal. There were thus 180,000 children 'whose immortal spirits were deprived of that guide they receive from a moral and religious education'. General testimony showed that of the adult working population a large proportion could neither read nor write, that many had only acquired the art of knowing letters and words and that very few could read with ease and understand what they read. Quoting from a report on the mining population of South Wales by the Rev. H. W. Bellairs, who had been commissioned by the Privy Council Committee for Education, Williams said that these men were 'industrious to the last degree, but were destitute of all means of mental recreation and enjoyment, therefore their place of resort was the public house'.

Charging the employers of labour with dereliction of responsibility, Williams asked why 'the masters who counted their gains from the labour of these people by tens, twenties and fifties of thousands of pounds a year did not adopt means for improving their mental and moral condition by placing competent schoolmasters among them'. Some, to their credit, had done much in this respect, but as a body they required from their workers not so much mental ingenuity as manual labour. He deplored such indifference towards an industrious people, by whose labour such masses of wealth were produced. Had the landlords of Wales been 'compelled by law to establish and maintain efficient schools in every parish, as were the landlords of Scotland, they would have been repaid tenfold by the improved condition of their estates and intelligent superior tenantry'.

In contrast to this apathy, Williams said there was among the people themselves 'an intense and universal desire to learn the English language which affords the best means of improving their condition, and of enabling their children to get on in the world'. Here he was reflecting a view expressed in the Report of the Commissioners, appointed to inquire into the management of Turnpike Trusts in South Wales, that the prevalent desire of the uneducated was to superadd to their own a knowledge of the English language, but the means fell far short of demand.

Confessing his habit, whenever parliamentary occasion afforded, of endeavouring to enforce economy in the expenditure of public money, Williams insisted that he had 'never objected or complained of its application for the purposes of education in any part of the

United Kingdom, believing . . . that an educated people could be governed easier and much cheaper than an uneducated ignorant people', besides conferring 'vast social benefits and moral power'. Had there been an efficient system of education in Wales comparable to those which existed in many European countries 'the people would have been educated and such occurrences as those of Newport¹² and the Rebecca disturbances, and their lamentable consequences, would not have taken place; the people would have redressed their grievances by constitutional means instead of violence . . .'

When Williams had finished his speech, the Home Secretary (Sir James Graham) rose to say that, provided the motion was withdrawn, the Government would agree to appoint Inspectors and that their report would be laid before the House. Williams consented, three Commissioners were appointed and their reports were published in 1847, the year in which he once more spoke in the House on the subject of education, this time in respect of the distribution of government grants. In 1834, Parliament authorised a sum of £20,000 to be distributed in aid of private subscriptions for erection of schools to educate children of the poorer classes, one stipulation being that no grant would be payable until half the estimated cost of building a school had been raised voluntarily. By 1846 this vote had been increased to £100,000 and in the meantime a Committee for Education¹³ had been set up under the Privy Council to superintend the grants. When the vote was considered in 1847 (17 July), Williams criticized as altogether bad a system whereby no money was advanced until there were proofs of power to co-operate, by means of voluntary subscriptions, on the part of those who applied for grant. He took the view that there 'ought to be an inspection of the means of providing education in every parish throughout England and Wales and the liberality should be greatest in those districts which were found to be most destitute'.

Williams's twelve years as a representative for Coventry were now drawing to a close. In July 1847 Parliament was dissolved and in the general election Williams suffered his only parliamentary defeat, an eventuality which put him out of the legislature for three years. The surprise defeat was attributed in part to 'Tory trickery' in supplying a candidate at the last moment and thus catching unawares the over-confident Williams camp, which failed to organize properly for the contest. Williams himself felt that he had lost because of his stand in favour of a policy of public education sup-

ported wholly by government grants; he was convinced that he had alienated Nonconformist supporters, who were generally in favour of voluntary effort as against official aid. At that time there was a widespread feeling that any system of education should have a religious basis; attitudes so based accounted for the National (or Church) Schools, on the one hand, and, on the other, the British or Lancastrian Schools, favoured by Nonconformists.

The years during which Williams was out of Parliament saw the eruption of a controversy that was to engage the minds of all concerned Welshmen. This public debate, conducted over a long time by means of printed and oral word, was ignited by the publication of the report of the Commissioners appointed in response to Williams's plea, an event which was 'to prove the main landmark in the nineteenth century, not only in the educational, but in the social and political history of Wales'.¹⁴

The reports, published in three large volumes, were the work of three young men, able and efficient, who were on the threshold of what were to be distinguished careers. But their appointment as Commissioners was a serious mistake. They were members of the Anglican Church, they had no knowledge of Wales, its language or culture, and they had no experience of working-class life and conditions. In turn, the Commissioners themselves compounded this misfortune by an unwise choice of assistants, most of whom were Churchmen. The result was an unmistakable, if unintentional, bias in the way they went about their task, despite the clear instructions provided for their guidance. They were commanded to ascertain the facts which would assist the Government in improving the provision made for education and in doing so they were enjoined to hear evidence from Dissenters and Anglicans, rich and poor, with courtesy, sympathy and impartiality. But the practical result of their investigation showed that of the three hundred or so witnesses examined about eighty per cent were Anglicans and as Wales was very much a Nonconformist country it is not surprising that they failed to present an adequate picture. Even so, they undertook the work with diligence and industry, and probably without conscious prejudicial intent. Whatever the exceptions to their content, the reports remain a valuable store of historical information.

Of the three Commissioners, the one assigned to deal with Carmarthenshire, as well as Glamorgan and Pembrokeshire was Ralph Robert Whicher Lingen, an Oxford graduate, who, in 1846, had

12. The Chartist disturbances of 1839.

13. This was the beginning of the Department of Education.

14. David Williams, *A History of Modern Wales* (Murray, 1965), p. 254.

become a Fellow of Balliol; more recently, he had been called to the Bar. His work on the Commission was followed by a distinguished career as secretary to the Committee of Council for Education (1849-70) and permanent secretary to the Treasury from 1870 until his retirement in 1885, when he was raised to the peerage as Lord Lingen. The other Commissioners, who were assigned to other parts of Wales were Jelniger Cookson Symons, and Henry Robert Vaughan Johnson, both graduates of Cambridge, the first already a barrister and the other soon to qualify likewise.

Lingen commenced his fieldwork in Llandovery on 18 October 1846 and finished at Merthyr Tydfil on 3 April 1847. His personal report, in Part I,¹⁵ takes up pages 1 to 42, supplemented by tables in pages 43 to 61. In addition, the volume contains 492 large pages of field reports, of which about 90 pages relate to evidence taken in respect of Carmarthenshire; evidence relating to the other two counties each takes up roughly the same space. There are also over 200 pages of parish tables concerning the three counties and about fifteen pages dealing generally with mining, manufacturing, and adult night schools. Whatever else may be said of the reports, there cannot be anything but agreement on the despatch and thoroughness with which the task was discharged.

The reports showed that education in Wales was in a deplorably bad state. Most parishes had no school at all; if there was one, it was pitifully inadequate, often accommodated in a dilapidated out-building, loft or stable, usually dirty and rudely furnished. Teachers, generally, achieved no better standards. Often, they had resorted to teaching because of some misfortune, such as the loss of a limb, which denied them employment in other spheres; perhaps, just as often, they were untrained and incapable, because of their deficiency in the language, of teaching in English, which was the medium of instruction. The language question apart, conditions of much the same kind commonly prevailed in England, and had the reports been restricted to accommodation and teaching standards, the reaction would doubtless have been greatly tempered. But the reports contained such unflattering statements as to lacerate national pride and whip up a fury of resentment. It was alleged that the Welsh language was a barrier against enlightenment and advancement, which resulted not only in widespread ignorance, but wild, immoral and unchaste behaviour as well. Critics, therefore, viewed the reports as a gratuitous libel against the Welsh people.

15. The other volumes, Parts II and III of the reports, relate to the areas for which Symons and Johnson were responsible.

The controversy was further aggravated by divergent attitudes as to what form education should take and how it should be provided. At that time there was a widespread feeling that education should have a moral and religious foundation. By a fairly lengthy tradition the Sunday Schools had exercised an educational function and many felt that education was a religious and not a state responsibility. On this issue the debate revolved upon the concept of voluntaryism. Most Welsh Nonconformists, and many of their counterparts in England, were voluntaryists, who objected to state aid for the provision of schools, which they maintained should come into being as a result of voluntary effort; often they equated the idea of state education with a state church and feared that, if it materialised, the educational system would be founded inalienably upon the Anglican Church. These apprehensions were genuinely held and few were ready to perceive a solution in a secular system of education, inconceivable to some and anathema to many. Whereas Nonconformists were generally, but not wholly, voluntaryists (in north Wales, for instance, the voluntaryists were not nearly as strong), Anglicans were not inhibited by such qualms and accepted aid willingly from the State, which voluntaryists regarded as the handmaid of the Established Church.

At the centre of this angry and passionate controversy was William Williams. Although he was one of those who looked forward to a secular system acceptable to all, he was viewed by many of his compatriots as the begetter of the Blue Books, the repository of the libellous malice against his native land that had been compounded by the Commissioners. Among these were David Charles, Carmarthen, David Rees, Llanelli (editor of *Diwygiwr*), Henry Richard and, perhaps the most violent in his criticism, Ieuan Gwynedd (Rev. Evan Jones), who was briefly editor of *The Principality*, published in Cardiff. Those who shared Williams's view that popular education was a state responsibility included Hugh Owen (later to become the principal founder of the University College at Aberystwyth), Dr. Lewis Edwards, Bala, (editor of *Y Traethodydd*) and Kilsby Jones. These latter, and those who thought like them, were also supported in their belief in a state system by their conviction that the people of Wales were too poor to provide schools out of their own voluntary resources.

Though, having lost his parliamentary seat, he was now deprived of a national forum to promote his views, Williams did not remain idle, but used all other means to vindicate himself against the powerful attacks against him and to advance the cause of a state aided system of education. To some extent he had himself undermined his own position by having, it would seem, accepted the reports un-

critically; furthermore, he had made pronouncements regarding Welsh culture and social conditions, which more than anything, perhaps, served to stir the ire of his critics. Though it was unwise to say that the Welsh language had not for ages produced any literature, he was not far wrong in claiming that it was deficient in printed works relating to modern knowledge, science and technology. His intention in saying that the Welsh people 'laboured under a peculiar difficulty from the existence of an ancient language' may have been misunderstood, but it is not surprising that thereby he invited and certainly got abusive javelins from insulted countrymen.

He also attributed the Rebecca Riots and the Newport Chartist rising to ignorance and want of education, thus giving the impression that such disturbances were peculiar to Wales, whereas England, too, was not without similar experience. Although it was the Commissioners' reports that alleged immorality and unchastity, Williams, too, was made to share the blame. Criticism from such causes surrounded him with controversial warfare that often paid little attention to his passionate plea for the 'blessings of education' which he was demanding on behalf of the inarticulate and neglected. But he was not left alone against the shower of critical missiles that assailed him; there were others, moved by strong conviction, who willingly came to his aid.

During the year 1848, Williams wrote two pamphlets, the first of which was a 'Letter to Lord John Russell on the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State of Education in Wales'. The other was 'A Second Letter on the present Defective State of Education in Wales', which was addressed to those who wished to promote the well-being of the Welsh people. The first of these letters, addressed to the Prime Minister, contained much of what he had said in Parliament when he called for an inquiry in March 1846. This drew an acid reply from Ieuan Gwynedd, who refuted charges of ignorance, immorality and disorderliness among the Welsh. His was the defiant trumpet blast on behalf of the Voluntarists: 'The anxiety of the people for education renders your scheme [advocated by Williams] unnecessary. The Welsh are determined to educate themselves'.

Those who rushed to the defence of Williams came from within Wales and without. Among them was Gibbon Salisbury,¹⁶ a descendant of the illustrious William Salisbury. In a letter to Williams, in 1849, he lamented the Coventry defeat and expressed his desire

to see Williams back "again in the House as the avowed champion of Education for the Welsh". In another, a public letter to the Marquis of Landsdowne, President of the Council, Salisbury condemned the opponents of state-aided education who 'have, like cowards, turned upon the friends of Education and have called them enemies of religion . . . who wished to shut up all Sunday Schools and Dissenting Chapels, and who hated the Welsh tongue'. In this letter Salisbury complained that the opponents of state aid had been 'cajoled by one', which may have been a reference to the opposition of Ieuan Gwynedd.

In his second letter, Williams cited some of the many evidences, contained in the Commissioners' reports, of the degraded state of education in Wales and doubted not when 'this humiliating picture had been brought under notice' that the Government would have 'directed efficient means to be adopted to remedying so crying an evil'. But he had been disappointed that the only result had been 'an exposure of a more disgraceful neglect of the Queen's British subjects than exists in any other civilized country in the world'. His broadside, fired without the walls of Parliament, boomed: 'Surely the Government does not consider that its duties to the people of Wales are limited to Taxing them; if that be not the case, it cannot permit them to remain in this deplorable condition. I have used my humble but earnest efforts to awaken the sympathies of Her Majesty's ministers, and to induce them to adopt effectual remedial measures, but not being now in Parliament, those efforts remain unheeded'. Of those who might have been expected to be more active, he had this to say: 'The persons who have commanding influence with the Government are the Peers connected with the Principality; but they keep aloof and do nothing'. Much the same might have been said of the Welsh Members, who were 'mostly ignorant of the language and out of sympathy with the ideas of those whom they were supposed to represent'.¹⁷

From the outset, Williams saw that the provision of adequate training to supply properly equipped teachers in sufficient numbers was essential. 'What Wales stands in indispensable need', he wrote, 'before a successful effort can be made to establish good education is properly and well-trained teachers, without whom any attempt to improve and extend education would be futile . . . Energetic efforts should therefore be directed to establish training schools for the education of schoolmasters'. The Congregational Union had not

16. He became M.P. for Chester. His vast collection of books, many relating to Wales, was given to University College, Cardiff.

17. D. Salmon, 'The Story of a Welsh Education Commission', *Y Gymrodor*, Vol. XXIV, p. 192.

long succeeded in instituting a Normal School at Brecon for teacher-training and a Training College, founded by the National Society, was soon to open at Carmarthen to supply Church School teachers. These were voluntary institutions. Williams advocated the establishment of two additional training schools with the help of government grants, one for north and the other for south Wales, for educating one hundred schoolmasters for each area. He stressed that these should co-operate with the Brecon and Carmarthen training schools in 'carrying out the one great object they have in common—namely, the educating and elevating of the Welsh people'. But this was not the limit of his horizon; he stood upon an eminence that extended it far enough for him to appreciate the 'inestimable good' of making similar provision for the training of schoolmistresses, too.

Although he respected the sincere feeling of independence shown by Nonconformists, Williams all along doubted their ability to overcome the financial difficulties in achieving their object. Practical experience had shown that response to appeals for money had not been adequate to support the voluntary principle and he feared that if Wales insisted on such a principle exclusively it would involve the abandonment of any sound educational system. He therefore, in his letter to Lord John Russell, invited the ministers and people of all sects and creeds to join him in devoting 'united and unbroken efforts to the sacred cause of educating and elevating their poorer fellow countrymen'. In backing his case, by offering to subscribe £500 towards establishing and maintaining a Training School, Williams stated: 'My pecuniary interest in Wales is but little compared with that of thousands of other men. I possess only a comparatively small property in that country. I offer my contribution from a sense of duty imposed upon property, and that I ought to apply a portion of what I draw from the industry of that country, to improve the intellectual, social and physical condition of its people . . .'

He re-affirmed his views at a meeting concerning education in Wales, convened by the mayor at Swansea on 29 January 1849; in doing so, he demonstrated his attitude to his native language by insisting that the first step to be attained by the working classes of Wales was 'a competent knowledge of the English language without, of course, disturbing the Welsh'. At an adjourned session of this meeting, which was reported by the *Swansea and Glamorgan Herald*, the audience appeared to be almost evenly divided on the question of state aid for education, for a resolution in favour of a college for training schoolmasters, open to all denominations and dependent upon government aid, was carried by a bare majority amidst a 'most awful uproar'.

So long as the debate raged, the real issue—how to achieve a satisfactory system of education—remained largely unsolved and the interests of the illiterate were almost forgotten in the conflict between the forces of politics and religion. At times, it degenerated into a recriminatory exercise between the sects. In 1854, for instance, the Rev. Robert Jones (*Derfel*) published *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision* (Treachery of the Blue Books), a dramatic poem of dubious literary quality, in which members of the Anglican Church were contrasted unfavourably with Dissenters. When religion and morality, or lack of it, was not at issue, the Welsh language and its literature was the subject of recrimination, but whether there was any intent to undermine or even annihilate the vernacular, there is no doubt that there was a widespread desire to acquire a knowledge of English as the 'language of advancement'; indeed, it has been said that at that time 'the teaching of that language was almost the be-all and end-all of education in Wales'.¹⁸

These conflicts, and the added misfortune arising from the split in the Nonconformist ranks, impeded progress towards an efficient system of secular education, particularly in south Wales, where the Voluntarists were at their strongest. Largely responsible for this hindrance was the determined but sincere opposition of sturdy Nonconformists, whose short-sightedness ultimately exposed them as 'false prophets',¹⁹ though it is fair to say that some later recognized their error and recanted. The role of Williams, on the other hand, has been variously assessed. There is no gainsaying his passionate belief in state-aided education, but there has sometimes been a tendency to overlook this by emphasizing his attitude, or supposed attitude, to Welsh life and culture and charging him with views unsympathetic to the Welsh language. Some see him as the willing and chosen tool of the Government in its intention to annihilate the Welsh language and assimilate the Welsh people.²⁰ By others he is seen as a man 'Welsh to his hearts core', who 'at length advocated his country's claims in the House of Commons';²¹ one worthy to be named with Griffith Jones, Llanddowror and Thomas Charles (of Sunday School fame),²² whose 'clarion call in his long but stirring Parliamentary oration had bestirred the interest of employers who had previously been indifferent to the need for an educated work-

18. D. Salmon, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

19. (Sir) T. Marchant Williams, 'The Romance of Welsh Education', *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymru* 1901-2.

20. Gwynfor Evans, *Land of My Fathers* (John Penry Press 1974), p. 366.

21. D. Silman, *loc. cit.*

22. Leslie Wynne Evans, *Studies in Welsh Education* (University of Wales Press, 1972), p. 120.

force'.²³ But whatever the view, the English education system, when at last it was introduced as a result of the Act of 1870, was 'avidly received by the parents, if not by the children, as the gateway to the fields of promise'.²⁴

The disappointment wrought by the loss of his seat at Coventry was made more tolerable by the continued affection of his admirers and supporters, which they showed Williams in the form of a silver candelabra and salver, weighing 240 ounces, which were presented to him with an Address paying tribute to the 'ample and indisputable evidence of the faithful and zealous labours, guided by the sole desire of benefiting all classes of your fellow-countrymen', to his efforts to 'increase the influence of the people in the House of Commons . . . by extending the electoral franchise and securing to all classes its independent exercise', his endeavours to enforce economy in public expenditure with a view to removing oppressive taxes on the necessities of life, and his support of 'every measure for intellectual advancement of the people'.

In expressing his thanks Williams said he had never asked a favour of the government and as a result he had been able to 'make my stand as an independent man amongst those who surrounded me, many of whom were bound by ties of various kinds' and who were 'prevented from doing their duty honestly to their constituents'. He referred to the course taken against him by Dissenters in the election in which he was defeated and insisted that he wanted an educational system entirely free from sectarian bias; he was 'well persuaded that the time is not far distant when we shall have a scheme of education which will be satisfactory to all classes'. Education, above all things, was 'the greatest good that could be conferred upon the common people. I am most anxious for them to obtain their political rights; but at the same time, I know they never will obtain them until they are educated people, and can present that moral force which will be irresistible . . .'.²⁵

When, in July 1850, Williams sought re-entry into Parliament he was still obliged to defend his position as an advocate of 'state education', even though the election was fought in the London constituency of Lambeth. The vacant seat had been caused by the resignation of a sitting member and his opponent was Admiral Sir

23. Leslie W. Evans, *Education in Industrial Wales, 1700—1900* (Avalon Books 1971), pp. 26 and 126.

24. Gwynfor Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

25. *The Coventry Herald*, quoted by Daniel Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-9.

Charles Napier, popularly known as 'Rough and Ready', a Whig who entered the field because he felt Williams was too much of a Radical. During the campaign his adversaries fastened upon two charges—his support of the Maynooth grant (towards a Roman Catholic theological college) and his call for the inquiry which had produced the Report 'bitterly hostile to Dissenters and scandalously libelling the Welsh population'. Furthermore, he was accused of favouring the use of public money for education grants and of wanting to force state education upon the Welsh people. His support of the Maynooth grant was condemned because it was inconsistent with his opposition to religious endowments and to the union of Church and State. It is true that he, a Churchman, was strongly against an established church, but so long as Roman Catholics paid taxes to support the Church of England he felt justified in favouring a grant to a Catholic institution. Williams's supporters countered by pointing out that these were the only two that could be criticized out of more than 2,000 votes he had recorded in the Commons as a representative for Coventry.

In a bitterly fought contest, Williams denounced the 'oligarchical interests' predominant in the Legislature, and the unjust taxation system that 'screens the rich and the property class from contributing their due share' and threw 'an oppressive burden on the industrious and productive classes'. He promised to seek repeal of the window tax and the 'taxes on knowledge' and pledged support for the policy of Free Trade, which had 'added so much to the comforts of the People'; and, in claiming that the Reform Act had 'entirely failed to accomplish the objects which its authors professed', advocated a fair distribution of electoral districts and elective franchise, exercised through the Ballot, for all who had attained manhood, criminals excepted.

Williams won the election by an overwhelming majority and so was able to return to Parliament 'to labour side by side with the veteran reformer, Hume'. A writer in *The Principality*, which had been briefly edited by Ieuan Gwynedd, his bitter opponent in the Blue Books controversy, approved Williams's election with enthusiasm and acclaimed him as a man of 'tried political character—of enlightened views—of inflexible honesty—a consistent opposer of all abuse'.²⁶

His first speech (12 August 1850) on re-entering the House of Commons was delivered in opposition to a coercive measure relating

26. Quoted by Daniel Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

to Ireland. He complained that nothing had been done to remedy the grievances of Ireland, which was still governed by armies and coercive Acts. Even so, if the measure, degrading though it was, would prevent a single murder, he would be the last to oppose it. But the crimes perpetrated in Ireland were committed by 'the hand of the oppressed against the oppressor'. Much was heard of these crimes, but nothing of others—evictions, by which hundreds of families were exposed to starvation. He had seen the condition of serfs in the worst parts of Russia and of several tribes of North American Indians, but the condition of the Irish and their dwellings was worse than anything he had seen. Yet in the United States, where men flocked from all nations to improve themselves the Irish competed successfully. They were wretched at home because of misgovernment and too many coercive laws. Among the few who voted with Williams and Hume, were Bright and Cobden.

In the following year (2 April) Williams pursued his election claim that the objects of the Reform Act had not been wholly achieved, by quoting (in the debate on the Compound Householders Bill) figures to show that very many thousands of householders were disfranchised, even though they occupied property of qualifying value. This came about because landlords were able to compound for rates, with the result that tenants were not listed in the rate-book. In London alone those disfranchised thus amounted to two, three and even four times the numbers listed for voting purposes.

Williams always suspected the purpose for which money voted for the Secret Services was used and when the Vote was considered (7 July 1851) he moved, unsuccessfully, that it be substantially reduced. He justified his case by saying there was a prevalent impression that some of the money was used to corrupt voters at elections. He also called for the appointment of a Select Committee, 'fairly chosen', to examine every item of expenditure. This was the occasion when Disraeli, having said that they had heard a remarkable charge, observed that Williams, 'who represented an important metropolitan constituency . . . always spoke on all subjects with statistical accuracy'.

His concern over the treatment of political prisoners was aroused by the case of Ernest Charles Jones, son of a well-to-do Welsh family, who had been sentenced to two years imprisonment for delivering a seditious speech. Jones, a Chartist protagonist, had been punished—along with two other political prisoners who had died of cholera which was raging in the prison—with solitary confinement on bread and water for refusing to pick oakum. Williams called for the repeal

of the legislation that allowed such people to be treated as common felons, subject to oppressive and disgraceful treatment. That cholera infected the prison did not deter Williams from carrying out his duties as a visiting magistrate to do what he could for those who, although convicted, suffered injustice.

In the general election of February 1852 Williams was returned as one of the two members for Lambeth. It was early in this new Parliament that Hume and Williams came to be known as 'the two Arcadians'. The sobriquet was flung contemptuously across the Chamber by Sir Robert Inglis,²⁷ he who had once questioned Williams's loyalty to the Crown. Williams, who was yet again demanding that real property should bear its fair share of duty, he dubbed the Junior Arcadian.

This favoured treatment of real property was to Williams the supreme example of legislative manipulation to secure privilege for the land-owning classes and in a determined effort to win redress he fathered a resolution in the following year, when he condemned it as 'a violation of every principle of common honesty'. In a very long speech he appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Gladstone) to remove this 'stigma on both Houses of the Legislature', which rendered them open to the charge of grasping selfishness. In an equally long reply, Gladstone, while not altogether agreeing, promised a careful examination of the whole question with a view to doing 'full and impartial justice to all classes'. Williams got early satisfaction, for Gladstone, in his budget of April 1853, introduced a 'succession duty' on real property. Williams welcomed the budget as 'the most statesmanlike scheme of finance he heard laid before the House', which it was universally admitted to be.

To Williams a large share of credit may be allotted for an important reform in the management of revenue collection and expenditure. He was concerned that the House should be the protector of public money and that no tax revenue should be expended without its authority. In moving a resolution to secure proper control, he regretted that such an important function had been 'most culpably neglected' over a long period. He justified his case by pointing out that of the millions of pounds collected in taxes a very large proportion was impounded by the revenue departments for salaries and

27. It has been said that the government deputed Inglis to refuse Queen Caroline admission to Westminster Abbey for the coronation of George IV.—See *Dictionary of National Biography*.

other payments. He contended that all revenues should be paid direct into the public treasury and that votes should be set out in the Estimates to meet the expenses of the departments. Undeterred by suggestions that there were insurmountable difficulties, Williams confidently undertook to remove them. His plea impressed an influential ear, for in February 1854 Gladstone introduced a Bill to bring all public revenue under parliamentary control, but because of a change of government the measure was put into effect by his successor, Sir George Cornewall Lewis, who, on 19 May 1856, stated in the House, 'My hon. Friend, the hon. Member for Lambeth, will see that I have included the charge for the collection of the revenue—£4,588,000—which has never been done before'.

That Williams was a recognized champion of maltreated servicemen in the Army and the Navy is illustrated by the case of HMS *Star*, which he raised in the House on 18 May 1854. Already he had been among the foremost to demand reform when he drew the attention of the House (on 20 July 1846) to the flogging of sailors and the manner in which courts-martial were constituted in the Navy. In doing so, he compared the continued harshness of naval punishments with the less rigorous demands of the criminal law, which had been 'very greatly ameliorated', with the result that the punishment of death, which was formerly inflicted for numerous crimes, was imposed only in a few cases. While civilians were punished, for stealing, with short terms of imprisonment, the sailor was still liable to be hanged. In recent years Chartists had been sentenced to imprisonment for uttering seditious words; a sailor could be sentenced to death for a like offence. 'A sailor', said Williams, 'might have been seized by a press gang, dragged from his house like a criminal, and have all his prospects blasted, and under feelings of irritation from such treatment, might utter words of complaint which might be construed into seditious language. Such a punishment ought not to be allowed to remain . . .'. Even in the Army, he said, there was protection against violence and injustice and flogging could not be inflicted without the sanction of a court-martial. But the sailor was flogged at the sole will of the captain and had no appeal.

Some days later Williams made a plea on behalf of the soldier. But while some reforms were needed, he took the view that the soldier's condition was superior to that of the agricultural labourer. When military flogging was debated (7 August) he said the whole country looked with astonishment and indignation at the punishment inflicted on those men who were called upon to hazard their lives in their country's service. Because certain generals and admirals thought it necessary, flogging was being retained and if it were left to the

discretion of such people it would never be got rid of. He called upon the Government to take the responsibility upon themselves.

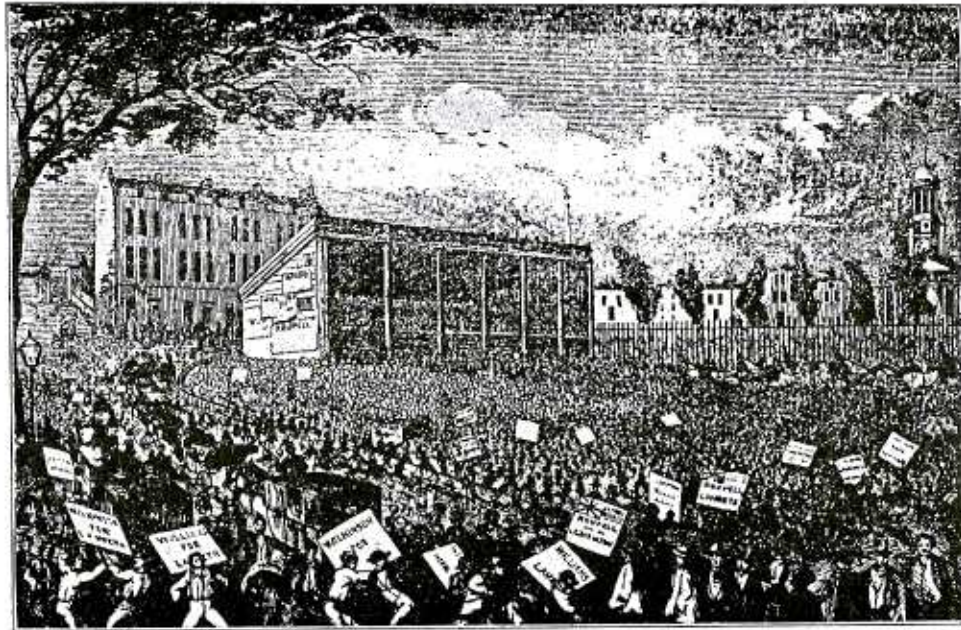
Williams made many similar protests, but he was long dead before reformative legislation was passed. Even so, partial success was achieved in the following year, when Williams, in co-operation with Hume called (on 9 February 1847) for the publication of punishments carried out on each of Her Majesty's ships. As a result there was a prodigious fall in the number of punishments inflicted.

In the case of HMS *Star*, Williams had received information from the crew and he alleged in the House that punishment had been inflicted with 'a cruelty that would disgrace a cannibal'. He pointed out that the Duke of Wellington had reduced maximum punishment in the Army from one thousand lashes to fifty in deference to the opinion of the House of Commons; he himself had over and over again drawn attention to cases of cruelty in the Navy, with the result that maximum punishment had been reduced from a thousand lashes to forty-eight. As a result of Williams's intervention, the ship's company were relieved of further oppressive cruelty through the resignation of the captain of the *Star*.

Unloved by senior officers of the fighting services, the intractable Williams was often the object of their spleen, but he was never one to be intimidated by oral threats, as witness his clash with Col. Knox, the Member for Marlow, in the debate on the Army Estimates in 1855. The Colonel, in a forthright manner, had taken exception to Williams's remarks about a table allowance of £500 that had been granted the Guards; resenting the strong language used, Williams defiantly assured his opponent that he would not be deterred from condemning abuses and that while there was something thought to be 'very terrible in the name of a soldier', he was neither afraid of the Colonel nor of any other man.

Soon (27 March), he returned to the attack during a debate on the method of Army appointments. It was well known, he said, that many staff officers, who had not been under fire (during the Crimean War), had been promoted over the heads of regimental officers who had been engaged in the field. He deprecated a system in which men of means connected with the aristocracy might purchase advancement and was convinced that there must be a change if the Army were to become as efficient as it ought to be. On the other hand, he had nothing but praise for the troops at Inkerman, generally admitted to be 'the battle of the private soldier', and their bravery had never been exceeded.

Williams, who had inherited the mantle of Joseph Hume as foremost among the Radicals following his death in 1855, was returned to Parliament in the election of 1857, but after the dissolution in April 1859, he felt his deteriorating health would not allow him to carry on efficiently and he therefore announced his retirement. But when he was informed of a rumour that he had been 'bought over' to stand down, his pride was stung and he yielded to the entreaties of his supporters to change his mind, with the result that he was returned unopposed.



The hustings at Kennington Green during the Lambeth Election of 1857, the last that Williams was obliged to contest.

This change-about made him the subject of some amusing verse in *Punch* (30 April 1859), which proclaimed
 Now Lambeth, trebly blest, has got
 Its Wiscount Williams back again.

After commending Williams's ability 'In high Finance to 'spound and 'splain', the skit concluded:
 Still penny wisdom's constant friend,
 He'll save our every candle-end,
 Till Britain bless the men that send
 Her Wiscount Williams back again.

That he was called Viscount Williams, in Cockney fashion, was a reference to a constituency speech made by Williams in 1857 (reported in *The Times* of 25 March), in which he stated, that during the time he had served in Parliament he had 'never asked or received the slightest favour from the various Governments which had held office', though he had 'often been tried' and had been 'subjected to temptations of all sorts and upon many occasions'. It was suggested that the 'temptations' even included promise of a title in return for support of the government. But, refusing to be bought, Williams insisted that the only sure way to win his support was through the presentation of 'measures beneficial to the country'. The following day *The Times* carried a leading article in which Williams was described as 'the Williams—adapted as he is by nature to grace any station'; otherwise, there was little but scorn for the claim that he had been offered and refused a title. His biographer, unimpressed by such disbelief, prefers to rely on the honesty of Williams and backs his confidence by pointing out that Delane, the editor, was a powerful government supporter.²⁸ Whatever the truth, in view of his unrelenting capacity for searching inquiry, it is not impossible to believe that approaches were made to Williams in an attempt to draw his critical fangs.

His concern for the cultural well-being of ordinary folk was demonstrated in the House in 1860 when he complained about the lamentable lack of opportunity afforded the working-classes to visit the British Museum, which was open to the public on only three days a week and in day-time hours. He pressed for evening opening, and more opportunity to make use of its facilities, but it was not until 1879 that the Museum was opened for six days a week.

Once more Williams returned to the attack on the privileged position of landowners, when (on 19 February 1861) he moved a resolution in the House that real property should be made to pay the same probate duty as personal property. Although, in 1853, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Gladstone) had introduced a 'succession duty', it was only at a rate half that on personal property, and Williams complained that the rich were still favourably treated—'an extraordinary situation, for the justice of which no man would contest'.

It was in reply to this speech that Gladstone, Chancellor once more, paid tribute to Williams by saying, '... on former occasions, and occasions of great importance, when it has been my duty to make large and important proposals to this House, I have had to make them with the acknowledgment that he was the Member of this House who had taken the most prominent part in bringing those proposals

28. Daniel Evans, op. cit., pp. 297-9.



In this cartoon, published after Williams announced his retirement from Parliament, the 'Alternative' medicine and the 'Doulton Mixture' are the elixirs that made him change his mind. Doulton, of the well-known pottery family, who strongly supported Williams, was the man who withdrew his parliamentary candidature following malicious rumours that he had bought Williams. Besides a quip about his refusal of a title, the cartoon includes allusions to Williams's reputation for asking awkward questions, especially on finance, and his friendship with Joseph Hume.

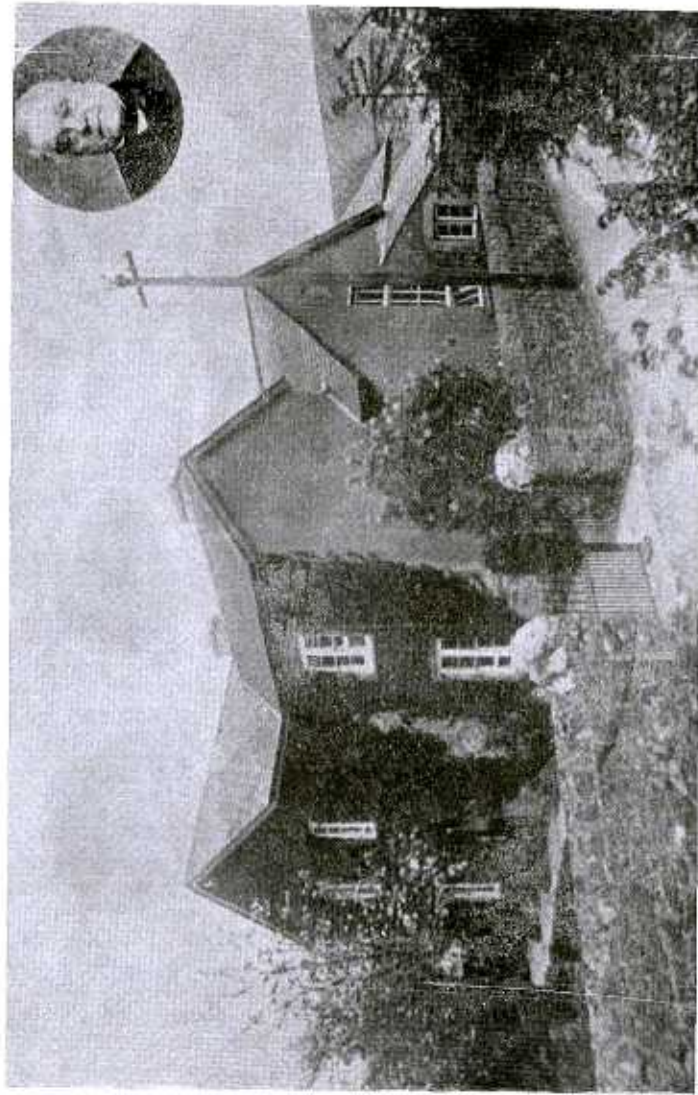
under notice. With regard to the Succession duties, for example, and the importance of bringing the whole Revenue of the country under the control of Parliament, I have paid public tribute to his exertions, because my hon. Friend made proposals with regard to both of these matters that, being in themselves just, have proved both practicable and beneficial'.

But this time he failed to win the agreement of Gladstone, who gave cogent reasons for his objections, among them the fact that annual direct taxation on personal property was light, whereas on land and real property it was heavy. Gladstone got the better of the argument and this was the last time that Williams raised the subject.

The years were now beginning to sap the parliamentary energy of the redoubtable Williams and his speeches and questions were noticeably dwindling; but he still interceded in the affairs of the House, though with less fire and certainly at shorter length. One of these occasions (10 March 1864) concerned his abhorrence of flogging in the Services, which he believed to be unnecessary, imprisonment being an ample substitute. When a Member objected by asking who was to do the offender's duty while in prison, Williams was still alert enough to summon up a devastating riposte, 'Who will do his duty while his back is bleeding?' But much as he condemned the flogging of soldiers and sailors, his objection to bodily chastisement did not encompass exemption for wife-beaters. Years before, in 1856, he had supported his compatriot, L. L. Dillwyn, Member for Swansea, when he brought in the Aggravated Assaults Bill. He deplored the common occurrence of wife-beating, which all kinds of punishment had failed to eliminate, and considered that 'nothing would affect a brute capable of maltreating a woman as much as subjecting him to the same bodily pain which he caused to others'.²⁹

His last question in the House (18 July 1864) challenged—almost inevitably—items of expenditure in respect of a steamer for the Governor of Gambia and the maintenance of forts and establishments in the Gold Coast. But he was thinking not only of money when he enquired of the Colonial Secretary whether there was any need of 'such an outlay to keep off the poor blacks'.

Though, thanks to parliamentary records, press reports and election addresses, Williams's public life is copiously documented, little is known of his private life. A tribute to him, in Welsh, by the Rev. Kilsby Jones says he was wealthy and generous. 'A great big man is he, and on his shoulders there is a head and not simply a peg on which to put his hat. He is a man of strong sense and



Llanpumsaint School (on right) and House (on left), with Williams inset. Since the picture was taken many years ago, the creeper has been removed.

wide knowledge as a politician. He is industrious and practical; and nothing he dislikes more than to have to do with people who write and talk the whole day long, but accomplish nothing. He has a big warm heart, and he is one of the most hospitable men in the world'.³⁰ His old schoolmate David Owen (Brutus) spoke of him as 'a man of normally skinflint carefulness and of exceptionally bouncing generosity'. This generosity was exercised during frequent visits to his native county, when, it is said, 'his pockets were always full of gold to distribute to old friends'. The same observer, writing in 1875, described him as 'a gentleman in truth—not like some successful dwarf of a man . . . who quickly forgets his country, his native language, his relatives and his nationality'.³¹

Although he spent the whole of his working life in commerce and politics 'over the border', he never completely uprooted himself from the land of his upbringing and he retained the interest of a farmer's son in the ways of the countryside. During his return visits he loved to attend the annual show of the Carmarthenshire Agricultural Society and the dinner either at the Ivy Bush or the Boar's Head in Carmarthen. On one of these occasions, in 1843, he attended the show at Park-y-Velvet Field in Carmarthen (now occupied by the Provision Market); at the Boar's Head dinner, during the 1846 show, his health was proposed by the president, Major-General Sir James Cockburn, Dolgwm, who, although differing in politics, spoke of Williams's 'extraordinary career', his 'honesty of principle and purpose' and his 'undoubted abilities'.³²

Two of his most notable expressions of generosity in his last years were handsome gifts to promote the cause of education. One took the form of a school and master's house which he provided for his native village of Llanpumsaint. The building, complete with an enclosed playground, he also furnished down to the very last requirement, so that it was only necessary for the pupils to sit at their desks and start their lessons from the newly qualified teacher he recruited. When he opened the school in 1862, he spoke in good Welsh, it is recorded,³³ although he had by then been away for nearly sixty years. The school is still in use and proudly displays his full-length portrait beneath a bronze commemorative tablet in the schoolroom. This tablet unveiled on 22 May 1934 and inscribed in Welsh, pays tribute

30. *Y Traethodydd* (1850), p. 257. English translation quoted by Daniel Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

31. A personal memory, recorded in Welsh, by the Rev. Evan Davies, Cwmdwyfran, and quoted by Daniel Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

32. *The Welshman*, 11 September, 1846.

33. Rev. Evan Davies, *loc. cit.*

to his brave fight to secure free schooling for the people of Wales and his generosity in supporting the campaign for a university college in Wales.³⁴

His other important contribution was a donation towards the founding of a university college. Although he had some years earlier promised a substantial contribution for this purpose, provided others did likewise—they were not forthcoming, in the event—his gift did not materialise until after his death and took the form of a bequest of £1,000. This sum he had undertaken to contribute when steps were being undertaken in 1863 to promote higher education in Wales and towards the end of that year (1 December) Williams presided over an historic meeting at the Freemasons Tavern in London, during which it was resolved to establish a University for Wales. An executive committee was set up and Dr. Thomas Nicholas and Williams were appointed secretary and treasurer respectively. Williams may therefore be quite justly regarded as one of the founders of university education in Wales, although chief credit must go to Hugh Owen (later knighted for his services to Welsh education), whose labours saw the University College opened at Aberystwyth in 1872. It was his pioneering work which persuaded Mrs. D. H. Evans³⁵ to present to the college a marble bust of Williams, executed in 1846 by Welsh sculptor, Joseph Edwards.

Williams was now well over seventy-five years of age and it is peculiarly fitting that his interest at the end of his life should be devoted to the promotion of education—the one cause he supported above all others—in the village he grew up in and in the country of his birth. Other causes to benefit from his bequests were the Carmarthen Literary and Scientific Institution (formerly the Mechanics' Institute) and the Carmarthen Infirmary.

Williams's declining health was unable to withstand the effects of a fall from his horse while riding in Rotten Row and on 28 April 1865 he passed away at his home, 12 Park Square, Regents Park, London. He lies buried in Kensal Green next to his fellow 'Arcadian', Joseph Hume, his red granite tombstone proclaiming his constant support of 'Educational, Economic and all Liberal Measures'. Whatever his failings, it cannot be doubted that he was an honest man who fought honourably for the things he believed in, and he deserves to be better known in his native county than history has so far allowed.

34. The present writer was among those in attendance at this commemorative meeting.

35. Wife of D. H. Evans, of Oxford Street, London, who was a grandson of Williams's sister, Beti.

The Early History of Court Henry, Dryslwyn

by JOHN A. LLOYD

FROM time to time, it has been said that Court Henry is so named because Henry Tudor, later King Henry VII stayed there on his way to England and victory at the battle of Bosworth. Unfortunately, this charming legend is not true. The house, which lies on the western edge of Llangathen Parish, a few hundred yards north of the Carmarthen-Llandeilo A40 Trunk Road at Cross Inn, took its name from the man who built it in the second half of the 15th century. This man was Henry ap Gwilym, a member of a family which had lived in and around the Parish of Llangathen for very many generations.

The majority of the historical records of Henry ap Gwilym and his ancestors are to be found in two manuscripts written in 1907 by Dr. E. A. Lewis of the University College of Wales, for Sir John Williams of Plas, Llanstephan. They are entitled:—

1. "A collection of documents illustrating the history of the Castle, Town and Lordship of Dryslwyn, from the earliest times to the close of the reign of Henry VIII". (This manuscript has not been published and is MS 455 D in the National Library of Wales).
2. "Materials illustrating the history of Dynevor and Newton from the earliest times to the close of the reign of Henry VIII". (This manuscript has been published in the *The Transactions of the Historical Society of West Wales*, Vol. I, 1911).

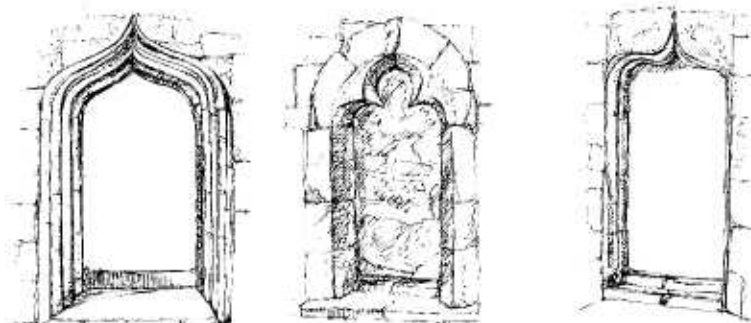
The pedigree of Henry ap Gwilym and his ancestors is recorded in Lewis Dwnn's *Heraldic Visitation*.

These are the main sources of information ; others will be noted as they arise. Henry ap Gwilym was a descendant of Goronwy Goch on his father's side and of Llewelyn Foethus on his mother's side. A word or two about these well-known ancestors demonstrates that Henry ap Gwilym and his predecessors had been living in the Parish of Llangathen "time out of mind".

Goronwy Goch, who lived in the second half of the 13th century and into the early part of the 14th century, was Constable of

Dryslwyn Castle in 1281 (Welsh Assize Roll 1277-84, pp. 171, 332). In 1301, he is named as one of the Three Foresters of Glyn Cothi. (P.R.O. Min. Acc. 1218/1). From time to time he is given the title "Lord of Llangathen". According to Lewis Dwnn, he married Dythgy, a descendant of the well-known Irish mercenary Eidio Wyllt, who came to Wales to help Prince Rhys ap Tudor in his battles against the Normans. Goronwy and Dythgy had a son named Griffith who is named in the Carmarthen Cartulary under the year 1309.

Griffith had a son David, (possibly another named Owen), and a daughter named Mawl. On his death, Griffith's property (whatever that may have been) was divided between his children and his father's honorific title, "Lord of Llangathen", passed to Llewelyn Foethus of Porthwrydd, now Berllan Dywyll, in the Parish of Llangathen.¹ David, Griffith's eldest son, had two sons, Thomas and Llewelyn.



Ancient windows at Court Henry, blocked up during alterations to the house.

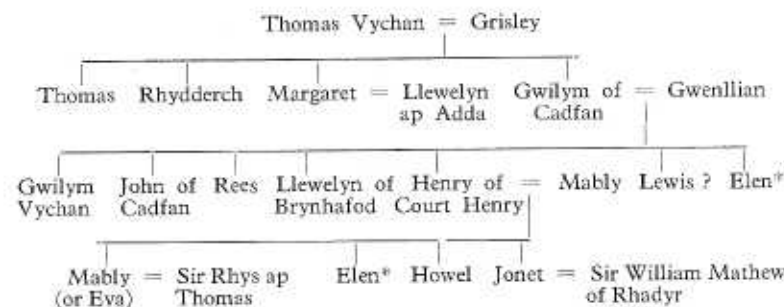
Thomas, the eldest son, married Gwenllian, a daughter of Rhys ap Llewelyn ap Rhys and had three sons, Thomas Vychan, Rees and David. Thomas Vychan is recorded as living at Gwernan or Krynga, places which either no longer exist or, more likely, are mistakes for the two farms, Wern and Grongar in the neighbourhood of Grongar Hill in the Parish of Llangathen. He married Grisley, a daughter of Gwilym ap Philip of Llandeilo Fawr, by whom he had four children. His death is the subject of an ode by Lewys Glyn Cothi, which tells us little about him other than that he gave the poet, who was collecting funds for the Lancastrian cause, some substantial donations.

1. See *Carmarthenshire Historian* Vol XV, "The Families of Berllan Dywyll" by Major Francis Jones.

Thomas and Grisley's children were Thomas, Rhydderch, Gwilym and Margaret. Nothing is known about Rhydderch. Margaret married Llewelyn ap Adda of Trawscoed. Thomas and Gwilym have places in the manuscripts written by Dr. E. A. Lewis.

In 1451-2, Thomas ap Thomas Vychan and another farmer had been tenants of lands in Dryslwyn since 1424, for which they paid rent of £11-10. a year, with the understanding "To keep the King's Park there without waste or the destroying of wood, to repair and maintain the enclosure round the said Park and also clean the ditch round the said Park as often as necessary". In the same years, 1451-2, Lewis ap Gwilym ap Thomas was one of the two Bailiffs of Dryslwyn Park. This Lewis, as will be seen later, was Thomas's nephew.

In 1461-2, Thomas ap Thomas Vychan is recorded as the sole tenant of Dryslwyn Park, but in 1464-5, the Park was re-let to two tenants, one being Thomas's nephew Henry ap Gwilym. One can assume that Thomas died between 1462 and 1464. He apparently had no surviving issue. At this stage, a simple pedigree may make the the story easier to follow.



Thomas ap Thomas Vychan has been dealt with above. Rhydderch is unknown except for his name. So, we come to the other son, Gwilym ap Thomas Vychan. Gwilym is recorded in the pedigrees as living at Cadfan, in the Parish of Llangathen, a house, now known as Lethr Cadfan north of Broad Oak, which still retains some 15-16th century features. There are no records of Gwilym's tenure of land in Dryslwyn or Dynevor; he simply appears in the pedigrees, which show that he married Gwenllian, a descendant of Llewelyn Foethus and had five (or six) sons and a daughter, as shown in the pedigree above.

Henry is the son about whom this essay is written, but the other children are of some interest. John inherited Cadfan, married and had issue. Llewelyn inherited Brynhafod, a farm near Cadfan of which no significant old buildings remain. Lewys Glyn Cothi wrote an ode to Llewelyn in which he says he also owned two other houses in Llangathen, namely Lan-lais (Glan Lash, between Broad Oak and Cross Inn) and Glandulais (near Cross Inn). In the second line of this ode the poet calls Llewelyn "Lewis" and apparently the two names are interchangeable. So, Llewelyn and Lewis may be the same person, which is why his name is shown with a question-mark in the pedigree above.

Gwilym's sister Elen is shown twice in the pedigree above, because, as will be explained later, she may have been Henry ap Gwilym's daughter and not his sister. Elen married Llewelyn ap Gwilym of Ystradffin (in Rhandir-mwyn).

Henry ap Gwilym is mentioned in both the manuscripts by Dr. E. A. Lewis and was also the subject of an ode by Lewys Glyn Cothi. It is said that his father gave him the farm called Lan-lais, which conflicts with what Lewys Glyn Cothi says in his ode to Llewelyn, in that the latter owned Lan-lais, so one can only suppose that Henry passed it on to Llewelyn.

In the year 1456 Henry acted as surety for arrears of rent of Sir William Herbert, which would indicate that by this time he was a fairly substantial farmer/landowner. By 1466, although not specifically stated, he was the tenant of Dryslwyn Park and also was the tenant of divers lands which included the profits of the mill and Court of Altigar (Allt-y-gaer, south-west of Grongar Hill). This mill was burned down in 1466 and took eight years to re-build. To pay for the cost of re-building, Henry's rent was reduced from £11-10 a year to £6 and he was also given a grant of £2-5-8. It is this rent figure of £11-10 that makes it fairly certain the land was Dryslwyn Park, because it is the same sum as paid by his uncle Thomas ap Thomas Vychan for the Park.

The last record of Henry ap Gwilym is under 1492, when he was definitely the tenant of the Park. In 1506 the Park was leased to Henry's daughter Elen. There may be some confusion here. Lewis Dwnn shows Elen as Henry's sister, but Dr. E. A. Lewis clearly says she was "Verch" Henry ap Gwilym. Francis Green of St. David's was of the opinion that there were mistakes in the printed edition of Lewis Dwnn's *Visitation*—and perhaps this is one of them—and that Elen's true place in the pedigree is as Henry's daughter. Hence the asterisks in the pedigree above.

At some unknown date in the second half of the 15th century Henry ap Gwilym built Court Henry. A certain amount of the stonework of that period still exists, but, as the house was considerably altered in the early 19th century, the shape and extent of the original Court Henry is uncertain. Tradition states that Henry ap Gwilym fought eight or ten duels with Sir Thomas ap Griffith of Dynevor, father of the illustrious Sir Rhys ap Thomas. The account can be found in *The Cambrian Register* of 1795, under "Biography"; this was written by an unknown author in the early years of the reign of King James I. Why these duels were fought is not stated, but it is clear from the story that Sir Thomas ap Griffith was a skilled and belligerent soldier, who settled arguments by fighting. We only have a cloudy view of Henry ap Gwilym, but something can be reconstructed from what is known of the two rivals' past.

It says in the article in *The Cambrian Register* that Sir Thomas ap Griffith in his youth, won great renown in the army of the Duke of Burgundy. Lewys Glyn Cothi's ode to Henry ap Gwilym indicates that Henry had served in the army of Gascony. Perhaps old rivalries, stemming from France, continued in Wales. According to the article, Henry lost all the duels, but he was luckier than a certain Turberville, who, fighting on behalf of Sir William Herbert, got his back broken by Sir Thomas ap Griffith.

This is all that history relates of Henry ap Gwilym, the builder of Court Henry, but in the telling of the tale it is sad to find so many 15th century people of Llangathen who are no more than shadows on the screen of history. How did Llewelyn Foethus come to be called the "Luxurious"? Why did Henry and Sir Thomas fight those duels? And one of the bigger enigmas of the Parish of Llangathen: what was the original Aberglasney? and what was the significance of the castellated gateway there. Or older still, what was Castle Argol, by which name Grongar Hill was anciently called?

This, so, was the early history of Court Henry. The remainder is as follows.

Henry married Mably, a daughter of Gwilym ap Llewelyn of Ystradffin. He had a son Howel about whom nothing is known and two daughters, Mably (or Eva) and Jonet. Mably became the first wife of Sir Rhys ap Thomas the heir of Sir Thomas ap Griffith, Henry's old adversary. Elen, who has been written of above may have been a daughter or a sister, and Jonet married Sir William Mathew of Rhadyr. For these two daughters to have married titled husbands, gives some idea of the estate of Henry ap Gwilym.

The next family to own Court Henry was a branch of the Herberts. Whilst absolute proof is lacking, circumstantial evidence shows the following probably to have been the case. When Mably married Sir Rhys ap Thomas, no doubt a substantial dowry was settled on her and this could well have included Court Henry, passing to her absolutely sometime between 1492 and 1506, the period when her father, Henry ap Gwilym would have died. Mably and Sir Rhys ap Thomas had an only son, Sir Griffith ap Rhys, K.G. of Newton, courtier and soldier, who married Katherine, daughter of Sir John St John of Bletso and died in 1521 before his father, having had a son, Rhys ap Griffith.

This Rhys ap Griffith was beheaded for treason in 1531 and his lands confiscated by the Crown. However, the lands confiscated did not include the property settled on his mother, Katherine, who in 1532, married Sir Piers Edgcomb of Cotehele, Cornwall. In 1593-4 certain lands belonging to, or perhaps the estate of Katherine Edgcomb, were sold to John Herbert, his wife Jane and their son John, the lands being in the Parish of Llangathen.²

John Herbert senior, a successful lawyer in Carmarthen, was a descendant of Sir Richard Herbert of Coldbrook and his wife Margaret, a sister of Sir Rhys ap Thomas. Sir Richard and his brother Sir William Herbert, were both beheaded in 1469 after the battle of Edgecote, in which Warwick the King-Maker defeated the royal forces.

Although it is not specifically stated, the sale of land to John Herbert and his family must have included Court Henry, because the will of John Herbert senior, which is in the National Library of Wales, gives one the feeling that he had lived there for many years before his death in 1594.

This then is the story of the builder of Court Henry. He left no memorial tombstone at Llangathen Church which exists today; nevertheless, he left his name for posterity in the house he built.

Note: There is another Court Henry, just to the north of Cil-y-Cwm. The house is now a ruin. It may well have been so named by its one-time owner William Herbert, who died in 1711. This William Herbert was a grandson of the John Herbert, lawyer of Carmarthen, who purchased Court Henry (Llangathen).

London 1979.

2. See *Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, Vol 3, 1961, p. 202, "Aberglasney".

TREFENTY

Some Observations and Reflections

by Major FRANCIS JONES, C.V.O., T.D., D.L., F.S.A.,
Wales Herald of Arms Extraordinary

MY introduction to Trefenty came in an unusual way. After the first World War, a kinsman of my father's, whose family had been engaged for several generations in the coastal seaborne trade, replaced his sailing vessel with a small steamship which would have less reliance on the uncertain element that so often had determined the course of her predecessors. At the time of which I write the vessel called at numerous ports and wharves between Liverpool and Bristol carrying mixed cargoes, but mainly flour for a well-known firm dealing in that commodity. I was fortunate to be able to spend part of my summer holidays on board, and those voyages—the greatest thrill of my boyhood days—remain among my most fragrant memories of those distant times. To the captain and his mariners such voyaging was but a means of subsistence, to me it was adventure, discovery, romance.

On this particular occasion I came aboard from the quayside at Haverfordwest. We then sailed on the ebb along the broad Cleddau and put in at Milford Haven for the night. On the following day we reached Tenby. Our next port of call was to be St. Clears. It was a beautiful day, the elements friendly, we reached Laugharne ahead of the estimated time, and there rode quietly for an hour or so in order to gain full advantage of the flow, for the river Tâf is tidal, and St. Clears could not be reached unless the waters were in our favour. As we cruised up river the captain drew my attention to various landmarks, navigational guides that ensured our safe progression along the comparatively narrow waterway. While the craft was negotiating a slight bend below Brixtarw I pointed across marshland on the opposite bank to a knoll on which a tall weather-tiled double-gabled house stood within a coppice, a smiling statue in a green cloak. I was intrigued by the delectable cameo. What is it called? Trefenty, I was told. We chugged on for some further two miles until we came safely alongside the wharf at Lower St. Clears.

Late on the following day we were outward bound, borne leisurely on the calm bosom of the Tâf. As we rounded the final bend I looked inland and saw again the tall house, the roof and chimneys,

and the uppermost branches of the guardian trees, bathed in the light of the evening sun—pure poetry, a Welsh englyn come to life. Over fifty years were to roll by before I saw Trefenty again.

During the subsequent years I devoted my energies to antiquarian research, involving among others such topics as ancient families, historic houses, heraldry, customs and traditions, and in so doing inevitably made the acquaintance of Trefenty, but in an academic sense. Before discussing my findings, perhaps it will be convenient if I include first a precis of the history of the parish of Llanfihangel Abercywyn, so that Trefenty may be placed in its tenurial and topographical setting.

(a) Topographical

Comprising 6149 acres, the ecclesiastical parish of Llanfihangel Abercywyn lies six-and-a-half miles to the west of the county town of Carmarthen. Shaped like the capital letter Y, it is bounded by the rivers Cywyn, Gynin, and Taf, and occupies the western part of the headland known in ancient times as Penrhyn Dyfed. On the east, beyond the Cywyn, are the parishes of Llandeilo Abercywyn and Llangynog, on the north are Meidrim and Llangynin, on the west St. Clears. Devoted wholly to the pursuit of agriculture, the land rises gradually northwards to reach its highest point of 450 feet just to the southeast of Castell Gorfod. Among the main farms in this river-nourished parish are Trefenty, Pentowyn, Rushmoor, Glasfryn, Wenallt, Foxhole, Lower Court, Pant Dwfwn, Asgood, Trecadwgan, Plas y Gwer, Wern and Esgair. Of these, the five first named were former gentry residences, centres of modest estates once characteristic of the rural scene in Wales.

Near the southern tip of the headland, on a knoll, 142 feet above the estuary, and about 500 yards from the bank, stands Trefenty, well-placed among the 350 acres of attached farmland. Generally the fields are large and on gently sloping ground, so that we need not be surprised to learn that in 1870 "the popular sport of hare coursing at Trefenty gave exercise and recreation of a very enjoyable description". To the south-east, just below the buildings, are the remains of the original parish church, which ceased its ministrations in 1848 when a new and more central church was built through the generosity of Mr. R. Richards of Trecadwgan, near the Carmarthen—St. Clears road (now M4).

To recognise the oldest parts of the ruined fane is difficult, owing to extensive additions and repairs that have been made to it in course of the centuries. More intriguing are the sepulchral slabs

in the graveyard, carved and ornamented with human figures and designs, memorials to members of a family of consequence of the late 12th or early 13th centuries, who had probably lived at Trefenty or at the mound-and-bailey castle on the west side of that house. In quite recent times these monuments are said to mark the graves of "pilgrims" who died on their way to, or from, the shrine of Dewi Sant, which has led some romantics to refer to them as "pilgrims' graves", and the church as the "pilgrim church". But it must be emphasized that no reference whatsoever to pilgrims being associated with this church occurs in any record, document, or tradition, and the authors of tours, topographical and antiquarian works prior to 1860 are wholly silent on the matter. The observation about the "pilgrims' graves" made in the Carmarthenshire volume of the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments, "It is to the revival of interest in Welsh antiquities, and the publication of guide books to Welsh districts, that we probably owe the birth of the legend", is as accurate as it is shrewd. The church has been abandoned for over a century and a quarter, and the local prophecy that should the graveyard ever be neglected the parish would be visited by a plague of snakes, remains unfulfilled. During the later period few worshippers came to the church of Llanfihangel, mainly because of remoteness, particularly during wintry weather. On one occasion, the congregation consisting of only the vicar, and pious old Mr. Evans of Llandeilo (his own church being then in disrepair), who always attended accompanied by a faithful sheep-dog to whom he was devoted, the vicar is said to have introduced into the prayers this extempore distich—

O Dduw, maddeu i ni ein tri
Ifans Llandeilo a finne a'r ci,

which I have ventured to translate as

O Lord, may forgiveness for us three be found
Evans Llandeilo, myself, and the hound.

We might note here some points of similarity between the old churches of Llanfihangel and Llandeilo, just over a quarter of a mile apart—both are situated near the river bank at the southernmost tip of their parishes, both are built alongside important manorhouses, and both are in complete ruin.

(b) Historical Sketch

The district surrounding Trefenty has a long and interesting history. From early days the territory that now includes the parish, formed a comote known as Ystlwyf (later, Oysterlow) in the large cantref of Gwarthaf in the kingdom of Dyfed which remained under its own rulers until the 10th century when it was absorbed into the kingdom of Deheubarth ruled by Hywel Dda and his descendants.

It must be remembered that Dyfed included, not only what became Pembrokeshire, but west Carmarthenshire so far as the Dark Gate (Porth Tywyll) in the town of Carmarthen.

Evidences of early settlement in Llanfihangel Abercywyn are provided by remains of earthen fortifications in a field belonging to Penycoed farm on the banks of the Gynin, while the name of the farm Castell y Waun in the east of the parish suggests the former existence of a similar outpost. A maenhir in one of Trefenty's fields probably marks the resting place of a bygone worthy, as does another in a field called Cae Maenllwyd on Lower Court farm.

Of all these remains the most significant is the large mound-and-bailey castle immediately west of Trefenty house, a site of tactical importance for it dominated the river valleys embracing the headland as well as the seaward approaches. An early record calls it Castell Aber Cavwy, but the last word is considered to be a scribal error for the word Taf-wy, that is, 'the castle at the estuary of the river Taf'. The mound is about 25 feet high, with summit diameter of 75 feet. As the surrounding land has been under cultivation for many centuries, the fosse has partially disappeared. The bailey, extending towards the curtilage of Trefenty, measures 150 feet long by 90 feet wide. The fortification was built by the Normans in the beginning of the 12th century, possibly on the site of an earlier Welsh castell. In the year 1116 Bledri ap Cadifor of Cilsant, interpreter between Welsh and Norman, was entrusted with the defence of the castle for Robert Courtemain.

Undoubtedly the most important area of the parish was around Trefenty. Here stood the castell, alongside it the homestead of Trefenty, and a few hundred yards away the parish church. Such churches were often built in the vicinity of the most important dwelling in a parish, and may explain the situation of the church of Mihangel in this remote spot. Incidentally, the formation of ecclesiastical parishes in southwest Wales was the work of Bernard, Norman bishop of St. Davids from 1115 to 1148, and in all probability it was during those years that the boundaries of Llanfihangel Abercywyn were defined.

The Normans maintained the bounds and identity of the comote of Ystlwyf (Oysterlow) so that its boundaries remained unchanged, for more often than not, the conquerors did little more than change the overlordship and system of tenure. As we shall see, the comote continued to be known as such, while its tenurial jurisdiction was that of a feudal manor or lordship.



Despite Norman penetration, the comote was often held by Welsh princes. In 1171 King Henry confirmed The Lord Rhys in possession of Ystlwyf, and some time after 1188 Rhys granted certain lands within the comote as an endowment to Whitland Abbey. During the 13th century it continued to be held by the princes from time to time, and also by the Earls of Pembroke. After the war of 1282 the comote formed part of the county of Pembroke under the jurisdiction of the earls. In 1390 John Joce was appointed steward of "the lordship of Oysterlow"; six years later the King granted "the comote of Oystrelowe" to his consort, Queen Isabel as part of her dower; in 1415 eight archers from the comote fought at Agincourt; in 1462 extensive lands which included "the lordships and manors of Osterlowe, Trayne Clynton, and St. Clears" were granted by the Crown to William Herbert, later Earl of Pembroke. Eventually it reverted to the Crown, and in 1520 the King appointed John Thomas ap Philip one of the 'dapifers' of the King's Chamber (son of Sir Thomas ap Philip of Pictou Castle) and John Lloyd one of the pages of the Chamber, to be Stewards and Receivers of "the manors or lordships" of Llanstephan and Oysterlowe, with a salary of 100 shillings per annum out of the issues of the said lordships.

In all medieval records Oysterlow continued to be described variously as comote, or lordship, or manor, lying in the county of Pembroke, that is within the Earldom. Part of the comote was held by the monks of Whitland Abbey, but at the Dissolution reverted to the Crown, and thereafter was leased to various people. In 1587 it was described as the "manor or grange called Usterlowe alias Escloigh [Ystlwyf] late parcel of the dissolved monastery of Whitland".

Wales was radically restructured in 1536 when the jurisdictions of the marcher lordships were abolished and the land divided into shires on the English pattern. Cantref Gwarthaf and all lands included in that area, were adjudged to be a part of the newly-formed shire of Pembroke, but strong objections were made to this arrangement, with the result that six years later the cantref was transferred to the shire of Carmarthen. The parish of Llanfihangel Abercywyn was then placed in the administrative Hundred of Derllys, and so continued to our times.

(c) Subsequent owners of Trefenty

In 1590 the lordship of Oysterlow was granted by Letters Patent to Sir John Perrot. This included the woodland of Cardiff Forest (also called Cardeeth) lying between Whitland and Pont y Fenni, where a farm called Forest still exists. Sir John Perrot of Haroldston near Haverfordwest, born in 1530 belonged to a well-established and influential family in west Wales. He took a prominent part in public affairs and became well-known at Court. Edward VI created him a Knight of the Bath, and he was one of the four gentlemen who bore the canopy at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. High appointments followed—member of the Council of Wales and the Marches in 1571-73, Lord President of Ireland 1584-88, Privy Councillor in 1589. However, he was rash and impetuous, finally, unwise conduct led to his arrest, and in April 1592 he was tried, found guilty of treason, and sent to the Tower where he died later in that year before sentence could be carried out. As we learn from the trial, he had been given to somewhat picturesque utterances, and Dean Swift tells us, "Sir John Perrot was the first man of quality to have sworn by *God's wounds* The oath still continues and is a stock oath to this day". It is amusing to reflect that the hall of remote Trefenty once resounded to this verbal confection. It became contracted to *Zounds!*

By his first wife, Anne daughter of Sir Thomas Cheyney of Shurland, Kent, Sir John Perrot had a son and heir, Thomas. Fortunately he had powerful friends, and soon after his father's death, the forfeited estates were restored to him, and later he was

knighted. During his younger days he was very much the Elizabethan beau, and Nichols in *Progresses of Elizabeth*, volume II, page 319, describes his extravagant appearance at the Tilt-yard in 1581, as follows—"Sir T. Perrot and Master Cooke were both in like armour, beset with apples and fruit, the one signifying Adam, the other Eve, who had hair hung all down his helmet".

Some unusual features attended Sir Thomas Perrot's marriage in July 1583 at Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, to Dorothy Devereux daughter of Walter, Earl of Essex, by Lettice Knollys his wife. One source states that he married "under extraordinary and mysterious circumstances", an account of which will be found in *Strype's Life of Bishop Aylmer*. His father-in-law, who had been created first Earl of Essex in 1572, owned large estates in Wales, with a seat at Lamphey in south Pembrokeshire, and when he died in Ireland in 1576, his body was brought to Carmarthen and buried at St. Peter's church on 26 November when the Bishop of St. Davids preached the funeral sermon from Apocalypse XIV, 13.

By Dorothy his wife, Sir Thomas Perrot had an only surviving child, Penelope. The exact date of his death is not known, but it took place shortly before 1595, for in that year the widowed Dorothy married Henry (Percy) 9th Earl of Northumberland, known as the "Wizard Earl" because of his involvement with astrology and alchemy, and according to one observer he was "passionately addicted to tobacco-smoking". For some years she lived an "unquiet life" with this capricious nobleman, but, reconciled, became his "most untiring petitioner and advocate". Happily, Dorothy enjoyed the friendship and support of the Queen, and in May 1605 was god-mother to the Princess Mary. She died in August 1619, the Earl in 1632.

Penelope Perrot sole heiress to the paternal possessions, married a member of an old Cornish family, namely Sir William Lower of St. Wynnnow's, M.P. for Bodmin in 1602, and for Lostwithiel in 1603, in which year he was knighted. He settled at his wife's residence, Trefenty. At this time the estate in Carmarthenshire consisted of the grange of Oysterlowe and thirty properties, comprising 2600 acres. In a law-suit of 1605 one Edward Yates of Buckland contested the right of Sir William Lower of Trefenty and Penelope his wife to "the herbage of the wood called Cardiff Forest in the grange and farm of Usterlo".

A distinguished scholar and astronomer, Sir William Lower carried out many observations and experiments at Trefenty. He co-operated with Thomas Harriott, another noted astronomer and

an expert mathematician who brought out the first English telescope in 1609, about a year after Galileo. During that year Lower made careful observations of the moon and drew a rough map of its surface, fortunate in having assistance from a neighbouring landowner, John Protheroe of Nantyrhebog, who, as well as being an enthusiastic student of the heavens, had established a small glass factory near London and so could produce lenses for telescopes and like instruments. Furthermore, Protheroe was blessed with remarkable eyesight which proved a valuable asset in the astronomical studies that engaged much of his time.

Early in 1610 Lower and Protheroe made a further study of the moon's features, greatly helped by a small Dutch telescope that Harriott had sent to them. In a letter to Harriott, Lower wrote that he had detected certain lineaments of the moon, adding "I must confess I can see none of this without my cylinder; yet an ingenious young man that accompanies me here often and loves you and these studies much, sees manie of these things even without the helpe of the instrument, but with it sees them most plainelie, I mean the young Mr. Protheroe".

On 12 April 1615 Sir William Lower died at Trefenty. Not many years later his friends died, Harriott in 1621, and Protheroe (who had been one of Harriott's executors) in the latter part of 1624.

As dower the widowed Penelope received £400 per annum charged on "the grange of Oysterlow in Abercowyn Llanfihangel". She did not remain a widow for long, and in 1619 married Sir Robert Naunton of Letherington, Suffolk, Secretary of State to King James, and Master of the Court of Wards. Sir Robert, knighted at Windsor in 1614, a favourite of the first two Stuart kings, had a distinguished career as author, scholar, courtier, diplomat, and Member of Parliament. He died on 27 March 1635. By Penelope he had an only surviving child, a daughter.

It is not known whether the twice-widowed Penelope returned to Trefenty. As the result of her Royalist sympathies during the Civil War, she was invited by Parliament in 1645 to compound for her estate assessed at worth £800 per annum. She died some time after this, and was buried with her first husband Sir William Lower. By him she had two children, Thomas and Dorothy.

The son Thomas Lower had been posthumously born on 8 December 1615, some eight months after his father's death. He seems to have spent part of his life at the family's Cornish home,

St. Wynnow's. On 1 May 1637 he mortgaged the grange of Oysterlow to the Earl of Pembroke and the Earl of Carbery. A survey made of the grange in 1650 shows that it was then held by Lord Carbery at a yearly rent of £28.1.6. It later reverted to the Trefenty family. During the Civil War Thomas Lower was a Royalist, and in February 1647 obliged to compound for the grange of Oysterlow and for lands in Cornwall. He died unmarried on 5 February 1661, and the estates passed to his sister, Lady Dorothy Drummond.

The sister, Dorothy Lower, was born in 1607, and before she was ten years old she had married Maurice Drummond, Gentleman Usher of the King's Chamber. He was knighted at Hampton Court on 10 July 1625. Dorothy also held a Court appointment, and in 1627 was a Lady of the Queen's Privy Chamber. Sir Maurice died in 1642. Dorothy spent a widowhood of some 35 years. In 1661 she inherited from her brother the Trefenty estate then consisting of the messuages and lands of Trefenty, Lower Court, Pant Dwfwn, Asgood, Astis, Park yr Abbot, Park Newydd, a tenement and a mill, a house and shop, and four un-named tenements and lands, with a rental of £386.

Although she had spent most of her life in London, Dorothy did not forget her Carmarthenshire patrimony, and of all the owners of Trefenty is the only one whose name is still invoked in the parish of Llanfihangel Abercywyn, at least once a year. By indenture executed on 20 May 1673, Dame Dorothy granted to Piers Butler and Richard Caryll an annuity of £10 charged on her properties called Asgood, Aestis, and Park yr Abbot, to be distributed among the poor of the parish after her decease. Several years after she had died, the two said trustees discussed the charity with her daughters and coheireses, and by a deed made on 30 May 1695 they confirmed the charity as a perpetual rent-charge to be paid by "such person or persons as from time to time should be farmers or tenants of Treventy and St. Clears, both in the said parish, by and with the advice and approbation, nevertheless, of the parson of the said parish". The tenants responsible for producing the money at that time were Daniel Evans of Trefenty, and John Halford of Pentre (the 'St Cleare' of the deed). The Lady Drummond Charity, as it is known, continues to operate.

Some leases granted by Lady Dorothy included the yearly duties and services that figured prominently in similar transactions of the 17th and 18th centuries. Thus, in 1670 she leased four farms comprising 630 acres in the parish of Llanfihangel Abercywyn, to Edmund Thurlow at a rent of £73, and rendering to lessor 4 capons at Christ-

mas, 4 horseloads of lime or 2 shillings in lieu, a day's reaping at Trefenty by 4 men or 2 shillings in lieu, and the best beast or £5 by way of a heriot when due. Another lease was granted in the same year to Morris William, of a tenement of about 50 acres at a rent of £80, and rendering one day's ploughing at Trefenty or one shilling in lieu, one day's harrowing or six pence, a man for one day to reap corn or six pence in lieu, a couple of capons at Christmas or 2 shillings in lieu, the best beast or 30 shillings as a heriot when due and furthermore to bestow two hundred of lime in stone, being six barrels to the hundred, upon land on the tenement first broken or ploughed up.

Lady Dorothy Drummond died about 1677, in which year her will was proved. She had four daughters among whom the family estates were divided. Only the eldest needs concern us here, Penelope Drummond, who married Edmund Plowden of Plowden Hall, near Lydbury, head of a long-descended Roman Catholic family in Shropshire; he also owned an estate at Aston-le-Walls in Northamptonshire. His younger brother, Francis was Comptroller of the Household to King James II. Edmund Plowden died in 1677 at the comparatively early age of 37, and Penelope, who lived latterly in London, died in 1699. They had five sons and a daughter. Of the sons, four became Jesuits, and only one, William Plowden, remained "in the world" and served as a Colonel in the Life Guards of King James II, thus inheriting the estates, although a younger son. The only daughter, Dorothy Plowden, noted for her luxurious hair which measured five cascading feet, married firstly Philip Draycott, secondly Sir William Goring.

From this time onwards the Trefenty estate remained in possession of the Plowdens who resided wholly at their English residences, and Trefenty continued to be let to substantial farming tenants. They also continued to be lords of the manor and grange of Oysterlow, of which Trefenty was the capital messuage, and to appoint stewards and other manorial officials from among local people. The acreage of the Trefenty estate had remained fairly constant, and in the Landowners' Return, printed in 1873, William Henry Francis Plowden (died in July 1870) is recorded as owning 1285 acres in Carmarthenshire, yielding an estimated rental of £5746. About that time Trefenty was sold to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and remained in their possession until 1920 when, in accordance with the Welsh Church Acts following the Disestablishment, the ownership was transferred to the University of Wales, the present landlord. The Plowdens, descendants of the earliest-known owners of Trefenty, still reside at their attractive Shropshire seat.

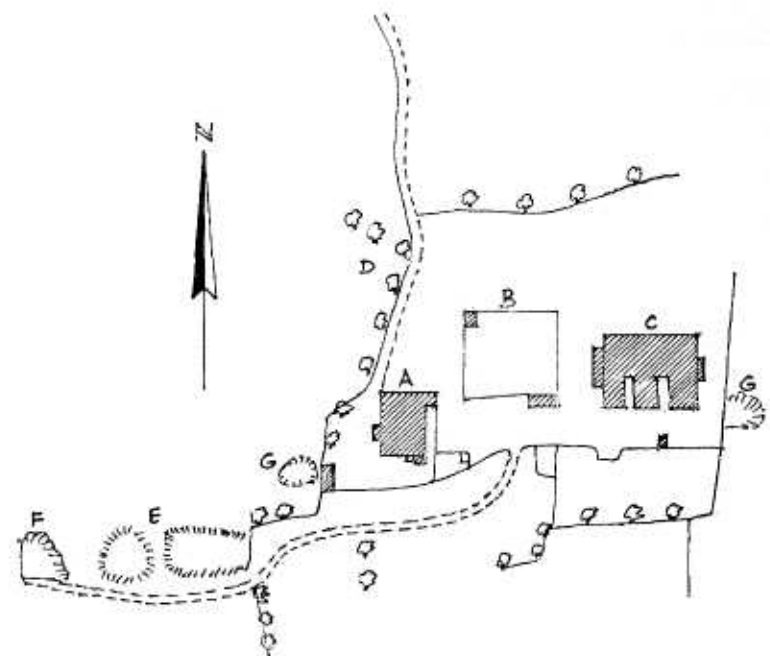
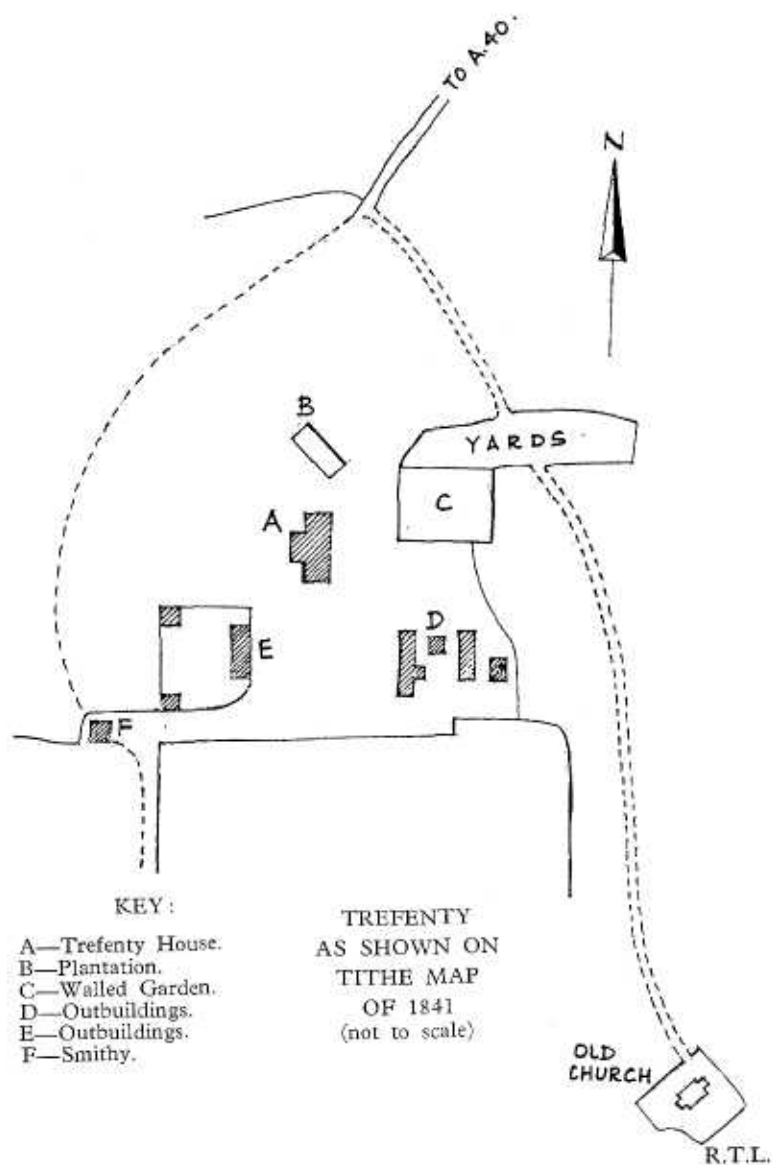
(d) The House, Environs, and some tenants of Trefenty

The house of Trefenty occupies a small plateau-like elevation, 142 feet above sea-level, commanding a splendid prospect of the surrounding countryside. It is flanked by lawns on the north and west sides, with traces of a former ha-ha separating them from the meadow beyond. The outer perimeter of the lawn on the south side had been enclosed by a wall which was removed in the period 1888—1906. Immediately to the east is a large walled garden, and beyond that, modern outbuildings.

The stone-built, three-storeyed residence, with the main entrance on the west front, probably dates from the early 17th century. Until recently the southern gable-end was weather-tiled, and the removal of the tiling revealed windows that had been blocked, doubtless to reduce the incidence of window-tax of earlier days. The wall has now been cemented, alas. An imposing structure, with walls of great width and strength, the house possesses a puzzling feature. As it now stands it is a double-pile house with seventeenth-century characteristics, except that the roof valley between the piles is broad, with four chimney stacks grouped together in the centre, whereas in the usual double-pile house the chimneys are placed in the gable-ends. Unfortunately, in the 1950's the interior was remodelled and modernised so radically (it is now divided into three 'houses') as to render it impossible to determine with certainty the original plan and arrangements.

For the accompanying drawing of the house as it is today I am grateful to the artistry of Mrs. E. M. Lodwick which has contributed so notably over the years to our appreciation of the landscape as well as preserving a pictorial record of the ancient buildings of Carmarthenshire.

No early plans exist to guide us, and the earliest-known map, at least which provides the outline ground plan, is the tithe map of the parish, surveyed and drawn in 1841. This delineates the mansion, and a short distance immediately to the south of it, two groups of outbuildings. Those at the southwestern end consisted of one fairly large building (still existing with a ground and upper floor, two dormer windows, and fireplaces) once used as a dwelling probably for servants; and three smaller structures, one of which is described as "smith's shop". The group at the southeastern end, below the walled garden, also consisted of four buildings, two being fairly large. Flanking the mansion beyond the lawn on the north, grew a plantation.



KEY:

A—Trefenty House.
 B—Walled Garden.
 C—Outbuildings.
 D—Trees.
 E—Mound and Bailey Castle.
 F—Quarry.
 G—Gravel Pit.

TREFENTY
 AS SHOWN ON
 O.S. MAP OF 1888

(not to scale)

Between 1841 and 1888 radical changes had taken place. All, save one, of the buildings on the southwestern side were taken down, their foundations today being overgrown with grass. Traces of the smithy remain. The group on the southeastern side was wholly demolished, the site now covered with rough grass and rushes. Following the demolition, a large and imposing range of outbuildings was erected on a virgin site immediately to the east of the walled garden, and continue to fulfil the purpose for which they were built, and, indeed can claim to be among the best in the country. I am indebted to Mr. R. T. Lenny of John Francis, Thomas Jones, and Sons for the outline ground plans of Trefenty and its buildings in 1841 and 1888.

On the 1841 map the Plowden properties in the parish are listed as Trefenty (301 acres), Foxhole (179 acres), Dole Wirion (9 acres), Gwanfy (8 acres), Pant Dwfnw (371 acres), all in the tenancy of John Waters, and Lower Court (401 acres) in the tenancy of William Thomas, the whole amounting to some 1269 acres at that time.

Trefenty and neighbouring farms were fortunate inasmuch as their limekilns could be supplied by coastal vessels. The tithe map shows a limekiln at Pont ddu on the Cywyn, and another to the north of Foxhole on the Tâf. And there may have been others, for one of Trefenty's fields is still called Parc yr Odin. The marshlands along the river banks had to be protected from erosion and inundation particularly from high tides. Canon Conrad Evans has quoted a record of 1675-6 among the Plowden archives, which states that numerous boatloads of stone were brought "to the severall causeways att Treventy made for the preservation of the marsh from the sea".

Generally, the tenants of Trefenty were men of substance. On 20 August 1661 Dame Dorothy Drummond, widow, granted a lease of 21 years of Trefenty to John Evans of Talybont in the neighbouring parish of Llandeilo Abercywyn, and William Smith of Llanfihangel Abercywyn, gentlemen. This John Evans was one of the three sons of David Evans of Llechwedd Deri in Cardiganshire, High Sheriff of that county in 1641. David's two younger sons settled in Carmarthenshire, Rees (who married Anne Lloyd of Plas Llanstephan) at Talybont where he died in 1697, and John who lived at Talybont before coming to Trefenty in 1661. John Evans paid £1.14.0 in respect of a subsidy in 1673, being the highest payment in the parish, and in 1688 was High Sheriff of Carmarthenshire—the only time that the appointment was held by a resident of Trefenty. His will was proved in 1691. Much later, on 5 November 1745 William Plowden, esquire, granted a lease of 21 years of Trefenty (then 256 acres) to John Jenkins of the same parish, yeoman, at a yearly rent of £87.

In 1778, Trefenty and Foxhole tenanted by John Jenkins and Lewis Evan respectively, were advertised to let as good farmhouses with convenient outhouses in good and tenantable repair, with upwards of 450 acres in excellent heart; on each farm there was a limekiln situated within 20 yards from the river banks where coal and limestone could be landed for their use. The Waters family took the farms, and continued the tenancy of Trefenty in John Jenkins for a few more years. Prior to this advertisement the house seems

to have required repair, for on 5 July 1778, John Philipps of Carmarthen, agent for Plowden, wrote to the owner that Trefenty had been "repaired since you were there, excepting a few yards of the tiling which is to be done". This suggests that Plowden had visited the house, perhaps staying there on short visits off and on.

The Waters family came into local prominence in the latter part of the 18th century. Members of the family farmed some of the largest farms in the district—Gardde, Rushmoor, Pant Dwfnw, Foxhole, Trefenty, and in the first part of the 19th century, Sarnau, where they built a small attractive residence. They came to Trefenty about 1778, and on 20 August 1816 Edmund Plowden gave a lease (probably a renewal) of Trefenty, Foxhole, and Pant Dwfnw, for 62 years to Thomas Waters, and in 1798 he obtained a lease of Llandeilo Abercywyn farm from Philip Protheroe of Bristol, so that he had become one of the largest farmers in the county. He prospered sufficiently to establish a private bank, "Thomas Waters and Sons", at Carmarthen. When Thomas died in 1819 at the age of 70, the bank passed to his sons, one of whom, John, lived at Trefenty, becoming a Burgess of Carmarthen in 1818 and later a Justice of the Peace for the county. Alas, as a result of the depression from about 1828 onwards, the bank foundered, in 1832 had to suspend payment and the firm was declared bankrupt. After this, John Waters lived wholly at Trefenty where he died on 6 February 1852 at the age of 64. He was the last to be buried in the old churchyard of Llanfihangel Abercywyn.

(e) Some episodes in Trefenty history

In the *Antiquities of Laugharne* (1880) Mary Curtis has this to say about "the farmhouse called Treventy which occupies the site of a monastery. I visited this house which is large and substantially built, the walls enormously thick, bearing marks of great age . . . I have been told that the dairy only is part of it [monastery]; that the kitchen before it was altered was a curious place. It is divided into two, and appears more ancient than the rest of the house. There was a while ago in front of the house, a passage with a roof to it, along which funerals had a right to pass to the church; out of it they have formed two rooms. At the back of the house I observed some walls looking very old. About ten minutes' walk from this farm, on the St. Clears side of it, is a small cottage very ancient, the walls exceedingly thick; it is called "Treventy Gate". She adds this about Trefenty mansion—"Opposite the front of the house, the river way, are earth works; here tradition says a battle was fought"—this is the castell of which I have spoken earlier.

Reference to the funeral practice is contained also in D. E. Jenkins's *Life of the Rev. Thomas Charles, B.A., of Bala*, published in 1908. He wrote, "Another custom of the parish is the old passage in the farmhouse of Treventy . . . Funerals weddings, and the ordinary congregation had to pass through on their way to Church, and each individual had to present his (or her) name to the tenant of Treventy on passing through. There was no public way passing the Church, and the owner of the Manor of Oysterlowe Grange had no desire to forfeit his right and allow the public to claim a right of way; and this, probably was an ingenious contrivance whereby each person might be kept conscious of the private ownership of the path down to the Church. Even the horses and their litter had to pass with the body through the limits fixed by the old thick walls and the white-wash". In 1841 the path to the church is shown well eastwards of the house and outbuildings, and in all likelihood the custom had been discontinued before that time, and Miss Curtis tells us that the passage had existed "a while ago". Memory of it still lingers, but Mrs. Thomas the present occupier tells me no traces whatsoever remain.

Another tradition refers to an underground passage once leading from the house to the church, and thence to Llangynog church several miles away. But this class of tale is "common form", and similar tales are told of numerous mansions in Great Britain and on the Continent.

Perhaps most beguiling of all, is the local memory concerning an unconventional circumstance attending cheese-making at Trefenty. About the years 1860-64, Mr. Plowden permitted a shepherd to keep two cows on the demesne. Their milk enabled him to make cheese which he sold to augment his scanty wages. As he could not afford to buy a cheese-press (*peis*) the enterprising fellow went to the deserted churchyard and took a few of the fallen headstones, and with deftness and ingenuity fashioned the necessary article, which despite its homely construction proved thoroughly efficient. Farmhouse cheeses in those days were large and circular, often well over a foot, even two feet, in diameter, as delicious to the taste as nutritious for the system. Now, one of the stones used by the adroit shepherd bore the inscription "In memory of David Thomas", and those words came out clearly etched on the cheeses. He carried them to St. Clears and was not long before he attracted customers, one of whom having read the inscription on his purchase, observed "You have resurrected this cheese from Llanfihangel churchyard!" This caused much mirth, and thereafter the succulent produce of Trefenty became known throughout the district as "the Resurrection Cheese"—*caso yr Atgyfodiad*.

Indeed, Trefenty must be unique among Welsh mansions inasmuch as it has given a metaphor to the language. In olden days of gentry and farmer occupation, the households at Trefenty were particularly numerous, a circumstance advertised in striking manner on washing-day when the hedgerows and bushes around the house were bonneted with garments of many colours and varieties. And so, when a housewife has an unusually large "washing", she is said to have a *golch Trefenty*. As families are now much smaller, and as mechanical inventions have reduced dramatically the number of servants required on farms, washing-day is no longer burdensome, often hardly noticeable, but the saying *golch Trefenty* is still heard, when for some reason the "washing" reaches formidable proportions.

My chronicle is ended. Castle, manorhouse, knights, courtiers, astronomers, gentry, farmers, bankers, passage, tunnel, Resurrection Cheese, wash-tub and all, I bid you adieu. Over the centuries there have been many transformations. On several occasions the ownership of Trefenty has changed hands, finally to become the fee simple of the University of Wales, an institution dedicated to the educational and intellectual progress of our people. But the land, that indestructible asset, continues unchanged. Trefenty's husbandmen still plough the fields and scatter the seed and garner the grain, still rear cattle and sheep, whose increase is devoted to human sustenance. Outwardly, the old mansion preserves in large measure its traditional appearance, adorning an environment of hill, woodland, meadow, and stream, canopied azure and vested vert, a vignette of loveliness. My visit during last July was, in a way, a fulfilment. As I gazed seaward from the sward below the buildings, a scene from the past suddenly came alight, and I fancied I could see a vessel gliding on the placid flow, on her deck an ancient mariner, and at his side a bare-headed youth pointing excitedly towards the gray pile on the distant knoll.

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for his comments on this essay in manuscript form.

The Education of Young Ladies of Distinction

by A. B. RANDALL, B.SC.(ECON.), M.R.T.P.I.

PRIVATE adventure schools in Carmarthen date back many years. Presentment returns for St. Peter's Parish for 1759 for example note "there are several private schools as also hath been time out of mind".¹ The first three decades of the nineteenth century were to witness a proliferation of such schools, many of them listed by J. and V. Lodwick.²

One of the principal sources of information on private adventure schools is the *Carmarthen Journal* and it is from its columns that a picture has been built up of two Seminaries at Parade House, one known variously as Miss West's Seminary for Young Ladies; Parade House Establishment; Ladies Boarding School and the French and English Boarding School, and the other, Mrs. Brown's Ladies' Boarding and Day School.

Within weeks of the *Carmarthen Journal* first appearing it was to carry an advertisement that a Ladies' Boarding School was to be opened at Parade House, Carmarthen on Monday, 9th April, 1810, when Miss West proposed to receive young ladies. There had been a delay in opening the school "principally in consequence of a disappointment in the arrival of furniture and some school requisites". Parade House itself had been "at length repaired and improved to render it commodious and complete for a Liberal establishment". Miss West revealed that a sketch plan of the Seminary, together with the terms and testimonies accompanying it could be inspected at the two Carmarthen Banking Houses.³ Some time later this information was also to be presented to her "patronizers" and friends.

The school was being "founded on the basis of long experience". Later advertisements give some indication of Miss West's main motives which included the "most persevering and assiduous attention to the instruction of her pupils", and to "the best interests of her

1. George Eyre Evans, "Carmarthenshire Schools", *Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society*, Part XLI, p.16.
2. J. & V. Lodwick, *The Story of Carmarthen* 1972, p. 99.
3. Presumably Messrs. Morris & Sons, and Messrs. Robert Waters and Robert Waters.

pupils" which since they were "a concern of importance, she trusts by her future endeavours to promote their welfare and improvement"

In general the subjects taught by Miss West are fairly conventional. Both these and the terms of the Seminary are set out in the *Carmarthen Journal* for October 29th, 1813.

October 1813

PARADE, CARMARTHEN
 ———
 TERMS
 OF
 MISS WEST'S SEMINARY
 ———

	Per Quarter	£	s	d	
INSTRUCTION in Reading, Grammar and other Branches of useful knowledge; Plain and Fancy Work	}	1	1	0	
Writing and Arithmetic		0	15	0	} No additional Entrance
Geography and History		1	1	0	
The French Language		1	1	0	
Drawing and Velvet Painting		1	1	0	
Music	1	11	6	} Entrance each One guinea	
Dancing	1	6	3		

BOARDING
 ENTRANCE FEE ONE GUINEA
 Per Annum

Board, liberally provided	21	0	0
The English Language, and Work	2	12	6
Writing and Arithmetic	2	12	6
Instruction in Mnemonics	1	1	0
If Tea twice a day	2	2	0

Each Boarder to bring Six Towels and One Spoon
 Charge only from the Day of Entering
 A Quarter's Notice is required before a Young Lady leaves the School, or Payment for a Quarter.

The "interesting system of Mnemonics as a wonderful assistance to memory in the application of it to Figures, Chronology, History, Geography, Grammar, etc. etc.", was introduced into the syllabus "for the advantage of her pupils" in July, 1813. We are also assured that the Velvet painting was "in a superior style". In 1815 Miss West extended the scope of her school by establishing a School for Drawing which was to be "open twice a week for the reception of those who wish to avail themselves of her instruction in that elegant art". The syllabus, though possibly typical of that practised in other ladies' seminaries, did not offer the very wide and unusual range of subjects taught in the town in later years which included lunar and sidereal observations, navigation and mapping of estates by chain and theodolite. As G. Eyre Evans, remarked, "the first three decades of the nineteenth century were not quite so behind hand in teaching power in Carmarthen as has sometimes been represented".⁴ In the early years there was little or no local competition. The only other school in the town to advertise by 1812 was Mr. White's Writing, Commercial and Mathematical School in King Street (which was taken over by a Mr. J. Thomas in 1819). Nevertheless there were advertisements for several seminaries for young ladies including Selina James Ladies Boarding School at Bult; Miss Farren's Seminary, Cardigan; Misses Rice and Wright's Young Ladies' Seminary offering "Education and Sea Bathing" at Aberystwyth; Mrs. Brown's at Narberth and locally Penycod House Seminary for Young Ladies, St. Clears. The latter which was run by a Mrs. Penn and her daughters had moved in 1812 from Laugharne; it was to close by August, 1814 when Penycod House was offered to let.

The early years of Miss West's Seminary appear to have been quite successful. By June, 1810 we learn that Miss West had "experienced a great deal of liberality from her numerous friends as well as firmness in their support". In view of the increase in the number of her pupils she was able to inform the inhabitants of Carmarthen that after "repeated solicitations, she has at length obtained her sister's consent to coalesce with her in maintaining the consequence of this establishment". Miss West's sister was to join her from Clifton.

Of her sister's qualifications there was no question. Miss West felt it would be needless to "pass encomium upon the talents and experience of her sister" which were so well known and attested "especially after mentioning that she had devoted her attention to the education of Young Ladies of Distinction whose attainments bear ample testimony of her competent abilities".

4. George Eyre Evans, "Carmarthen Schools 1828-1835" *Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society*, Part LII, p. 7.

Miss West was due to open the school with her sister following the summer vacation, in the new term commencing the 16th July, 1810 but it is questionable whether her sister joined her until some years after. Nearly five years later, however, in January, 1815 Miss West was informing *Journal* readers that she had engaged a new teacher. In the following July her sister notified the "patronisers of the school and the public in general" that she had "recently relinquished an engagement to act in conjunction with her sister, flattering herself with the hope that she would not fail to give satisfaction and promote by her concurrence the success of an undertaking of so much importance as the education of young ladies".

Within twelve months of her sister joining her, Miss West's 'Parade House Boarding School' was to change hands. No reasons are given in any of the advertisements but it is tempting to speculate whether the two sisters were able to work together harmoniously. In March, 1816 the *Journal* carried a notice of a sale of "household furniture and school fixtures the property of the Governess of a respectable female seminary in South Wales, which she then intends to relinquish. The above would be worthy of attention of any person wishing to succeed to this Establishment". No names are mentioned but the advertisement clearly refers to Miss West's Seminary. The school was soon to be relinquished in favour of a Mrs. Charles Brown, whom Miss West had "the satisfaction to commend as a lady of great respectability and adequate qualifications such as might be expected from the daughter and grand daughter of clergymen".

In succeeding Miss M. West, Mrs. Brown begged "to assure her friends and parents and guardians who may honour her with support that every possible attention on her part shall be devoted to comfort, improvement and morals of the ladies entrusted to her care".

Mrs. Brown's school, the "Ladies Boarding and Day School, Parade House" opened on Monday, 28th July, 1816. The range of subjects taught was basically the same as at Miss West's. The terms of the school are listed below.

TERMS OF MRS. BROWN'S LADIES BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL

	£	s	d	
Board (including tea twice a day) and	26	5	0	per annum
Instruction in English Grammar, History,				
Geography, and all kinds of Needlework				

					Per Quarter		
Entrance for Boarders	...	...	...	...	1	1	0
Day Scholars	...	...	...	...	4	4	0
Entrance	...	...	...	...	10	6	
Writing and Arithmetic (Boarders and Day							
Scholars)	...	...	...	...	3	0	0
French	...	...	...	...	4	4	0
Drawing	...	...	...	...	4	4	0
Music	...	...	...	...	6	6	0
Entrance	...	...	...	...	1	1	0
					* no entrance		
Use of pianoforte	...	...	...	...	1	0	0
Dancing	...	...	...	...	5	5	0
Entrance	...	...	...	...	1	1	0
Washing	...	...	...	...	12	0	
					per quarter		

An assistant had been engaged who was "perfectly competent to teach Drawing and also French, which will be spoken in the school by those who learn it". A later advertisement for January, 1817 indicates that the staff had further increased with "Music and Dancing by approved Masters". It is quite possible that drama was also included in the school curriculum. The young ladies of Miss Hide's Seminary, Carmarthen for example are recorded as having performed Mrs. Hannah More's sacred drama "Moses in the Bulrushes" on December 10th, 1817.⁵ It is likely that Mrs. Charles Brown was the same Mrs. Brown who advertised the opening of a school for Young Ladies in Narberth in May, 1812. Mrs. Brown of Narberth limited the number of her pupils to twelve "purposely that she may have more time to devote to their improvement". The terms of that school are included in the *Carmarthen Journal* for 23rd May, 1812.

Mrs. Brown's school was not to last as long as her predecessor's. Rumours of a closure had been circulating by 1817, so that when Mrs. Brown advertised the reopening of her school for a new term from Monday, 28th July, she added that she wished "to contradict a report which she finds has been circulating of her leaving Carmarthen; she can only guess the motive and use of such a report which she assures her friends is totally unfounded, and hopes for the continuance of the support she has already experienced".

5. *Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society*, Part XXVI, p. 54.

The school entered what was to be its final term on Monday, 19th January, 1818. There was no notice of its closure but an advertisement in the *Journal* in March, 1818 includes a reference to Captain Charles Brown leaving the town. It announced a sale of "all the elegant modern household furniture and other effects of Captain Charles Brown (who is leaving Carmarthen) . . ." to be held on Monday, 23rd March, 1818. On the same day the house itself was to be let by auction until the following Michaelmas. Parade House was in fact sold on June 15th to a local marble and stone mason, Daniel Mainwaring.⁶

In April, 1818 the only other ladies seminary in the town, Mrs. Gullivers (late Miss Hides) in Spilman Street also closed as Mr. Gulliver was leaving Carmarthen. The apparent vacuum was not filled until later that year with the opening of two Seminaries in Spilman Street; Misses Rees' Seminary, (August) and, Miss Lander and Mrs. Kenge's Ladies Boarding and Day School (Michaelmas).

6. Daniel Mainwaring was the builder of the first Picton's Monument—*Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society*, Part XL. p. 42.

More about the other Llandilo

The article on the Llandilo artist Carey Morris, by Miss Eirwen Jones in Vol. XV of *The Carmarthenshire Historian*, has prompted Mrs. Betty Eldridge, 5 Strickland Place, Wentworthville, New South Wales, Australia to supply a booklet which was published to celebrate the centenary of Llandilo Public School, NSW in 1966, wherein is given a description of the flag designed by Morris. The flag, which was sent out to Llandilo NSW in exchange for an Australian flag, is described thus:

'The flag is 9 feet by 52½ inches. It has two sides, the material being silk. The obverse side contains a painted centre-piece, the arms of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, K.G., with his portrait below showing him on his favourite charger. Above there is the name of the town, Llandilo Fawr, in gilt letters, and below, "Sir Rhys ap Thomas, Battle of Bosworth, 1485". On each side of the centre-piece is a Tudor Rose. In the top right-hand corner are the arms of Henry the Eighth, and in the opposite corner is the Union Jack.

'The reverse side contains the national emblem of Wales, the Red Dragon, on a green and white ground, with a three inch green and white border, and the Union Jack in the top left corner.

'The flag was designed and painted by Carey Morris, a noted Welsh artist, and the needlework was done by Miss Johns. Both are natives of Llandilo, Wales'.

The centenary booklet reprints a report from the *Nepean Times* of 9 June 1928, which stated: 'Last Monday, 4th June, King's Birthday, was Welsh day at Llandilo, for on that day the beautiful flag presented by the mother town in South Wales, was dedicated and unfurled in the presence of about four hundred spectators, of whom the Welsh element was the dominant and most enthusiastic portion.

'Members of the Cymrodorion Society, bearing their beautiful banner, were there in force, together with members of the Welsh Choral Society and other folk of the Sydney Welsh community. Many of them had resided in the Llandilo in Wales, and took the opportunity of being present to honor their nationality'.

According to the booklet, 'the first move towards the establishment of a national school at Llandilo, then often referred to as Landilo or Landillo, was made on 6th October 1865', when 'the newly elected Local Patrons' made formal application to the Board of National Education for a grant towards the Non-Vested School, which was already in existence. The settlement is described as a 'small and rural village' which lies in the 'undulating foothills of the

Blue Mountains just east of the Nepean River', six miles north-east of Penrith, a town of some 40,000 population. It was 'first given to settlers in grants of lands by Governor Macquarie—to settlers such as Samuel Terry and many others—and consisted of an area of some 2,000 acres'.

The booklet explains that the place 'derives its name from the Welsh town of Llandilo in the south-western corner of Wales' and its meaning 'is said to be the village or enclosure around the Church of St. Teilo, who was the second Bishop of Llandaff'. It is further stated that 'back in the year 1928, the community here was in contact with Llandilo, in Wales, and a set of flags was then sent out by sailing vessel to the school'. These 'beautiful flags' were on display during the centenary celebrations of 1966. The school, a 'typical Australian Bush School', then had a hundred pupils approximately and in the village 'is the small but quaint Anglican Church of St. David, which was opened in the year 1899'.

But how came the Australian settlement to acquire its name? The answer is elusive, as demonstrated by the researches of Mr. D. C. Jenkins, 24 Fairway, Carlyon Bay, St. Austell, Cornwall, who, also, has been encouraged to write in response to Miss Eirwen Jones's article. He states that the 'Australian National Flag was received in the County School, Llandilo (where I was a pupil), I think, in 1924', and continues:

'Several years later I made enquiries about the founding of Llandilo, NSW. Information from the NSW Department of Lands stated that this parcel of land, about 30 miles west of Sydney, had, for the most part, originally been granted to Samuel Terry (950 acres) and John Hutchinson (200 acres). This was in January 1818. The area was sub-divided under the name of Llandilo between 1884 and 1887. The Llandilo sub-division consisted of 2,000 acres, the remainder of the area being taken from adjoining properties owned by Butcher, Guest, Duckett, Cramby, Cuddy, Freebody and (possibly feeling a bit of an outsider among this un-Celtic sounding bunch) J. B. Williams. There was nothing in the Australian records available to show whether any of these men had a Welsh connection.

'I have no information about any of the foregoing persons, with the exception of the well-documented Sam Terry. Transported at the very beginning of the last century, he completed his sentence, elected to stay there, and was given a grant of land. His modest holding within a very few years, and apparently with a little sleight of hand, grew to many thousands of well-stocked acres. His Botany Bay Convict to Cattle King saga ended in 1837, when he died "leaving a Princely Fortune of nearly One Million Sterling".'

E.V.J.

James Howell, son of the vicarage.

by Major FRANCIS JONES, C.V.O., T.D., D.L., F.S.A.,
Wales Herald of Arms Extraordinary

THREE hundred and thirteen years have gone by since the death of James Howell, Historiographer Royal to Charles II, and author of the ever popular "Familiar Letters". Generally speaking, little of his other activities seems known to those who quote his name. Nevertheless, he was a remarkable man, equally at home in the Courts of Europe as in the lodgings of scholars, secretary to embassies, secret agent, a royalist who boldly told Cromwell that the monarchy must be restored, author, pioneer of spelling reform of the English language, and one of the earliest writers to make a livelihood from literature and journalism.

James Howell, fourth child of the Revd Thomas Howell, vicar of Abernant and Cynwil in Carmarthenshire, was born about the year 1594. He received his early education at Hereford Free School under "a learned though lashing master" as he feelingly describes him, and proceeded to Jesus College, Oxford, in 1610 where he graduated three years later. He spoke of his college days with affection, and to him Oxford was always "my dearly honoured Mother".

His description of himself as "a pure cadet, not born to land, lease, home, or office", and having no "other patrimony or support but my breeding", illustrates the difficulties of a younger son. However, his "breeding", attractive personality, and capacity for mastering languages, more than compensated for the lack of inherited possessions.

After leaving Oxford, Howell was appointed steward of a glass-ware manufactory, and in 1616 went to the Continent on behalf of his firm. He travelled through Holland, France, Spain, and Italy, studying methods of glass-making and securing the services of expert workmen. He learnt to speak and write the languages of the countries he visited, an accomplishment that was to stand him in good stead in future years.

On his return to London, about 1621, he decided to seek a post where his linguistic talents, could be employed to greater advantage. For a short time he was a tutor in the family of Lord Savage, and during 1622 accompanied Lord Altham's son on a tour in France.

Towards the end of 1622, Howell was commissioned to go to Spain to obtain satisfaction for the illegal seizure of a richly-laden vessel belonging to the Turkey Company. His audiences with the King and Ministers of State proceeded satisfactorily, until the cancellation of the "Spanish match" between the Prince of Wales and the Infanta prejudiced all chances of a final arrangement. He was at Madrid when the Prince was presenting his suit, and became friendly with members of his Household.

In 1624 he secured the post of Secretary to Lord Scrope (afterwards Earl of Sunderland), Lord President of the North, and took up residence at York. Through his master's influence, he was elected Member of Parliament for Richmond in Yorkshire, but his excursion into politics was of brief duration.

On Sunderland's death in 1630 he found himself without regular employment, but succeeded in securing temporary posts. In 1632 he was Secretary of an embassy to Denmark, and during his sojourn at the Danish Court secured privileges for an English trading company. In 1635 he spent some time at Orleans on state business, and after 1639 acted as a secret agent for Strafford, then Lord Deputy of Ireland.

In 1640 Howell turned his energies to creative writing. Despite his bustling life he had maintained an interest in literature and knew many leading writers of the time. He was especially friendly with Ben Jonson, to whom he presented Dr Davies's Welsh Grammar, together with a poem of his own composition in praise of the book. One letter he sent to Jonson contained "a choice story" he had heard in France, "for you to put upon your loom and make a curious web of". When the poet died Howell composed an elegy on him.

Between 1640 and 1666, he published over 60 books, pamphlets, and numerous poems and letters. Many were composed in the Fleet where he was imprisoned for his loyalty from 1643 to 1651. A stout Royalist, he wrote tracts advocating the restoration of the monarchy, even in Cromwell's heyday. His "Instructions for Forreine Travel", dedicated to Prince Charles, seems to have been prophetic in its dedication. Subjects like Royal Marriages of Great Britain, History of Louis XIII, Account of the Low Countries, Venice, Naples, and Spain, reveal his knowledge of continental states. He compiled dictionaries and grammars of foreign languages, and made numerous translations from Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish authors. He wished to reform English spelling along phonetic lines, and advocated the elimination of redundant letters, like the final vowel in "done", and the removal of "u" from words like "honour".

None of his works is more popular than *Epistolae Hoelianaë*, the "Familiar Letters", an intimate stream of contemporary gossip which continue to delight the reader even after the passing of three hundred years. They show his literary style at its best, light and aphoristic, and containing a wealth of descriptive and anecdotal material. Among people to whom he addressed letters were his brother Dr Thomas Howell, Bishop of Bristol, Dr Field, Bishop of Llandaff and afterwards of St Davids, Sir Kenelm Digby, Lord Herbert of Chirbury, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Conway, the mercurial Sir Sackville Crow (of Westmead, Laugharne), and the Earl of Pembroke with whom he claimed distant kinship based on a tenuous link in the higher reaches of his family tree, visible only to a Welshman of strong genealogical passions.

He touches on all manner of topics—ancient prophecies, the Inquisition, Algerian pirates, Continental morals, foibles of kings, battles, miracles, scandals, the Grand Turk, plagues, churches, heralds, and Welsh mountain ponies. He advises us against litigation—"Law is a shrewd pick-purse". English ale is an elixir, apparently,—“While Englishmen drank only ale they were strong, brawny, able men, and could draw an arrow an ell long”. He describes a letter on the beverages of various nations as "a dry discourse upon a fluent subject". He appreciated the power of the pen, and told Jonson, "The fangs of the bear and the tusks of the wild boar do not bite worse and make deeper gashes than a goose-quill sometimes". It seems he had a message for Monmouthshire folk, when he describes Hugh Penry, who had married his sister, as "one of the best husbands in all the thirteen shires of Wales".

Experience had taught him patience—"Though princes's guerdons come slow, yet they come sure". He found no reason to revise this view. Following the Restoration, Howell received, for his loyalty, a gift of £200 from the King who also appointed him Historiographer Royal with a salary of £100 a year. These favours, and the money he derived from writing, enabled him to spend the remainder of his days in ease and comfort.

James Howell died in London, and was buried on 3 November 1666 in the Temple church where a fine monument was raised to perpetuate his memory. The tomb was badly damaged by Hitler's bombs in May 1941. His name lives on.

The Watchers Watched

The following is part of the Police Defaulters Book for the Borough of Carmarthen in respect of the period 20 June 1848 to March 1881, (Carmarthen CRO. Museum 119A).

Date	Names	Misconduct	Decision of Watch Committee
1848			
June 20	Frederick Rees	Intoxication and absent from his Duty	Reprimanded and Cautioned
July 4	P.C. Thos. Burch	Using disrespectful language to P. S. Davies.	Fined 4/-
Oct. 1	P.C. Richard Martin	Being in the Crecelly Public House during hours of Duty.	Fined 2/6
Oct. 3	P.C. Thos. Burnhill	Absent from his Beat and found in Bed at 12.30 a.m.	Fined 5/-
Oct. 16	P.C. Henry James	Drunk and unfit for duty	Fined 2/6
1849			
Jan. 24	P.C. Richard Martin	Neglecting to report Information	Fined 2/6
March 4	P.C. Henry James	Not reporting a disturbance that occurred on his Beat.	Fined 2/6
May 24	P.C. Richard Martin	Not reporting a Fire that occurred in Spilman St., on the 24 inst.	Fined 5/-
July 20	P.C. Henry James	Appearing on duty not shaved	Fined 1/-
1850			
29 May	Thomas Phillips	Calling his Sergeant a Liar	Fined 2/6
1851			
7 Jan.	William Jones	Disobeying orders at an inquest.	Fined 2/-
6 Aug.	Henry Evans	Gossiping when on duty.	Fined 1/-
19 Sept.	Thomas Buckley	Sleeping while on Duty.	Fined 4/-

Date	Names	Misconduct	Decision of Watch Committee
28 Dec.	Nicholas Martin	Found at Breakfast at 10.25 a.m.	Fined 2/-
1852			
20 Feb.	William Woozley	Not reporting a Fire at Mr. Bagnall's in the Guildhall Square	Fined 2/-
24 March	Nicholas Martin	Found in a Spirit Shop.	Fined 4/-
21 June	David Morgans	Neglecting to Serve an Order of Affiliation	Fined 4/-
20 Sept.	Nicholas Martin	Disobeying Orders given by the Mayor	Fined 2/-
23 Nov.	Thomas Buckley	Intoxication and using threatening language to P.C. Woozley when on duty	Fined £1-0-0
1853			
26 Feb.	Nicholas Martin	Not coming out of Mr. Morgan's Spirit Shop and not giving a satisfactory account	Fined 4/-
29 July	Henry James	Neglect of duty by not taking Henry Lloyd into custody for threatening the life of his wife.	Fined 4/-
12 Aug.	Thomas Buckley	Being present when Mr. Lewis, the Market Collector was collecting Tolls, contrary to order.	Fined 5/-
Nov.	John Davies	Found sitting down in a doorway.	Fined 4/-
1854			
11 Feb.	Henry James	Neglecting to Quell a Disturbance at Evan Evans, Water St.	Fined 4/-
21 Feb.	Nicholas Martin	Neglecting taking into custody a cripple who was begging by the Monument.	Fined 4/-

Date	Names	Misconduct	Decision of Watch Committee
26 May	John Davies	Intoxication and allowing a Prisoner to escape from Custody	Discharged by the Watch Committee
1856			
18 July	P.C. David Williams	Neglecting to deliver Circulars	Fined 5/-
1857			
5 Oct.	Sergt. Richard Lewis	Neglect of Duty in not summoning a Jury.	Fined 10/-
13 Nov.	William Woozley	Having taken 3 hours and a $\frac{3}{4}$ to perform six miles, when on duty.	Fined 2/6
21 Nov.	David James	Using bad language towards Mr. Evans of Jackson's Lane.	Fined 10/-
1858			
21 Sept.	John Edwards	Not reporting a robbery in Picton Place.	Fined 2/-
26 Nov.	John Thomas	Being under the influence of Liquor and attempting to assault his wife in the presence of the Police.	Fined 10/-
1859			
19 Feb.	Nicholas Martin	Not ascertaining the Names of Parties ringing at Mr. "David Lewes" Nott Square door on the 4th inst.,	Fined 2/6
11 April	John Thomas	Drinking in a spirit shop on the night of the 2nd—absence of his beat 45 minutes—and using bad language before his Sergt. and the night constables.	Suspended on the 3rd and on the 11th April discharged by the Watch Committee
12 May	David Jones	Divulging part of the night Report of the 7th inst.,	Fined 5/-

Date	Names	Misconduct	Decision of Watch Committee
29 July	Thomas Evans	Drunkenness when on duty and found asleep in Mr. Williams alley Lamma's Street	Fined 10/-
Sept. 16 1860	Sergt. John Beynon	Being late for Drill.	Fined 2/-
13 Jan.	Thomas Evans	Exceeding his duty by assaulting Stable boy at the Old Plough, Lamma's St.	Fined 5/-
20 Jan.	Daniel Griffiths	Quarrelling with P.C. Powell and threatening to assault him with his truncheon.	Fined 10/-
1 Oct.	David Thomas	Found asleep in a Privy on the 31st ultimo when on duty.	Fined 2/6
1862			
19 July	John Davies	Not being in time to fall in Procession at the Judges Lodgings.	Fined 1/-
August 7	Daniel Griffiths	Malice against Charles James, Mason and Drinking when in Uniform and other misconduct.	Dismissed by the Watch Committee on the 7th inst.,
1863			
2 July	William Jones	Being absent from duty during the Eisteddfod, and no doubt in a state of intoxication.	Fined 10/-
10 July	David James	Not saluting the Judge as directed	Fined 1/-
24 July	Sergt. Beynon	Being party tampering with a complaint, causing him not to appear before the Bench	Fined 15/-
25 Sept.	Thomas Evans, No. 6	Not removing a cart where an obstruction on Saturday last, letting it remain so for $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour.	Fined 2/6

Date	Names	Misconduct	Decision of Watch Committee
27 Nov.	David Griffiths	Allowing children to be in the Hall during the Petty Sessions.	Fined 1/-
18 Dec.	William Jones 2	Being an hour visiting the Public House on Saturday last and remaining in the Glos-ter Arms where they were Raffling for a Watch.	Fined 5/-
1864			
13 May	Samuel David	Neglect of duty by not being outside of Hall when told to keep the children from the Windows.	Fined 1/-
Dec. 3	David Griffiths	Not going round Johnstown beat on Saturday 26 inst.	Fined 2/6
Dec. 23	David Griffiths	Not keeping children and women out of court during Petty Sessions 23 inst.,	Fined 2/-
1865			
20 Jan.	David Griffiths	For being absent from the pavement between the rails and Bagnalls Shop on the 10 inst.	Fined 2/-
24 Feb.	Thomas Jones	Not reporting Miss Mathias' gate in St. Peter's Street was carried away.	Fined 2/-
7 April	Sergt. David Williams	Being seen going into Mr. Bright's Spirit Shop in company with P.C. Colegate and two females on Saturday the 18 March.	Fined 20/-

Date	Names	Misconduct	Decision of Watch Committee
7 April	P.C. James Colegate	Brought before the Watch Committee and allowed to resign the same charge as Sergt. David Williams.	Allowed to resign
1866			
24 Aug.	David Lewis, No. 2	Being found asleep in a doorway in Guildhall Square 1.45 a.m. 23rd inst.	Fined 2/6
23 Sept. 1869	David Morris 5	Disputing in the Street	Fined 1/-
5 Jany.	Sergt. Williams	Being under the influence of Liquor and not being with his squad on duty at the Assembly Rooms at the Race Ball.	Fined 5/-
5 Jany.	William Jones P.C. 3	Being under the influence of Liquor and not being able to be at the Assembly Rooms on the night of the Race Ball.	Fined 5/-
5 Jany.	John Harris P.C. 7	Not being at muster at 9o.c. to go on duty at the Assembly Rooms at the Race Ball.	Fined 2/-

A Tale of a Welsh Tester

References in Colonel J. A. Lloyd's article on the early history of Court Henry, published in this volume, serve as reminders of interesting links between Carmarthenshire and Cotehele, a charming late medieval manor house near Calstock, a few miles east of Callington in Cornwall.

The story starts with Katherine, daughter of Sir John St. John of Bletso, who married Sir Griffith ap Rhys, K.G. of Newton, courtier and soldier, who was the son of the illustrious Sir Rhys ap Thomas. The son of this marriage was Sir Rhys ap Griffith, a studious and retiring character, who married Catherine, daughter of Thomas, the powerful second Duke of Norfolk; she was a more ambitious and forceful person than her husband, who was beheaded for treason at the age of 23 in 1531 and his lands confiscated by the Crown. The evidence for his treason was slight, but it was rumoured that Anne Boleyn, 'the King's Lady', hated him because he and his wife had spoken disparagingly of her; but for this circumstance Rhys might have been pardoned.

After the death of her husband, Sir Griffith ap Rhys, Katherine married, in 1532, Sir Piers Edgumbe of Cotehele, whose father, Richard Edgumbe, had been obliged to escape the vengeance of Richard III by fleeing to Brittany, where he joined Henry Tudor. Like Sir Rhys ap Thomas, Richard Edgumbe was a close supporter of Henry Tudor at Bosworth, and after the battle he was knighted; later he became Comptroller of the Royal Household.

In the manor house of Cotehele, which stands on the steep west bank of the river Tamar, there is a notable bedhead, usually referred to as a Welsh tester, though nothing else of the bed or canopy survives. This bedhead is elaborately carved and bears the inscription: KYFFARWTH AIGWNA HARRY AP GR, which may be translated—Harry ap Griffith, an expert, made this. The oak bedhead, of typical early sixteenth century Welsh craftsmanship, includes eight panels, six of a pictorial nature. Two of these, middle top row and middle bottom row, appear to have been fitted at a different period, as they are ill-fitting and set asymmetrically. Of these two panels, the upper one comprises the royal arms of the Tudors, but, unusually, the quartering is reversed, the English lions occupying the first and fourth quarters. This is a rare, but not unique, feature, as it was not until 1707 that the French fleurs-de-lis were placed in the second and third quarters. The supporters appear to be an antelope and a

panther, which were those of Henry VI, above each of which is a Tudor rose. The lower of these two panels depicts an angel, in armour and carrying a raised sword, driving Adam and Eve (separated by a serpent) out of Eden.



The Welsh bedhead at Cotehele.

The other pictorial panels are:

- Top left* : A shield, on which are represented the Five Wounds of Christ and the emblems of the Passion.
- Top right* : Two Welsh minstrels, representing harmony. One has a harp and the other a *crwth*.
- Bottom left* : St. George slaying the dragon.
- Bottom right* : A woman with leashed lamb and dragon, and, in a fortified place, royal and other personages.

Surrounding these panels are carved hawking and hunting scenes, in which is depicted a Welsh gentleman. The falconers wear high crowned hats with plumes and the huntsmen are shown with longbow, spear and horn. Also shown are birds, stags, a fox and a hare, greyhounds, basset hounds, and a pelican in piety.

Also in the house are Welsh chairs, 'grotesque contrivances of inter-lacing struts and rails, carved with an infinity of knobs and rings, of which the origin is wrapped in mystery. Their triangular motif may be symbolic of the Trinity and, although these examples cannot date before Henry VIII's reign, they doubtless derive from a medieval pattern'.* The triangular motif is a reference to the three cornered seat supported by three legs, the seat being provided with a tall back.

The carved bedhead, and probably the chairs, must have been taken to Cotehele by Katherine, widow of Sir Griffith ap Rhys, and it is tempting to think that they must therefore have come from Carmarthenshire, even Court Henry, perhaps.

E.V.J.

**Cotehele House* (National Trust, 1976), p. 19.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE WORKHOUSE REMEMBERED

Sir,

Thank you for the *Carmarthenshire Historian*. I always find them most interesting.

The Workhouse memories of Mr. D. J. Evans, in Volume XV, remind me that, as a boy in Carmarthen, I remember standing outside the Workhouse and seeing a stone fall onto a small pile on the road (a consequence of the stone-breaking that tramps were required to carry out). I knew what was going on and decided to wait. I waited and waited but nothing else happened. Perhaps it was dinner time? Or could it have been 'industrial action'!

W. G. LUTON,
39 Meadowside,
Nuneaton.

OUT OF PRINT

Sir,

Thank you for sending me the latest volume of *The Carmarthenshire Historian*. I'll take this opportunity to ask you whether it is possible to get Volumes Nos. 1, 2 and 4, and to congratulate you on the excellent and interesting annual publications. Diolch.

M. E. EVANS,
Dunrovin,
Baldslow Down,
St. Leonards-on-Sea,
East Sussex.

(Unfortunately, Vols. I to V are now out of print. Other volumes are available, though some are low in stock.—Editor).

GLYNHIR AND THE Du BUISSONS

Sir,

I understand that the *The Carmarthenshire Historian*, in Volume X, gave details of a certain Thomas Jenkins of Llandeil. Apparently Thomas Jenkins was well-renowned for his woodwork and it seems that he carried out certain repairs to the house of Glynhir, Llandybie, which was my family home from 1770. Part of the house dates from the Queen Anne period and part was built during the Napoleonic Wars.

I am, at present, collecting material for a history of my family, which would also include Glynhir, and I would therefore be very grateful to obtain a copy of the publication mentioned above.

W. A. Du BUISSON,
Pratsham Grange,
Holmbury St. Mary,
Surrey.

(The reference is to Thomas Jenkins (1813-71), whose remarkable diary, kept between 1826 and 1870, was published in abridged form under the title 'The Footprints of a Master Craftsman'.—Editor).

ARTHUR MEE'S MARRIAGE

Sir,

I refer to the ninth in the series on Carmarthenshire historians, in Vol. XIV of *The Carmarthenshire Historian*, namely Arthur Mee (1860—1926).

During research into the registers of Capel Ifan Church, which stands outside the village of Pontyberem, I came across the entry recording the marriage of Arthur Mee, 27, Bachelor, Journalist, 8 Mina Street, Llanelly, the son of George Samuel Mee, Journalist, and Claudia Thomas, 31, Spinster, Pontyates, the daughter of David Thomas, Cooper. The marriage was solemnized on 22nd September 1888 at the Church of St. John, commonly known as Capel Ifan, and was the first to take place there after the church was assigned to the Parish of Holy Trinity, Felinfoel, following parish reorganization. Previously, the church was in the Parish of Llanelly, as the entry in the register, immediately before that of Mee's marriage, shows.

The old church of St. John (Capel Ifan) was licensed for marriages in 1837, whereas the new church of St. John in the village of Pontyberem was licensed in 1897. When the new ecclesiastical parish of Pontyberem was formed in 1934, the Vicar was directed by the Registrar General that in future the old church should be described as St. John (Capel Ifan), Pontyberem, and the new church as St. John, Pontyberem, which thus became a parish church. The first marriage in the old Capel Ifan Church after the formation of Pontyberem Parish took place on 4th August 1934.

A. D. G. WILLIAMS,
Secretary, Gwendraeth Valleys Historical Society
Brynblodau,
Bancffosfelen,
Llanelli.