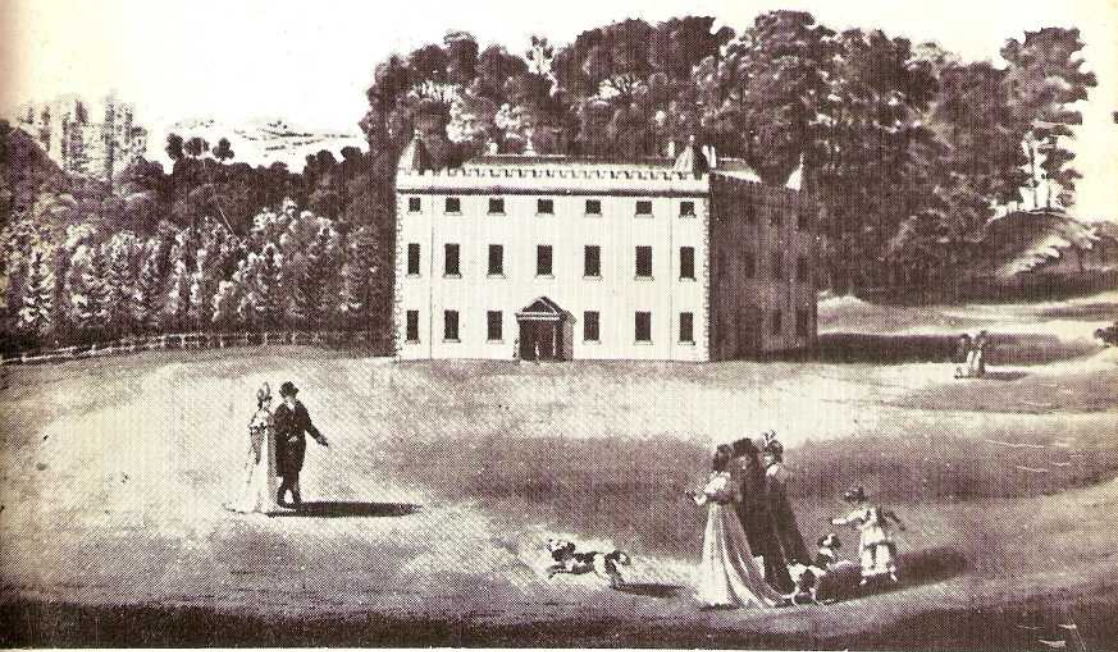


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Carmarthen and Merlin the Magician

By ALAN B. RANDALL, B.SC. (ECON.), M.R.T.P.I.

AMONG the characters of early romance few have held a more prominent position than Merlin (or Myrddin as he was known in Welsh). In the world of romance and song he is the "mighty enchanter, whose birth and death are alike involved in mystery. Many circumstances combine to elude any satisfactory investigation of this weird but enthralling character, whose interesting life, as the only great seer acknowledged by Wales, is full of striking events and curious anomalies".¹

Who then was this person who has had such an influence on local folklore? To some he is regarded as a historical person of the 6th century, yet to others he is solely a legendary figure whose name was originally Llallogan or Lailoken. As far as Welsh traditions of the Myrddin Story are concerned these are covered in the works of Professor Jarman.² It is a version of the wild fugitive story, a legend transferred from northern Britain to Wales sometime between the sixth and tenth centuries. The Welsh sources of the legend are contained in a series of poems, three of which—Yr Afallenau (The Apple Trees), 'Yr Oianau' (Greetings) and 'Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin' (The Dialogue of Myrddin and Taliesin)—are to be found in the Black Book of Carmarthen (c. 1200). The other poems are 'Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer' (The Conversation of Myrddin and his sister Gwenddydd) and 'Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin yn y Bedd' (The Song uttered by Myrddin in the Grave), both from the Red Book of Hergest (c. 1400), and 'Peirian Faban' (Commanding Youth) from a 15th century manuscript (Peniarth 50).

With the exception of 'The Dialogue of Myrddin and Taliesin', they are prophetic poems, the product of the 11th and 12th centuries mirroring the struggle between Welshman and Norman. Though prophetic, they nevertheless preserve a substantial proportion of the original legend. Myrddin is the son of Morfryn and brother of Gwenddydd. He had fought against Rhydderch Hael at the Battle of Arfderydd, near Carlisle, on the side of his lord Gwenddolau. At the battle his lord was slain and Myrddin lost his reason, possibly through his responsibility for the death of Gwenddydd's son. He hides in Coed Celyddon, or the Caledonian Forest, for 50 years with

COVER—The reproduced print shows the east front of Newton House, otherwise known as Dynevor Castle, after alterations carried out in 1720.

no company but the trees and beasts, leading a wretched existence, meditating on his present misery, or on his former happiness and worrying lest Rhydderch should come against him. In this frenzied condition he is said to have acquired the gift of prophecy. However, the Myrddin of the 'Cyfoesi' is a different and dignified person, no longer tormented by fear of Rhydderch Hael but able to prophesy his adversary's death.

Clearly, the traditional Welsh version of the Myrddin legend has no association with the Carmarthen area, except that the three poems contained in the "disparate, bound volume" called the Black Book of Carmarthen could have been written at the Priory in the town. Though, at the Dissolution Morgan Watkins³ believes "the Black Canons doubtless owned it, . . . we have no proof whatsoever except that it probably bore then the name it has enjoyed ever since" and he adds that "one or two of its parts might have emanated from another house".

Geoffrey of Monmouth's Tale

To Geoffrey of Monmouth we must look for the first direct link between Merlin and Carmarthen in the literature. It is his intervention in the development of the Myrddin legend that Jarman believes leads to "Myrddin's new career in international literature under the name 'Merlin'." Not a great deal is known about Geoffrey; he was possibly a Welshman, though perhaps a Breton born in Wales, who became a teacher and later a priest and bishop. His three main works were *Prophetiae Merlini*, which first appeared in 1135; the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, which incorporated the *Prophetiae Merlini*, and was written some time between 1135-1139; and the *Vita Merlini* (1148-51).

It is in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* that he provides the first written relationship between Merlin and Carmarthen. The book attempts to trace the 1900 year history from the mythical Brutus to the British King Cadwallader. It was a work that was to be accepted as authoritative both by early British historians and French chroniclers. By 1155 Wace had completed his *Roman de Brut*, a reproduction in verse of the *Historia*, and it in turn served as a direct source of the Brut written by an English priest, Layamon, by 1204.⁴

The discovery of the boy Merlin is included in Geoffrey's *Historia*. Vortigern in fear of Hengest flees the Saxons and is advised by his magicians to build a strong tower. He selects a site at Mount Erith, and whatever he builds one day the earth swallowed up the next. His magicians advise him to find a boy without a father, kill

him and sprinkle the mortar and stones with his blood so that the foundations hold firm.

The King sent his messengers out to search for such a person. "They came to a town which was afterwards called Kaermerdin and there they saw some lads playing by the town gate . . .⁴ A quarrel broke out between the two lads Merlin and Dinabutius, and as they argued Dinabutius said to Merlin: "Why do you try to compete with me, fathead? How can we two be equal in skill? I myself am of royal blood on both sides of my family. As for you, nobody knows who you are, for you never had a father!" The messengers hurried to the governor of the town (whom Layamon refers to as a reeve named Eli),⁵ they investigated but no one knew who his father had been though "his mother was daughter of a King of Demetia and that she lived in that same town, in St. Peter's Church, along with some nuns." Wace⁵ describes her as 'Nun she was of her state, a gentlewoman of right holy life, and lodged in a convent within the walls of their city'. To Layamon she was daughter of Conaan, lord of knights, a king.

Both Merlin and his mother are sent to Vortigern. The Layamon embellishments of the story are interesting, in view of later prophecies, in that Eli the reeve of Carmarthen is threatened that "this burgh all consumed, this folk all destroyed" if he did not arrange to deliver Merlin to the king.

From her explanation of Merlin's conception it was clear that she had had no relations with a man. "I know only this: that, when I was in our private apartments with my sister nuns, some one used to come to me in the form of a most handsome young man . . ." Maugantius, the king's adviser, explained that it was possibly an incubus demon that had visited her and impregnated her. These incubus demons inhabit a region between the earth and the moon and "have partly the nature of men and partly that of angels, and when they wish they assume mortal shapes and have intercourse with women".

Merlin proves to Vortigern that his magicians had lied, and that under the tower there was a pool which contained two hollow stones. Inside the stones were to be found two sleeping dragons. When the king's workmen had drained the pool and discovered the creatures, all present "were equally amazed at his knowledge, and they realized that there was something supernatural about him". When the two dragons, one white, one red, emerged they fought bitterly. Merlin explained that the portent meant that the British (the red dragon)



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Merlin reading his prophecies. Cotton MS. Claudius B. VII, f. 224.
c.1250-70.

would be hard pressed by the Saxons (the white dragon) until the coming of the Boar of Cornwall (Arthur), who would drive out the Saxons. Merlin then delivers a long string of obscure prophecies.

Merlin foretells Vortigern's fate, appears as adviser to Aurelius and Uther Pendragon and is responsible for transferring Stonehenge from Ireland to Salisbury Plain. He then "uses his magic arts to stage-manage the conception of Arthur at Tintagel and after this he disappears from the story".⁶

What is so surprising in Geoffrey's story is the complete dissimilarity between his Merlin and the Myrddin of Welsh tradition. The character he presents is a far cry from the "wild-man in the woods". Merlin's conception by a half-demon; his superiority over Vortigern's magicians; his clairvoyant and prophetic powers; his movement of Stonehenge by engineering skills and wizardry and his ability to change his appearance all create a strange and unfamiliar character. These powers were to develop in later legends where "although Merlin is a Christian, he is something more. He represents an older understanding of man and nature, a profound wisdom from a pagan past, not in opposition to Christianity but in anticipation of it. It may be that memories of the Druids went into his making".⁶

What were Geoffrey's sources? Did he show, as Tatlock⁷ suggests, a clear personal knowledge in placing the nun-mother "*in ecclesia sancti Petri inter monachas*"? Not only is the chief church still St. Peter's, but we learn from the Chronicle of Battel Abbey that Henry I had given to that abbey the church '*in honorem sancti Petri apostoli fundatum*' in the city of Chaermerdi in Wales, and in 1125 gave it to the bishop of St. Davids, who removed the monks and put in Augustinian canons. So why not nuns at St. Peter's seven centuries earlier?" But to Tatlock there is more, in that Geoffrey is showing an accurate knowledge of recent detail, and also probably of a tradition of Merlin there.

Geoffrey was to claim that his main source for the *Historia* was 'a certain very ancient book written in the British language' given to him by Walter the Archdeacon of Oxford. Yet as early as 1190 William of Newburgh claimed that everything that Geoffrey had written about Arthur and his successors and even his predecessors from Vortigern onwards was invention "either from an inordinate love of lying or for the sake of pleasing the Britons".⁴

Without question Geoffrey's chief source is a compilation made

about 800 A.D. by the Welsh priest Nennius entitled the *Historia Brittonum*. He also makes a number of borrowings from Gildas's *De Excidio Britanniae*. As Thorpe notes, Geoffrey's debt to "these two early chroniclers is a considerable one. Some scholars have suggested that our search for sources might well begin and end there."

Certainly it was from Nennius that Geoffrey took the story of Vortigern's tower; the finding of the fatherless boy; and the confrontation with Vortigern. He embellishes and slightly alters the story by finding the boy at Carmarthen rather than Nennius's location 50 miles to the east of the town. He changes the boy's name from Ambrosius and divides him into two—Merlin Ambrosius, the marvellous boy without a father, and Aurelius Ambrosius, who is the son of a Roman consul and later a king. For the story of the begetting by an incubus Tatlock believes Geoffrey may well have used the work of Apuleius which was well known in the Middle Ages, and interpreted it in the light of contemporary notions. The prediction of the coming of Cadwallader and Cynan to drive out the Saxons, and the presentation of Myrddin as a prophet is found in the *Armes Prydein* (The Prophecy of Britain), written circa 930.⁸

Why did Geoffrey relocate Nennius's story from Glamorgan to Carmarthen and change his name from Myrddin to Merlin? Parry⁹ observes that it "was the fashion in Geoffrey's day to explain place-names as derived from personal names, and he took full advantage of the opportunity given to him, creating a person from the name of a place and telling a story to account for the latter.. Though the form Myrddin is regularly derived from Moridunum, the Roman name for Carmarthen, meaning 'Sea-Fort', Jarman believes that an eponymous founder was created out of a place-name, with Caerfyrddin interpreted as the 'Fortress of Myrddin', such a conversion being the result of popular fancy. Similarly, Tatlock has no doubt that an eponymous prophet, Myrddin, had previously been heard of at Carmarthen.

The changing of Myrddin's name to Merlin is quite clearly Geoffrey's responsibility. Clarke¹⁰ argues that Merlin as a name is unattested before Geoffrey, that it is his own variation of Myrddin, made, "it is surmised, in order to avoid the sound similarity to merde [excrement]; a large part of his readership would be French speaking."

What is surprising is that when he wrote his *Historia* Geoffrey knew so little of the Welsh Myrddin legend. Even when he learned the content of the traditions and incorporated them in his *Vita*

Merlini (c. 1150) he did not admit to error, but simply made Merlin live on into another age. In consequence, Giraldus Cambrensis¹¹ carefully distinguishes two Merlins—Merlin Ambrosius (also known as Myrddin Emrys) and Merlin Calidonus or Merlin Silvester (also known as Myrddin Wylt), a distinction preserved until recent years.

Though the *Vita Merlini* seems to have exercised no great influence on later literature, Geoffrey's *Historia* had a widespread impact, and was a best-seller of its time, with more than 200 manuscript copies of Latin text still in existence. As "a source book for the imaginative writing of others, as an inspiration for poetry, drama and romantic fiction down the centuries," declares Thorpe, "it has had few if any equals in the whole history of European literature".

It is not surprising therefore that in view of the enormous popularity of the *Historia*, so much local tradition can be traced back to Geoffrey. His tale of Vortigern's flight and death in his tower has at some stage been localised to Craig Gwrtheyrn some 12 miles from Lampeter on the Teifi.¹² Dr. Arbour Stephens would have us believe that West Wales was the setting for the whole Glastonbury legend with the Isle of Avalon located in the valley of the Gwendraeth Fawr.¹³

Poetic Allusions

Much of the local association of Merlin and Carmarthen is summarised in the following few lines from a poem entitled *Llan-gunnor Hill* written about 1794:¹⁴

"There with delightful pleasure view
Carmarthen town, both old and new
The place where Merlin claim'd his birth,
That mighty prophet when on earth,
Who in Allt' Fyrddin form'd a cave,
Which serv'd him for his house and grave;
His wants were truly few indeed
But few are those which mortals need!"

The belief that Merlin was born in Carmarthen clearly goes back to the *Historia*, but it was developed over the years. From the Rev. Mr. Meyrick's reply to Edward Llwyd's questionnaire in March 1697/8 we learn that not only is there a tradition that Merlin was born in Priory Street, but that "the house of his nativity is yet shown there."¹⁵

The association of Merlin with the town was further developed in the poetry of Spenser and Drayton. In Spenser's *Fairy Queen*,

written by 1590, Britomart and her nurse, Old Glance, go to consult Merlin:

“ To Maridunum, that is now by change
Of name Cayr Mardin call'd, they took their way;
There the wise Merlin whilom went, they say,
To make his wonne, low underneath the ground,
In a deep delve, far from the view of day
That of no living wight he mote be found,
When so he counsell'd with his sprights encompass'd round

And if thou ever happen that same way
To travel, go to see that dreadful place;
It is an hideous hollow cave they say,
Under a rock that lies a little space
From the swift Barry tumbling down apace,
Amongst the woody hills of Dynevowre;
But dare not thou, I charge, in any case,
To enter into that same baleful tower,
For fear the cruel fiends should thee unawares devour.

A little while,
Before that Merlin dy'd he did intend,
A brazen wall in compass to compile
About Cayrmarden, and did it commend
Unto his sprights to bring to perfect end;
During which time the Lady of the Lake,
Whom long he lov'd, for him in haste did send
Who therefore forc'd his workmen to forsake,
Them bound til his return their labour not to slake

In the meantime, by that false lady's train
He was surprised, and bury'd under bier
Ne ever to his work return'd again”

Book III Chapter III.

Michael Drayton's *Polyolbion*, printed in 1612, contains similar allusions to Carmarthen, including Merlin's intention to build a wall of brass around the town, to the Lady of the Lake, and to the marvellous cave:

“Now Merlin by his skill and magic's wondrous might,
From Ireland hither brought the Stonendge in a night:
And for Caermarthen's sake would fain have brought to pass,
About it to have built a wall of solid brass,
And set his fiends to work upon the mighty frame,
Some to anvil—some that still enforced the flame,

But whilst it was in hand, by loving of an elf,
(For all his wond'rous skill) was cozen'd by himself:
For walking with his fay, her to the rock he brought,
In which he oft before his necromancies wrought,
And going in there at his magic's to have shewn,
She stopt the cavern's mouth with an enchanted stone:
Whose cunning strongly crost, amaz'd while he did stand,
She captive him conveyed into the fairy land,
Then how the lab'ring spirits to rocks by fetters bound,
With bellows rumbling groans, and hammer's thund'ring sound
A fearful horrid din still in the earth do keep,
Their master to awake, supposed by them to sleep;
As at their work how still the grieved spirits repine,
Tormented in the fire, and tired in the mine.”

The reference in the two extracts to Merlin building the wall of brass around Carmarthen seems to be Spenser's personal contribution to the legend. It may well have been Giraldus Cambrensis's description of the town 'enclosed by brick walls' that suggested the colour of brass. In the same context Giraldus talks of woods and impenetrable forests, and to Dinefwr Castle "built on the top of a high hill which overlooks the river Tywi," and this may have prompted the location of the cave. His incarceration in the cave he doubtless obtained from Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (1485).

Differing stories of Merlin's fate abound in literature. There are several variants of him being enthralled by a beautiful maiden or fay named Vivien, sometimes identified as the Lady of the Lake. He is entombed by her magical charms in caves, tombs, castles in the air, towers of mist and is sent to sea in a house of glass never to be heard of again. The locations for his imprisonment extend from the 'woody hills of Dynevowre' to the forest of Brécilien.

Rhys¹⁶ referring presumably to "The Dream of Maccen Wledig" from the *Mabinogion*, relates the incarceration story directly to the foundation of Carmarthen. "Carmarthen enters into another legend which represents that town built by a princess called Elen Luydawg, or Elen Mistress of a Host: that is but another way of describing the Lady of the Lake constructing a house of glass or some still more pellucid material to be Merlin's prison."

Abergwili Associations

When Merlin's Hill, Abergwili became associated with Merlin is uncertain; that it did is not surprising. Describing the scenery between Llandeilo and Carmarthen in 1791 Mrs. Morgan¹⁷ writes:

"It is no wonder that such a romantic situation as this, surrounded by mountains, should give rise to a thousand legendary tales, in an age in which oral traditions were all they had to depend upon With the imagination thus wound up, on a near approach to Merlin's Hill, and the evening just closing, it was very easy, by the aid of the poets, to believe that I saw the magician at the entrance of a cave."

The association most probably occurred sometime after Spenser's *Fairy Queen* was printed in 1590, and had certainly occurred by 1767 when Sir Joseph Banks¹⁸ was to record that Merlin's "residence is said to have been a little hill, which still bears his name: it is situated about one mile from the town." The hill itself rises to over 490 feet and like Craig Gwrtheyrn referred to earlier is an Iron Age hill fort dating from the period c 500 BC—AD 43. It has been described by Grealey¹⁹ as tongue-shaped "of 'contour-type' defended by a single, massive rampart which encloses an area of about 10 acres."

Apart from containing Merlin's cave, it is also the location of his grave, chair and well. When Donovan²⁰ visited the hill early in the 19th century he recorded that "the cluster of trees upon this eminence, was pointed out to us by a shepherd's boy, under the title of Merlin's grove, and a cavity he mentioned on one side, of course by that of Merlin's cave." About the same time Malkin²¹ was to see a rock near the brow of the hill known as Merlin's chair "in which it is said, that famous prophet at other times used to sit, when he uttered his prophecies."

Just as Donovan and Malkin learned something of popular beliefs in the Merlin tradition, so too a hundred years later Ceredig Davies²² was to record the beliefs of Abergwili people in Merlin. He was informed by many persons who lived in the neighbourhood of Abergwili that Merlin was such a giant that he could jump over the Vale of Towy. The influence of Drayton is so very clear in the story of Merlin's cave that he reports after staying near Carmarthen, "Merlin's Hill (Bryn Myrddin) was pointed out to me where the great magician still lives (so they say) in a cave in that hill, . . . moreover, it is added, that if you listen in the twilight, you will hear his groans, and also the clanking of the iron chains which hold him bound. Others say he is heard working in his underground prison."

Welsh legend abounds with cave tales and it comes as no surprise to learn that Carmarthenshire boasts yet another cave containing Merlin. But it also contains Owen Lawgoch and his warriors. The

cave—Ogof Myrddin at Dinas, Llandybie—is said by Rhys²³ to "concede priority of tenancy to the great magician." The story is a version of the enchanted sleep of Arthur and his knights, where the heroes, in this case Owen Lawgoch and his men remain incarcerated awaiting a second advent. The story has its embellishment with Bradley²⁴ describing Owen as seated on an ancient bardic chair; a man of immense stature, with his red hand grasping a mighty sword, and sleeping until he can claim and seize the throne of Britain.

Also in the parish of Abergwili is a stone known as 'Carreg Myrddin.' An entry in the *Inventory of Ancient Monuments for Carmarthenshire* describes it as 5 feet above ground, 4 foot six inches broad at its base. Though Sir John Rhys thought the stone contained traces of Ogams, he was unable to make anything intelligible or continuous of them. The tradition surrounding the monolith was outlined by Aaron Roberts, Vicar of Newchurch, in 1876²⁵: "Merlin Ambrosius prophesied that a raven would drink up a man's blood off it; and a rather remarkable coincidence is said to have taken place within the memory of persons who were alive about fifteen years ago. A man hunting for treasure-trove sought, by digging on one side, to get at the base. The earth gave way, and the stone fell upon and crushed him to death. The proprietor of the soil ordered the stone to be placed back in its original position, to effect which it took the full strength of five horses with strong chains."

The Merlin Prophecies

A great many prophecies and sayings have been attributed to Merlin over the centuries, some are said to have been fulfilled, others are yet to occur. Prophecy or vaticination has a long history. Parry²⁶ tells us it was practised in Wales from the 9th century with a large number of prophecies linked to great poets like Taliesin and Myrddin. A special legend grew around Myrddin, according to which he had the gift of foretelling the future. Many poets were to take up the idea and write prophetic poetry in his name. It was prophecy born of defeat, often foretelling a hero—Arthur, Cadwalader, or Owain, who would rise again to deliver his people.

These prophecies were generally believed. The *Prophetiae Merlini* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, for example, were "taken most seriously even by the learned and worldly-wise, in many nations . . . There was scarcely a cranny of Christendom outside the Eastern Church which did not recognise Merlin as a great seer."²⁹ The Welsh appear to have readily accepted Merlin's prophecies, for as Donovan observed: "The invincible attachment of the Welsh to the prophecies of Merlin to this day is astonishing: there are thousands in the



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Merlin Ambrosius, from Thomas Heywood's 'Life of Merlin' 1641.

principality even now, who are firmly persuaded that sooner or later his prophecies must be fulfilled." Camden, however, was unconvinced; Merlin "hath been accounted among the credulous and unskilfull people a most renowned Prophet" who had "devised for our Britains prophecies, nay rather meere phantasticall dreams."²⁷

Notwithstanding Camden, the Welsh clung to their prophecies. Writing in 1889, Rowland²⁸ records that fifty years previously the old people of Carmarthenshire had great faith in Merlin's prophecies and that a copy of them was to be found in every house. The printed prophecies were sold in fairs and markets and were written in modern Welsh.

Several publications containing Merlin's prophecies were printed in Carmarthen at the beginning of the 19th century. Thomas Heywood's *The Life of Merlin Surnamed Abrosius*, originally printed in London in 1641, was reprinted in 1812 by J. Evans of Priory Street, Carmarthen. It is clear from the subscription list that the book had great local appeal. At the end of the book, however, Evans had a 26 stanza song in Welsh, entitled 'Cân o Brophwydoliaeth Myrddin', said to be taken from the *Book of Prophecies* written by a clergyman. The same poem was reproduced by him as a pamphlet entitled "Prophwydoliaeth Myrddin; Wedi ei chyfansoddi ar Fesur Cerdd yn y Flwyddyn 1668".

A further, undated, version of the prophecies appears in a short booklet *Prophwydoliaeth Myrddin Wyllt*, published and sold by M. Jones of Priory Street, Carmarthen, at two pence. The 26 stanzas are included as Merlin's second song of prophecy, and are preceded by a short introduction on the life of Merlin and a 49 stanza first song of prophecy. It is probable that this edition is the one suggested by Rhys Phillips²⁹ as having been printed in Carmarthen in 1842. The original date and authorship of the prophecies has been the subject of some debate. The date 1668 included in the 1812 pamphlet was criticised by the Rev. Wm. Rowlands³⁰ as not being late enough; he thought 1768 was more appropriate. Rhys Phillips, however, publishes yet another version of the poem, in which the final stanza gives a clue to the Welsh "pseudo-Merlin": "Davidd yw ei enw mab William yw ar gan". In consequence he attributes the authorship to the Rev. David Williams (Dafydd o'r Nant), Vicar of Penllin, near Cowbridge, c.1460-90. The following stanzas are selected in view of their local significance:

4

Fe ddaw y Llew i'r Mwythig yn gwisgo arfau cent,
 A'r Hebog hono ynteu yn rowndio Castell Gwent;
 Fe ddaw y Milgi a'r Llwynog i'r Aberhonddu fawr,
 Fe ddaw y Gath a'r Weingei a'r hyd Glan Towi i lawr.

7

Ceir gweled Owen lawgoch yn d'od i Frydain Fawr,
Ceir gweled newyn ceunog yn nhre' Caerlleon Gawr:
Ceir gweled Towi'n waedlyd, a chlwyf ar Edmwnt goch,
Waith bod yn aber Milffort o blaid i'r Saeson moch.

18

Ceir gweled yn Nghaerfyrddin ymrafael cethin tyn,
Cyn delo dial arni, ei chaearau syrth yn syn;
O achos ymgynghori y'mhlaid y Barut du,
Mae Llyfr y D'roganau yn dweud y geiriau yn hy.

21

Ceir gwel'd ymladdfa greulon ar Gefen-cethin fryn,
A'r gwaed a fydd yn llifo ar hyd cleddyfau'n lyn;
A'r cyrn a fydd yn canu o gwmpas Abernant,
Ac ar Riw-cyrph, ond odid, y lleddir llawer cant.

24

Cyn delo hyn mewn effaith, ceir gwel'd arwyddion maith,
Daw llong dros Gefen-berwyn, fe gyll y Cymry'n briaith;
Daw tarw i ben y clochdŷ Caerfyrddin hoyweddd sydd,
A'r dw'r a doriff dani, ond dyna newydd prudd.

Ceredig Davies believed that the last two lines of stanza 4 foretold the coming of the railway train running along the banks of the Towy. The reference to the bull and the clocktower in stanza 24 is significant in view of other prophecies foretelling the destruction of the town.

Terror and Panic

How far back the prophecies of Carmarthen's destruction go is hard to say. They are not referred to in the written prophecies of Merlin, though the *Vita Merlini* foretells great damage to a number of towns, such as Dumbarton, Porchester, Segontium and Richborough. Sir Joseph Banks observed in 1767 that of the several prophecies still preserved in this country, "one particularly, which says that Carmarthen shall some time be overwhelmed by water, seems to have some credit".

There are several instances of the seriousness with which such prophecies were taken. Writing in the *Red Dragon*³¹ Helen Watney asked, if it was true that Carmarthen would be swallowed up by an earthquake some 12th of August fairday when a red bull ran up the steeple? She reported that her Welsh nurse had told her so, and

one fair day a little red bull made for St. Peter's Churchyard, alarming the townsfolk. "She made me quite dread (when a little girl) staying on the fated 12th with some dear old aunts in the town".

*Carmarthenshire Notes*¹⁸ quotes a story that appeared in *Tit-Bits* in 1889, under the heading 'False Prophecies', that tells of Carmarthen Fair held on August 12th being "thinly attended owing to a rumour, founded on an ancient prophecy, that on that day the town would be destroyed by an inundation". It was further reported that the people had so much confidence in the prophecy that "hundreds of them left town for the neighbouring villages, and in fact the terror was so great that many left on the preceding day for Swansea and other towns".

The source of the account of panic was according to Rowland²⁸ a Welsh paper published in America under the name 'Old Letters from Wales' written by Anna Beynon at Bargod, Pencader to her sister Mary Powell in America. He asserts that the account was subsequently alleged to be fictitious and that in his view it was founded on a story quoted by Spurrell:³²

1727

"Aug 12 Great consternation caused on the fair day by a big man, with long hair, ragged clothes, and eyes shining like two stars, crying "mae tref Caerfyrddin i suddo o'r golwg am ddau o'r gloch heddyw" (the town of Carmarthen will sink today at two o'clock).

It had been noised about the country that Carmarthen would sink some time, and that Merlin had said,

'Y Gaer fawr, ti gei oer fore,
Daiar a'th lwnc, daw dwr i'th le'.

'Llanllwch fu, Caerfyrddin sudd, Abergwili saif'."

Interestingly, Ceredig Davies quotes a slightly different version of the above, which he translates as

'Carmarthen, thou shalt have a cold morning
Earth shall swallow thee, water into thy place'

'Llanllwch has been, Carmarthen shall sink, Abergwili shall stand'

The full version of the story, as Rowland knew it, is given below. As is is an interesting anecdote no apology is made for quoting it at length:

"Everybody believed that the day of destruction had come, and that the mysterious stranger was a second Jonah sent to warn them of the danger. The people in the fair were bewildered the same as the cattle in Newcastle Emlyn fair. The country people ran in all directions towards home, and the town people ran out to the country, and most of them turned to Abergwili because that place was to stand. There were a great many young men from this neighbourhood, who went to the coal-pits to fetch coal for Evan the Blacksmith, and intended to spend a few hours in the fair on their way home; but when they came near the town they could see that everything was turned topsy turvey. The people ran against them shouting—"The town is sinking, half of Water Street has sunk already, and houses in Priory Street and Lammas Street are disappearing". They saw a great many people carrying their treasures. They saw one woman carrying her sick husband on her back, and her little girl carrying a cat. They saw an old lady with a hairy dog in her arms lamenting in English that she had left her silver plate behind. The young men had great difficulty in crossing the bridge because so many people were pushing against them. In the town a drunken publican called after them, "Don't be in a hurry, boys, the town will not sink for two hours yet. Come to have a drop of beer. I give mine all away". They drank too much. Some were too drunk to take care of their horses, and the bags of coal fell off their backs and were left on the roadside, and other bags burst and all the coal was lost. Tom Penddol lost all his coal, and mounted one of his horses and led the other. He fell between them, and the horse trod upon him and he was killed on the spot".

The Old Oak Legend

Prophecies regarding the destruction of the town are not uncommon. Ceredig Davies had heard that Carmarthen was to sink when Llyn Eiddwen, a lake in Cardiganshire dried up. Perhaps the best known, however, is that associated with the Oak that once stood in Priory Street, Carmarthen:—

'When Merlin's tree shall tumble down
Then shall fall Carmarthen town'

Very little is known about the history of Merlin's Oak (Priory Oak or the Old Oak) or the reasons for its associations with the magician. A number of explanations have been advanced. Was it, for example, one of a number of oaks which formed an avenue to the Priory or did it merely derive its name from "a local Priory-

Street boy called Myrddin, who was in the habit of visiting the Coach and Horses Inn which stood opposite the Old Oak" and who would take his drink under the tree?³³ Perhaps we can look even further back to the possible Druidic associations of Merlin suggested by Cavendish. The Druids appear to have been especially concerned with the Oak; assemblies being held under these venerated trees, with a taboo on damaging them in any way.³⁴

What facts there are present a less romantic tale. On the back of an old playbill of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden is a handwritten memo: "Old Oak in Priory Street was planted by an Ancestor of President Adams, of America, May 29th 1659". Part of the Play-bill is retained in the Carmarthen County Record Office (Derwydd H16), and as the memo was written in the 19th century it provides flimsy evidence. According to Stepney-Gulston,³⁵ who once owned the play-bill, Charles II was proclaimed at Carmarthen on 19th May, 1659, ten days before the oak is said to have been planted and a year before the King landed at Dover. Stepney-Gulston thought it not "unlikely that it was planted to commemorate the return of a Sovereign to power after the death of Oliver Cromwell" in Sept. 1658. Spurrell had recorded that the Oak was planted by "Adams, Master of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, in this town, an ancestor of one of the Presidents of that name"; but other researchers dispute this, asserting there is no evidence in the school records for an Adams, either as headmaster or member of the staff.

From a poem written by Alex Aitken in 1856³⁶ it appears that the oak had died in the first half of the 19th century:

Behold me now, the time has been
Though not a trace doth now remain,
When I was covered o'er with green.
And my broad arms o'er hung the plain,
No mark of life adorns me now,
But rugged antlers crown my brow.

We learn from Lodwick³⁷ that the oak had been deliberately poisoned by tradesmen who "disapproved of the practice of people congregating under its spreading branches at all hours of the day and night".

Whatever its origins, the arguments surrounding the removal of the oak in 1978 gave credence to the local beliefs. Indeed, until its removal the stump had been well guarded, being encased in concrete and surrounded by metal railings.

Parry Jones³⁸ has recorded his reaction when, as a child at the turn of the century, he rode into Carmarthen in a gambo:

“As we jog along, father shouts that we are coming to the old oak—the Oak of Merlin. I jump up and take a good look at it. It is now a mere decayed trunk with a withered stump of what was once a hefty branch pointing awkwardly away from the town, walled up with cement and ribbed with iron bands, a brown, dry mummy, it has survived in its coffin for over half a century. I never knew it in its glory. On a plaque, may be, read the following prophecy of Merlin: ‘When Priory’s Oak shall tumble down then will fall Carmarthen town’. This particular morning I did not like the look of it. It might fall while I was in the town and my life perish with it. Had not my father told me of the ancient prophecy that when it falls Carmarthen will be flooded and its inhabitants perish! I feared for my fate. He assured me that he had heard that many families left the town on Lamma Day, for somehow the belief had become current that that was the day on which it would happen. To me now these tales can have no meaning beyond indicating the place that the old oak, and Lamma Day, filled in the minds of the old citizens of Carmarthen”

Perhaps the young Parry Jones worried unnecessarily, like so many inhabitants of the town, for it may be argued that the prophecy had already been fulfilled! In *Parochialia*¹⁵ Meyrick wrote: “At Llanllwch there’s a large pool where according to tradition old Caermarthen stood”. This is partly reflected in a story told by Helen Watney’s nurse that “Carmarthen had once been swallowed up, and that on a clear day the tops of the houses could be seen in some pond near Johnstown’. Yet another location for Carmarthen is given by Mary Curtis³⁹ in an even more extraordinary tale:

“It is said Old Caermarthen stood where Cefn Sidan is. This is a bank of sand near the Laugharne Burrows; that is sunk by enchantment; that a man was standing on Capthorne farm, near Llansadurnen church, when it sank; that if you stand on the very spot he stood on, keep your eye fixed on the part where the town stood, and place a cat on it, the town will rise again; and when it has risen, if you walk straight to Cefn Sidan, keeping your eye fixed on it, put a cat or any other animal there which will sink down, the town will never sink again”

What if anything, can be concluded about Merlin and the stories associated with him? Perhaps the words that Wace applied to the

tales surrounding Arthur apply equally to Merlin, such stories being “not all lies, nor all true, all foolishness, nor all sense; so much have the story tellers told, and so much have the makers of fables fabled to embellish their stories that they have made all seem a fable”.

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The Household Accounts of an 18th Century Mansion

By D. L. BAKER-JONES, J.P., M.A. F.S.A.

ONE of the very extensive and valuable collections of family papers deposited at the Carmarthen Record Office is that belonging to the Rice or Rhys family of Dynevor Castle or Newton, as it used to be called until about 1782.

The castle of Dinefwr was the capital of the territory which at one time formed the principality of Deheubarth. From 1277 onwards Dinefwr was a royal castle in the custody of the constable answerable to the King's justice of West Wales. Some memorable events occurred in its long history. It was in the possession of the Black Prince in 1343, it resisted a siege by the forces of Owain Glyndwr in 1403. But when Leland the Elizabethan antiquary visited Dinefwr in 1523 the castle had become ruinous. One era in its history had come to an end and the other was about to begin. The most famous personage associated with Dinefwr is Sir Rhys ap Thomas who held it as one of his residences along with Abermarlais and Carew. But when speaking of the house that ultimately came to be known as Dynevor Castle what is meant is the fifteenth century manor house of Newton probably built by Gruffydd ap Nicholas, and a 'neuadd' which drew praise from poets who enjoyed its welcome and hospitality. When Sir Rhys ap Thomas died in 1525 he was succeeded by his son Gruffydd. The latter enjoyed royal patronage, he was a member of Prince Arthur's household until the first Tudor Prince of Wales died in 1502. After an interesting career as a courtier and soldier Gruffydd died in 1521. He was succeeded by his only son Rhys ap Gruffydd who became heir to his grandfather's vast estates. Rhys became involved in the political rivalries and intrigues of the time and was executed for high treason on 21 December 1531. His estate passed to the Crown under the Act of Attainder which was passed immediately after his death.

It was his son Griffith Rice 1528-1592 who received from Queen Elizabeth I a restoration of status and some of the lands which had once belonged to Sir Rhys ap Thomas. He made the manor house of Newton his home which originally comprised a hall, chamber, little chamber, study, store tower, containing a low vaulted chamber,

and a chapel. In addition there were a kitchen, larder, buttery, bakehouse, brewhouse as well as a barn, stable and porters' lodge. Griffith Rice married Eleanor a daughter of Sir Thomas Johnes who a few years previously had been granted Abermarlais. Griffith became High Sheriff of Carmarthenshire in 1567 and 1583. With regard to the house there is no way of knowing whether it was substantially altered between 1560 and 1660, although it is probable that either Griffith Rice or his son Sir Walter Rice, M.P., considerably improved or even rebuilt the modest 15 century house mentioned above.

Sir Walter Rice, c1560-1636, married a daughter of Sir Edward Mansel of Margam. He was M.P. for Carmarthenshire from 1584 to 1585 and for Carmarthen borough from 1604-1611. It was Sir Walter's grandson Sir Edward Rice, 1632-1663, who built the new manor house of Newton. The house was enlarged and it is possible that the kitchen block forming the north side of the inner courtyard was converted from the earlier manor house. Edward Rice died unmarried and was succeeded by his brother Walter, 1634-75. In 1660 or so the fine decorated plaster ceilings and the staircase in the main block were made.

Griffith Rice of Dynevor lived from 1664-1729 and his marriage with Catherine Hobby in 1690 changed the family's finances dramatically for the better. Catherine was co-heiress with her two sisters to the valuable Neath Abbey estate. Griffith was M.P. for Carmarthenshire from 1691 to 1710. In the period about 1720 alterations and additions were made to the house at Newton; a wing called the Buildings, was added to the south side and this included a set of rooms known as the Harpers' rooms. As will be seen later there are records of numerous payments to harpers and fiddlers who no doubt occupied these apartments. The interior of the house was refurnished and the main rooms panelled with pine wood.

Griffith Rice was succeeded by his grandson George, who was Member of Parliament from 1754 to 1779, and Lord Lieutenant of the County for twenty-four years. He made the stable or outer yard when he built a new range of stables or coach houses. George Rice held important government offices and was helped through the influence of his father-in-law Lord Talbot, sometime Lord Steward to the Royal Household. George had married Lord Talbot's only daughter Cecil in 1756. Cecil was an only child and the ultimate heiress to three valuable estates. In 1780 Cecil's father was created Baron Dynevor with remainder to his daughter, and so, on his death in April 1782 she succeeded to the title Baroness Dynevor, and also assumed



Lady Cecil Rice, Baroness Dynevor (d. 1793), from a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

the name of de Cardonnel by Royal Licence in 1787 pursuant to the will of her mother. When George Rice died in 1779 his widow continued to live at Dynevor and was responsible for many improvements to the house and park. Some of her accounts are mentioned later in this article.

The eldest son of George Rice and the Baroness was George Talbot, who was born in 1765 and resumed the paternal name of Rice in 1817. He served as Member of Parliament for two years before his mother's death in 1792. As the third Baron Dynevor he was appointed Lord Lieutenant of the County, a position which he held for forty eight years until his death in 1852. Towards the end of his life he lived mostly at Barrington in Oxfordshire—another Talbot house—leaving the administration of his estate to his son George Rice-Trevor, a protagonist of the Tory cause in Carmarthenshire. Rice-Trevor 1795-1869 was the sixth and last member of the family to be elected M.P. for Carmarthenshire. He took a leading part in the campaign against the Rebecca Riots in the 1840's. After succeeding to the title in 1852 he redesigned Newton, or Dynevor Castle as it had been known since 1782. The house was refaced with grey stone, the towers at the four corners were raised, new windows were put in, and the porch and Venetian Gothic style balcony facing the garden front were added.

Over the centuries many changes took place and what was once a mediæval manor house later emerged as a splendid Victorian mansion. Capability Brown landscaped the Park and Fenton, on his visit in 1809, said, "Everytime I visit Dynevor I find fresh beauties". A herd of distinctive white cattle grazed in the Park for centuries; fallow deer have been a feature of the place. Dynevor was thus the mansion house of a large estate, its owners constituted one of the 'power houses' of West Wales, and it was the centre of a thriving community. The following examination of the accounts will, it is hoped, show something of the activities of this community and what life was like in a Carmarthenshire noble household in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Month by month one can trace the activities on the farm and in the mansion house. Most of the menfolk were occupied with general farm and labouring tasks during October 1757, and the women followed the usual occupations of washing, ironing and work in the house. There is one seemingly curious entry which recurs, namely, the payment of 1d per day for six weeks to a woman for watching the 'stone horse' in the park—in other words, watching the stallion so that he

did not roam about freely before the proper time came for him to 'cover' the mares of the neighbourhood. In addition to daily routine tasks November 1757 saw repairs to the 'Back Stable', that is, thatching, digging and levelling for the renovations. This continued for months and several men were occupied, until March in the following year, digging stones at the Llanfawr and Penbre quarries. In addition a new cowhouse was erected and the work of cleaning it ready for use took eight men a total of fourteen working days.

In January 1758 two men spent 9½ days in carrying 'saplings and quick setts'; one woman spent 6 days 'washing, making candles and doing the salt fish', while two men spent two days 'killing ye pigs'. 'Watching the stone horse' continued and is referred to month by month until April, when two men were employed to watch. Spring time tasks became evident in February 1758 when 'mould' was carried into Chapel Field—an important part of the agricultural calendar, as eight men spent a total of 69½ days on this task alone. Five men spent 36 days 'spreading ye dung and molehills in ye fields and meadows'. Moreover trees had to be cross sawed and lopped.

In March 1758 threshing, fetching straw and carrying hay to the parks had to be done. Some of the threshing was carried out at Llandeilo at 'Thos. James', while at home two men spent 4½ days brewing and three men took 3 days to 'putting down hurdles'. In April there were a few additional tasks, such as 'levelling ye ditch' in 'Kae Ffynnon', brewing, hauling timber, mending the pumps, hedging and 'cleaning the fields and meadows' as well as 'watching the colts in the meadows'.

In May we have the following main entries—shearing sheep, cleaning 'cae ffynnon' after 'ye collier'¹, carrying 'mould', 'sawing for ye carts', 'cleaning ye fields' and hedging. Carrying 'mould' continued in June, along with the 'cross sawing of wood to burn', carrying straw, cutting hedges, brewing, cleaning the fields and by now, hay-making was in full swing, with four men working 11½ days 'mowing the fields' with five women helping to clean the fields after them.

In July 1758 the accounts refer to the time 'when my Master was here'; the work of digging for the new stable went on, along with carrying straw, mending the road from the meadows to the house, brewing and most important of all—mowing, raking and 'beating

¹ In the sense of charcoal-burners.

muck in the fields' as well as cutting nettles about the house, nineteen men working 30 days on these tasks. During the same period nineteen women worked 18 days cleaning after 'ye mowers'.

During August 1758 a variety of tasks were completed, such as, carrying 'the tythe', killing sheep and selling mutton, thatching hay-ricks. Among tasks for the womenfolk there were seasonal matters to be concluded, such as 'making Jellyes and preserving Cherries', which took one woman five days and one other day to preserve peaches. In September we read that the cart-horses were shod; in addition, brewing, carrying out rubbish, threshing 'tythe' corn, trimming hedges and herding in the meadows were continued.

It is of interest, too, to discover from the following table² of disbursements the number of workmen and labourers at Newton during this period, the peak periods of activity and the wages paid :

Month	Days Worked	No. of Workers	Wages from	Men	Women	Total Wages
1757 Oct.,	250½	27	3d-6d	19	8	£6. 6. 3½
Nov.,	110	20	3d-7d	17	3	7. 4. 8
Dec.,	57	15	5d-7d	14	1	2. 6. 8
1758 Jan.,	125	15	3d-7d	14	1	3. 1. 5½
Feb.,	188	21	3d-8d	16	5	4.19. 3½
March	190	14	6d-8d	14	—	4.10. 1½
April	122	16	3d-6d	9	7	2.10. 6
May	88	15	3d-6d	7	8	2. 1. 1½
June	132	11	3d-6d	5	6	2.10. 3
July	85	44	3d-6d	16	28	1.16. 9
Aug.,	63	11	3d-6d	8	3	1.10. 4½
Sept.,	84	5	3d-6d	7	1	1.11.10½

Surviving from this period is a bill³, rendered to 'George Rice Esq. for going to London with ye Coach Horses, March 25, 1751' which details expenses in travelling to London, lodging there, and making the return journey.

Month	Description	Wages
March.	25 Llandoverly 6 Horses hay & Corn	0. 2. 6
	Hostler	0. 0. 6
	26 Brecon 6 Horses hay & Corn	0.10. 0
Hay	Hostler	0. 1. 0
	6 Horses hay & Corn	0. 2. 6
	Hostler	0. 0. 6
27 Kingston	Smith	0. 1. 0
	6 Horses hay & Corn	0. 9. 0
	Hostler	0. 1. 0
	Smith	0. 0. 8

² Carmarthen CRO/Dyn/201/2.

³ CRO/Dyn/205/2.

Ross	6 Horses hay & Corn	0. 2. 6
	Hostler	0. 0. 6
28 Gloucester	6 Horses hay & Corn	0. 9. 0
	Hostler	0. 1. 0
Cirencester	6 Horses hay & Corn	0. 2.10
	Hostler	0. 1. 0
	Smith	0. 1. 8
29 Farringdon	6 Horses hay & Corn	0. 9. 0
	Hostler	0. 1. 0
	Smith	0. 0. 6
Dorchester	6 Horses hay & Corn	0. 2.10
	Hostler	0. 0. 6
30 Henley	6 Horses hay & Corn	0.10. 0
	Hostler	0. 1. 0
London	1 Horse 5 Nights at 1/8d per night	0. 8. 4
	4 shoes for do.	0. 2. 0
	Hogs Lard	0. 0. 2
	Hostler	0. 1. 0

April.	Description	Wages
5 Windsor	1 Horses hay & Corn	0. 0. 6
	Hostler	0. 0. 3
6 Henly	1 Horses hay & Corn	0. 1. 4
	Hostler	0. 0. 3
Abbingdon	1 Horses hay & Corn	0. 0. 6
7 Farringdon	1 Horses Hay & Corn	0. 1. 2
Cirencester	Hostler	0. 0. 3
	1 Horses Hay & Corn	0. 0. 6
8 Gloucester	1 Horses Hay & Corn	0. 1. 2
	Hostler	0. 0. 3
Ross	1 Horses Hay & Corn	0. 0. 6
9 Hay	1 Horses Hay & Corn	0. 1. 2
	Hostler	0. 0. 3
Brecon	1 Horses Hay & Corn	0. 0. 6
Llandoverly	1 Horses Hay & Corn	0. 0. 6
	Turnpikes going to London & Coming Back and Maidenhead ferry	0.10. 4
	Board wages While I was away (viz. 4 days in London for 4/- 6 days going to London and 5 days returning at 2/- per day	1. 6. 0
		<u>£ 6.12. 3</u>

18 July 1751 Jo Griffiths' Bill going and returning from London £6.12.3.

Recd the 18 July 1751 of Geo. Rice Esqr by hands of John Owens ye full contents of bill within and all Demands.

mark of J. Griffiths.

After a gap of some years, the records show that in 1783 quantities of mown grass were sold as hay from Newton. About 48 acres

were cut and sold for the sum of £54.2.6. From March to August in the same year the following livestock was sold :

March	An 'esplayed' ⁴ heifer	...	...	...	£12. 0. 0
April	4 oxen	...	...	...	43. 0. 0
	1 cow	...	...	...	6. 0. 0
	2 oxen	...	...	...	12. 0. 0
	1 yearling bull	...	...	...	2.10. 0
June	a wether	...	...	...	13. 0
	a large wether	...	...	...	1. 5. 0
August	6 oxen at Llandeilo fair	...	...	...	48. 0. 0
	2 rams to kill	...	...	...	18. 0
					<u>£126. 6. 0</u>

In the summer of 1784 the following item occurs : £7.19.8½ for wool sold from July to August, including coarse wool, lamb's wool, part of which was given out for a woman to spin for Lady Dynevor. Another important commodity in the estate's economy was lime, and surplus quantities were sold, e.g. 690 teals⁵ @ about 6d per teal, realising about £17.15.0. But to produce this quantity of lime 145 teals of coal, costing £3.10.8, had been supplied by David Edwards and William Jones, and the wages from men producing the lime amounted to £7.17.6. Accounts of 'tack'⁶ in 'late math'⁷ during the autumn of 1784 show that a total of 110 cows, 2 bulls and 12 oxen were pastured at the following rates—cows @ 18d per week, bulls and oxen @ 20d. By October 1784 the income to the estate from tack pasture was £34.14.9.

From Christmas 1783 to Christmas 1784 sales of corn amounted to 73 teals of barley, sold for £56.19.1½, of which a small quantity of the best quality, that is 3 bushels, fetched 16/6 @ 22/- per teal. 'Second barley' was sold for 12/- per teal and was used for feeding dogs, fowls and pigs. During the same period sales of wheat totalled 21 teals, 1 bushel and 3 pecks for £29.10.3 and of this the best quality wheat was sold @ 38/- per teal.

⁴ spayed or neutered.

⁵ 1 Teal equals 4 Bushels, i.e. 32 gallons

⁶ Pasture for hire.

⁷ Aftermath i.e. second or later mowing.

New livestock purchased at this time included :

1 cow bot. of Thomas Thomas	...	...	...	...	£5. 0. 0
2 oxen bot. of Mr John Morgan Carrier	...	...	...	...	7.10. 0
1 draught mare	...	...	...	...	7. 0. 0
1 " horse	...	...	...	...	6.10. 0
1 cow and calf	...	...	...	...	7. 0. 0
					<u>£33. 0. 0</u>

At Christmas time 1784 the livestock position at Newton was :—

	Died	Sold	Killd	Left
Ox 8 yr old May 1784		1		
3yr estrayed heifers		2		1
2 cows of the old stock		1		1
1 Ox bot. of Thos. Williams		1		
1 " " " John Dd. Jones		1		
1 White Heifer 2 yr old May '84				1
1 Bull calf 1 yr old		1		
1 Calf				1
2 Oxen bot of John Morgan		2		
1 draft mare bot				1
1 " horse "				1
1 cow and calf bot of Jn Griffith				2

Mr. William Roderick the bailiff was able to produce the following figures for the year ending Christmas 1784 :—

Grass sold for Hay from Newton demesne	...	...	£ 54. 2. 5
Cattle "	...	...	126. 6. 0
Wool "	...	...	7.19. 8½
Lime "	...	...	5.16.10
Tack in 'latemath'	...	...	34.14. 9
Barley sold	...	...	55.15. 1½
Wheat "	...	...	29.10. 3
			<u>£314. 5. 1</u>

Against this income there were the following expenses :—

Cattle, sheep, etc., bought for Newton	...	...	£ 33. 0. 0
Oats	...	...	16. 4. 3
Workmen's wages	...	...	57.11. 7
Lands in hand part of Newton demesne year ending			
Michmas 1783, yielding	...	...	117.13. 6
			<u>£224. 9. 4</u>

The disbursements of Lady Dynevor from Christmas 1787 to February 1789 illustrate the household expenses at Newton. Not least amongst the responsibilities were the frequent demands of the

neighbouring poor on the generosity of the family. Thus poor people and employees received during this period :—

26 yards half cloth @ 21d per yd	£ 2. 5. 6
17½ „ for men's coats @ 2/6	2. 3. 1½
38 „ of flannel for the poor @ 9½d	1.10. 1
John Pogson's Diet a Year and Nine months, £5 per ann:	8.15. 0
Subscription to the Widows of the Clergy	2. 2. 0
William Pogson—a pair of shoes 5/6, hat 8/- as well as other charity expenses for the benefit of the same person	11. 7.10
for 'cloathing' poor children	2.13. 4
John Howell ½ of a years charity due to his father Feby. 1760 at which time the old man died	1.13. 4
Doctor Davies, Carmarthen, visiting the house keeper three times	6. 6. 0
Wm David towards burying his son	5. 0
John Jenkins for a Coffin for Bob Weaver's boy	10. 6
Dr Thomas what he did for watching Bob Weaver's boy	7. 0

Some of the charitable gifts came about through the wills of members of the Rice family : e.g. Maria Rice of New Windsor in the county of Berkshire, spinster, had bequeathed in her will dated 21 January 1763 "the sum of one Hundred Pounds . . . to be applied by him [her nephew George Rice] . . . twenty shillings . . . yearly arising from the Interest of the said One Hundred Pounds—in putting two poor children either Boys or Girls of the parish of Llandilo or about Newton in the county of Carmarthen to school, until they shall be fit to be placed out apprenticed". As a result of this bequest one beneficiary was a William Pogson, who benefited thus :—

8 Feb. 1783		£	s	d
One quarter for Llangathen Lame boy in Arithmetic to Mr Jones	...	5	0	
3 Quarters and 3 Weeks for William Pogson in Arithmetic to Mr. Jones	...	16	6	
Advance to settle Wm. Pogson with Jno Samuel, Tinman and Glazier	...	10	0	0

Responsibilities concerning charities and worthy causes continued for some years and included payment for the schooling of pauper and handicapped children. Back in 1784 the following sums of money were spent :—

		£	s	d
For the Lame Boy's Scooling	...	0	2	6
„ Mrs Nathan for a Quarters „ for Wm David and David Rowlands girls	...	5	0	
Mrs Nathan for John Tobias children's schooling	...	7	6	
For Wm David's daughter and books	...	12	6	

Later on, in April 1791, a payment of 6 guineas was made to Dr Davies of Carmarthen for visiting the housekeeper three times. In July a further two guineas was paid to Dr Davies. It would appear that the doctor's treatment was not entirely effective as Lady Dynevor paid in November of the same year the sum of £5—19—0 for the housekeeper's expenses at the fashionable health resort of Llandrindod Wells.

In June 1788 a donation of five guineas was made to the Agricultural Society, and 5/- as a year's allowance to William Thomas "for cleaning the Pugh (pew) in Llandilo Church". A further £1—16—5 was spent on repairs to the chancel of Abergwili Church, and a contribution of 12/6d for 500 tile stones for Llandilo church. On December 21, 1796 a second subscription of £10—10—0 was made towards the Organ in Carmarthen Church [i.e. St. Peters]. Earlier, on 29 October 1791, a payment had been made to Peter Williams for two dozen Bibles costing £7—4—0.

Happy occasions were celebrated with due merriment—harpists and fiddlers were employed at the mansion and bell ringers from Llandilo to Carmarthen were given ample opportunity to show their skill at special times, such as at New Year 1788, when the following sums were paid :—

		£	s	d
David Richard and the Harper	...	0	5	0
Will : Bowen „ „	...	2	6	
The Lannon (Llannon) „	...	2	6	
Will : Richard Fidler	...	2	6	

Later on, towards the end of January, 2/6 was given to "David Richard Fidler playing for the servants' Dancing" and during the same month Solomon the harper, Michael the piper and the Glanbrân boy and the "fiddler" were each given 2/6d. A bill of £1-16-0 was met for the tenants' dinner on 7 January 1789. In July and August 1796 the ringers were given one guinea on each of two occasions—at the birth of Miss Cardonnell and "when my Lord came to the country". On one occasion, namely 3 Sept., 1788 groups of ringers at Llandeilo, Carmarthen and Kidwelly received one guinea each.

On 12 January 1789, similar payments were made to the Carmarthen and Llandeilo ringers on account of Mrs 'Dorriens' wedding. (Mr. Dorrien had assumed the name of Magens at the time of his marriage on 16 Dec. 1788 to the Hon. Henrietta Cecilia Rice, eldest daughter of the Rt. Hon. George Rice and Cecil Baroness Dynevor).

When George Talbot Rice, Esquire, of Newton celebrated his birthday on 9 October 1786, 'being of age of 21 years', the town of Carmarthen was the venue of special jollification and rejoicing. To begin with three thousand bricks and sixty strikes (i.e. pieces) of timber were carted to Carmarthen 'for the making of the Shed for the roasting of the ox' and for the carriage of these materials Anne Hall was paid 13/6d. For attending the cook and the bonfire night and day Charles Davies received 15/-. The proceedings continued for at least four days and Richard Lewis was given 10/6 for "carrying coal and tending the fire at the Town Hall Carmarthen carrying the grate and gathering the bricks about the street at the Roasting of the Ox". To erect the ox roasting shed Thomas Adley, a smith, provided iron @ 1d per lb for a total of £1—8—0; as well he received 10/6 for being in attendance. Jonathan Griffiths and John Rees, masons, erected a fireplace for the ox for £1—11—6. The task of slaughtering the ox fell upon Thomas David, a Carmarthen butcher, who was paid 13/2 and 3/- worth of ale. The men turning the 'spite' were given 1/-, while Mrs Davies, the cook, was paid 10/6 for one night and one day in attendance. The other items relating to the ox-roasting comprised 800 Common bricks from James Morris & Co. @ 3/3d per 100, fire wood 7/-, 16 barrels of 'Ring Coal' @ 2/8 per barrel, with an extra delivery charge of 2d per barrel. Susan Lewes provided nine empty tar barrels for the bonfire for 9/-, rope for 'carrying ye flags' 1/6d and 4lb of 'Tow for raming ye guns' @ 3d per lb. Some two thousand and three thousand additional bricks had to be used @ 2/6 per 100—a total of £2—17—6. Carriage for the latter came to 5/9d and the labourer was paid 1/2d.

While the celebrations proceeded five constables of the Borough were paid 2/6d each for "looking after the gates of ye Townhall to keep the mob off". For carrying "colours" and providing "musick on the Quay and Bonfire" the sum of £1—11—6 was paid to Benjamin Lewis, senior, and Benj. Lewis junior, Thomas Nicholas, John Nicholas, David Tobias, Henry Lewis and John Shainbry, described as 'Musicieners'. Merry-making went on throughout the town of Carmarthen and many innkeepers were paid considerable sums of money for providing ale, grog, toddy, rum, port wine, shrub and brandy. The taverns mentioned included the Six Bells, Angel, Old Plow, Hare, Harp, Blue Bell, Royal Oak, Buffalo, Red Cow, Rose and Crown, Prince of Wales, Horse and Jockey, Three Mariners, New Inn, Golden Lion, Globe, Mermaid and Three Compasses. Twenty-five bottles of port wine cost £3—2—6, while 36 quarts of ale came to 12/-. The total cost of the ale consumed during the celebrations was approximately £60—about 7,200 pints. There are

several references, too, to the price of other alcoholic beverages, e.g. a bottle of brandy cost 4/- and as we have seen a bottle of port cost 2/6d.

Numerous people would have found employment during the festivities. Thus three men received 4/- for "cleaning the Streets and Paving them where the Ox was roasted". An unnamed person was given 2/- for "Gould to Gilt the Horns of the Ox", and 5/- was another item to give "Captain Palmer and his crew for Speenyarn and ale for being Hearty on the Occation".

Wages paid from time to time show the different strata and relative status of employees. In the house itself the most important person was the housekeeper, employed at a salary of £12 per annum. Then came the housekeeper's maid, the kitchen and laundry maids, dairy maids and maids of all work. Jane Tobias, a kitchen maid at Newton in 1788, received 18d per week—payment was not made weekly but sometimes every year or half year. Elizabeth Jenkins, a laundry maid, was paid 3/- per week and 'Kitty the cook maid received £2—10—0 as 'board wages' in comparison with Polly Davies's 'board wages' of £1—15—0 for about six months, and Ann David was paid 7/6d for five weeks service in the kitchen. At the top of the scale came Mr Wm Roderick, the steward or bailiff, whose business it was to supervise household expenses and the affairs of the farm. He was paid at the rate of 7/- per week. The lowest paid of all was the maid of all work, Catherine Hopkin, whose wage was 6d a week. Indeed, many of these employees' wages were years in arrear, but as the domestics lived in and were provided with food, clothing and a roof over their heads, they had not that need for ready money as is sometimes supposed.

'Leather for the Pump' cost 2/6d, an item which occurs more than once. Another tradesman referred to is Powell the Plumber, whose bill came to £3—8—4. The local smith was in frequent demand for "shoeing horses and banding wheels", while Joan Davies was paid £10—0—0 for 'cranks for ye water engine' and William Charles 9/- for mending pumps at Dynevor Castle. In Oct. 1796 Thomas Morgans charged 12/6 for 20lb of pewter used by the plumbers at Dynevor Castle and on 12 Sept. 1796 "Wm Charles received £2—2—0 for "making a new Top Piece to the Brew House Pumps and other pipes to both pumps". John David, the smith, made "chains to tie the oxen" for £1—10—0.

Several entries in the first quarter of 1788 show the use of home produced leather. Others refer to purchases 'paid Ben Davies the

sadlers' Bill—2/5d; a Bill for Leather for the Harness and mending do—£6—11—0'; 'for a Hyde and a half of Leather had from Mr Halliday Llanelly weighing 48lb @ 12d making Harness and mending—£2—8—0' and in April 1790 a payment of £4—17—8 was made to Henry Morley the Saddler. On 16 July 1791 David Edwards had 6/- for dressing the hide to mend the harness.

The health and well-being of farm stock and domestic animals depended very much on the skill and attention of the farrier and these entries are illustrative—'29 Dec. 1788—William Lloyd cureing a cart mare—10/6'; '3 Feb. 1796 Lewis Bowen's bill for Farriery—14/6'; '12 May 1796. Paid David John for Drenching. Many employees worked on a casual or seasonal basis. The old "warrener" taking rabbits and bringing them to Newton received 13/- in November 1788. The "Ratcatcher" John Jones had 4 guineas as a year's wages and his duties might also include killing crows during May and June for which his additional bill amounted to 17/6.

Local craftsmen were in constant demand. Thus in October 1788 Evan David Evan, a 'sieve maker', was paid 1/6d for a 'New Stable Sive and bottoming another' and several yard and stable brooms were purchased for 7/8d. Thos. John's bills for brooms at Dynevor Castle in February 1798 came to £1—16—0 and judging from the various bills he probably supplied between 70 and 80 during that season. The tinman came on his rounds and replaced kitchen utensils. The local ropemaker was paid on 3 Feb. 1788 the sum of £6—12—8 for rope and flax. And another ropemaker, Harry Jenkin, received 6/8d for '20 yds Hair Rope for the Drying Yard' as well as ropes for the laundry. A regular visitor to the mansion house was the clock and watch maker who came regularly to adjust and clean the clocks. Things went out of order from time to time—so the glazier had to be called in to replace broken panes, to glaze windows in new buildings and in November 1788 'Morgan Davies the glaziers' bill came to £4—13—2. The pump in the kitchen yard needed attention and "Mr Rice's dog at John Harry's being bit by a mad dog—1/2". Later on, in October, Lewis Bowen the farrier was paid £1—0—0 for 'attending the ox and Two Cows Calveing'. Moreover, the farrier was also responsible for docking tails, castrating, ringing pigs' noses and was paid 2/- "for cutting 2 litters of pigs, calves and a bull". One "Richard Williams' Bill for Cover for a mare" came to £1—3—6.

A familiar visitor to farms and mansion houses was the tailor, who would come on his rounds and stay, sometimes for a few weeks,

to make clothes for the household and dependants. 'Harries the Taylor' was paid 3/- for a small job in December 1788, and the 'cloathing of poor children' cost £2—13—4 in the winter of 1790. In January 1792, Harry John the Taylor was paid £1—5—1½ for making 'clothes for the poor'. Later, in 1793, 'Wm Harries' bill making clothes for the spinning children' came to 4/3½d. Linked with the tailor's craft was spinning and weaving. David Richard was paid 2/- for weaving flannel for horse collars. In July 1796 the 'Spinning Woman' was paid £4—7—6, being her wages for 25 weeks from 17 January to 11 July @ 3/6d. One Mary Betsy was paid £4—7—8 for 25 weeks to instruct the children to spin from Nov 1792—May 1793 @ 3/6d per week, fire included.

An unwelcome visitor was the Exciseman, and in July 1787 the duty on 'Candles made at the home' paid to the Office of Excise came to £1—8—0, while the duty on '69 Teals of Malt made at home' was £22—15—0. In 1790 the Excise man's name was Mr Lott and he was paid £20—0—10½ duty on malt. The Kings taxes paid up to Michaelmas for the previous six months in 1793 were as follows—

	£	s	d
Commutation Tax	12	0	0
Houses and Windows	10	5	0
Inhabited Houses	2	13	0
Male Servants		15	0
Horses		3	0
Additional Duty on Horses	2	10	0
Carriages with 4 Wheels	14	0	0
Additional Duty on - do -	3	0	0

In spite of the multifarious activities and special skills of the different employees at Newton the establishment was not self supporting. Many commodities were bought locally, depending very much on the season. For instance, a cask of butter was bought from Griffith Rees to be sent to London. Its weight was 73lbs @ 6d per lb. and the bill came to £1—16—6. Another cask of butter (85 lbs) was purchased, for use at Newton at the same price per lb. One year later, in the winter of 1788, Rees supplied two casks of butter weighing 155lbs @ 5d per lb and costing £3—4—7, and another supplier Thomas Jones supplied 161lb at the same price. Although butter and cheese was produced in the Newton dairies, yet it was insufficient to meet the demand of the household, and resort had to be made to merchants who traded in many items of country produce, such as potatoes and even apples in addition to cheese and butter.

For the purposes of brewing, hops were obtained from London,

e.g. in January 1787 the sum of £10—17—11 was paid for 2cwt 1qr 19lb @ 90/- per cwt. Freight, portorage, etc., were 7/- extra. In July 1790 a quantity of hops, described as '1½ pocket'⁸ and weighing 2cwt 1qr 19lb, cost £19—3—11, together with 3/2d shipping charges. Later on, in January 1791, a Mr Howells' bill for hops came to £8—2—9 and another from Unwin for 24¾lbs cost £1—10—11.

Wine was imported through the port of Carmarthen from Bristol and thereto from the continent. It was customary to have distinctive bottles with the family's crest or monogram and examples survive to the present day. W. Jones was paid £4—10—0, the sum of money he had spent in Bristol for the purchase of wine bottles. In January 1790 Mr Herbert Lloyd's bill for freight of wine amounted to £34—19—9. In March 1792 a bill for liquour amounting to £18—12—0 was paid, and in June 1791 'five gallons and a half of Spirits sent to Dynevor towards the first Dinner on acct. of the Cavalry @ 10/- per gallon' is also mentioned. At Newton brewing went on as part of domestic routine and in 1797 Thomas John was paid £1—1—0 as one year's allowance 'for Night work in brewing'.

Supplies of candles came sometimes from Williams the Chandler at Llangadog. For the candles used in 1787 and the charge for making them, Williams was paid £14—18—8. The bill for candles used in 1788 came to £12—5—7, and, on one occasion at least, a quantity of tallow was bought at Llangadog for use at Newton.

From the housekeeper's bills for December 1787 it is possible to see something of the amount of meat consumed at Newton: —

		£	—	s	—	d
Dec. 1	Beef of David Thomas 119lb @ 3d ...	1	—	9	—	9
	do „ Williams 129 „ „ ...	1	—	12	—	3
8	Pork 23lbs @ 4½d—8/7. Quarter of veal 6/6 ...			15	—	1
	Beef of David Thomas 168lbs @ 3½d ...	2	—	5	—	6
	Pork 21lbs @ 4½—7/10½. Veal 6/9 ...			14	—	7½
15	Beef of David Thomas 147lbs @ 3½d ...	1	—	19	—	9½
	do „ Williams 145lbs @ 3½ ...	1	—	19	—	3
	Beef's heart 2/2. Side of veal 14/6. Head 2/6			19	—	0
	Pork 22lb @ 4½d—8/3. Tongue 1/6. feet 3d			10	—	0
Dec. 22	Beef of David Thomas 200lbs @ 3½d ...	2	—	14	—	2
	Quarter of veal 7/6. Head 2/-. Tongue 1/6					
	Feet 6d			11	—	6

Six livers for the dogs cost 2/- from David Thomas, butcher.

⁸ One pocket of hops equals 168lb.

When payment was made for the meat the 'weight was settled with Mrs Morris (the housekeeper's) book. During 1796 the following quantities of meat were consumed 5644lbs of mutton at 4½ per lb—£105—16—6 and 1813lbs of beef at an average of 5d per lb—£37—15—5, not to mention game, poultry, pork, ham, bacon, fish for which we have no precise details.

Deer from the park also was a source of meat for the household, but from time to time this was sent to centres as far afield as Aberystwyth, Bath, Swansea, Bristol and London. Entries for 22 Nov. 1788 are: 'paid the booking of the Venison at Llandilo to Bath—6d', paid John Tobias' expenses with Venison at Swansea—5/-'. And again for 31 June 1797: 'paid Joan Tobias' Bill of Expenses at Aberystwyth with Venison—12/5d'.

Supplies of fish were obtained from Carmarthen, Kidwelly and Swansea, e.g. on 24 December 1788 Will: Evans' bill for fish from Swansea was 8/11d and another fish supplier mentioned is Mr Humphreys of Carmarthen along with one Andrew of Kidwelly.

Salt was in great demand and considerable sums of money appear in the accounts. In February 1788 £7—0—0 was paid, about twice the amount paid a year previously. At this time of the year fattened pigs were killed and ham & bacon curing played an important part on the time-table. But slaughtering was not confined to the winter months, as in April 1793 William Richards bill for slaughtering at Dynevor Castle was 8/6d. In August 1793 Thomas Rees the Butcher charged 1/- for slaughtering two sheep.

Much use was made of wild plants with curative and medicinal properties. Thus bog-berries are referred to—probably the bog bean (*menyanthes trifoliata*) found all over Europe and used as a tonic. In August 1788 a peck of these cost 7/-, and later, in November, Mr Brookes supplied a quantity costing 10/6. In Oct 1796 several women were employed gathering 'Haughes' (haws) and received 18/-. If this refers to 'Hips and Haws', the berries were traditionally used in western Europe in preserves, sauces and drinks, the leaves being used as a tea substitute derived from *rosa pomifera*.

Acorns were gathered and for 5½ bushels payment of 5/6d was made, whereas 4½ bushels of hawthorn cost 4/6d. The acorns of the species *Quercus robur pendunculata* (English Oak) have been used for various purposes from time immemorial as a food for pigs, and sometimes ground as flour or as a coffee substitute for human use. Again

the Hawthorn or *May Crataegus axycantha* was variously used—the young leaves were used as a tea and a remedy for blood pressure or as a tobacco substitute, while the seeds could be used for making a coarse coffee.

A large number of items in the accounts deal with the day to day tasks of farming and managing the estate. Timber had to be sawn for partitions and pallsades. Young trees had to be planted on the demesne land. Mr Scott received £3—3—0 for trees. And when trees came to be felled and hedges trimmed a great deal was used in the house. In May 1787 David John was paid £1—4—0 "for cutting 12 cords⁹ of wood which were carried to the House for Use". Loppings were used for charcoal, e.g. on 4 July 1792 Walter David was paid one guinea for "burning the lopings at Dryer's wood into charcoal for Dynevor Castle". When there was insufficient charcoal available frequent purchases were made, e.g. in January 1788 "paid Tho. Williams' Bill for charcoal £1—11—6".

In March 1791 William Francis was paid £2—1—6 for cutting cordwood of old logs, in all 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ cords for the use of the house. From lengthy and straight timbers could be saved a piece of wood for a large ladder. Again boards would be sawn for floor timbers in the extensions and renovations in the house and out buildings. All the plantations and forests were carefully supervised. Dangerous trees were felled, trees thinned and suitable trees harvested at proper times. This was the task of the woodward and during one season John Tobias was paid £2—10—0 'for being in Glamorganshire as woodward', i.e. supervising the Neath estates of the family. Sometimes trees were felled on land adjoining the river Tywi and floated down towards Dynevor. Hedging and ditching was an important winter season occupation and on 22 Jan. 1791 several men were employed for hedging and ditching, e.g. '45 $\frac{1}{2}$ perches of hedge @ 6d'.

The overall management of the estate, the immediate home farm and demesne were carried out by the steward as we have seen. But one of the stewards' underlings was the 'beedle'. Thus, in July 1796, David Hopkin was paid three years' wages (£6) as 'Beedle to Dynevor Castle due Xmas 1794'. He had held the post 'of beedle or Biddle' to the then Newton estate since 1788 at least, at the salary of £2 per annum.

Towards the end of the 18th century, when new developments

⁹ One cord equals 128 cubic feet.

and ideas in agriculture and estate management were important, farms had to be measured and mapped, instructions given to tenants, leases examined for renewal or termination. Thus in January 1788 Mathew Williams was paid £2—2—4 $\frac{1}{2}$ for 'measuring and mapping two farms in Landarog and one in Lanarthney together with other jobs per bill'. In July 1788 12/- was paid to Morgan Walter for 'surveying Hay for Sale at Newton'. Again Richard Hopkin received 10/6 for surveying 'Abergwili Tythes'.

Lime was an important commodity for spreading over the land and for use in white washing farm buildings, still rooms, out kitchens and dairies. Also, when mortar was needed, lime was used and laths split for partitions, e.g. 7 February 1788 1600 laths were split at Newton at a cost of 3d per hundred. In August 1796 'Mr Jones Kilsane's bill for hair' amounted to 10/-. Hair was mixed with the lime mortar and used for plastering partitions and walls.

Some other items and activities may be mentioned. White clover seed was obtained from London @ 70/- per cwt. Considerable quantities of straw were required for cowsheds and stables e.g. 100 bundles @ 12/-. Lady Talbot was an amateur farmer and had in her own charge 20 'Weathers', which cost in all £8—5—0. A ferret, bought for 10/6 needed to be fed and Mrs Thomas the Housekeeper supplied 'Milk to the Ferret' for 4/3d. There were bills to be paid for threshing. For 'several game certificates' from Mr Jones Llwyd the Clerk of the Peace £22—6—2 was paid. The Gwili canal was surveyed for £10—10—0 and 'for making a Wear to turn the river Lougher from Mr. Evans' Meadow £3—0—0'. A 'Black Mountain Mutton' was bought at Llandeilo, weighing 43lbs, @ 4d per lb. A bereavement in the household meant that the domestics were given sums of money to purchase garments so as to be 'soberly dressed' at at the obsequies, e.g. Mrs Thomas, Housekeeper, £5—5—0; Sally Lloyd, Housekeeper's Maid, £3—3—0; William Roderick (butler?), £5—5—0. Also two quires of black edged paper was procured from Carmarthen for 2/-. Masons and carpenters were constantly building and repairing, mending the warren wall, tiling and pointing, white-washing and 'plaistering'.

Special occasions demanded extra expenses. Thus on 13 August 1795—"gave the ringers on the birth of Mr George Rice £2—2—0. Paid for ale out of 15 Houses, £15—15—0.

On the arrival of the Cavalry several extra bills for unspecified items came to £8—16—0. And on 21 Dec. 1798 there was 'a bill of the Expenses of the Cavalry to Pontardylais—£2—10—4'. When

In the first instance Laques was probably a farm, but no early references have been discovered relating to the property, which comes into view for the first time towards the end of the fifteenth century, when it was the residence of the landed family of Reed. It is likely that the Reeds either built the first mansion at Laques, or possibly improved and extended an existing building, for the position of the family was superior to that of the usual husbandman and would be reflected in the style of their home. In 1616 the property was sold to Rice (or Rees) Lloyd the younger of Plas Llanstephan, who died in 1623, leaving Laques to his younger son Daniel Lloyd.

Daniel Lloyd probably improved and enlarged the house, as indicated by certain architectural features which date from the period of his tenure. Its size may be judged from the number of hearths it contained, and the taxation list of 1670 shows Mrs. Sarah Lloyd, widow, of Laques, assessed at 5 hearths, the same figure as for Plas Llanstephan, so that it was then a fairly large house. The inventory of the goods of William Lloyd taken in 1747 names rooms then in the mansion—*on the ground floor*, Hall, the Little Hall, the Old Parlour, the Little Parlour, Study, Clock Room, Kitchen, Out-kitchen, Dairy, and 'Killroom'; *on the first floor*, bedrooms called Best Room, Forestreet Room, Girls' Room, and Room over the Old Parlour; with Large Garrett and Boys' Garrett, used as bedrooms.

I first visited Laques on 26 August 1960. The older part of the two-storeyed mansion is the western end, while the eastern block, either an adaptation of an earlier building or added anew, probably the latter, belongs to the eighteenth century (after 1747), and contained what became the principal rooms. The older part has three entrances—one at the rear of the building (north side), another on the south side leading to the kitchen and domestic offices, and the third on a projecting side, clearly the original main entrance, opens into a hall from which a splendid Jacobean staircase rises and is carried to the very top of the house. On the exterior wall, on either side of this former main entrance, are two oval stone plaques, each about a foot and a half in diameter, one displaying the initials and date 'W/LL/S.1703', for William and Susanna Lloyd: the other, decorated with a shield containing a bend, once depicting the Lloyd arms, *gules* on a bend between three trefoils *argent*, a lion passant *sable*. Over the years both plaques had been heavily whitewashed, but during cleaning operations in 1960 they were uncovered by the occupier, Mr. Lewis, who invited me to examine them and to see the house. The ground floor is on two levels, the principal section being the higher. During alterations in the eighteenth century, a new main entrance had been made at the east end, with a fine fanlight above

the door, and then the older principal entrance became secondary. The rooms in this eastern section are sizable, with lofty ceilings, two of them decorated in part with fine plaster work. A carved wooden mantelpiece, probably of eighteenth century workmanship, adorns an upper room. Cellars and attics are extensive.

On rising ground, immediately above the house, is a walled garden; on the slope below the house are small lawns, and below those, orchards containing, with other fruit-trees, some particularly fine fig trees, heavily laden when I saw them in August 1960. Probably there had been at one time a terrace wall between the lawns and the house. The drive, lined with good beeches and other timber, bifurcates near to the house, one sweep leading to the main entrance, the other, alongside the building, to reach what had been the original entrance.

Evidently it was beginning to be neglected in the first half of the nineteenth century, for Lewis (*Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, edn 1840) records that "Laques, the seat of the ancient family of Lloyd, the former proprietors of Llanstephan Place, is a substantial residence, now much neglected, in a very sequestered part of the parish". Nevertheless, it remained in sufficiently good condition for the family to continue living there up to 1870 when the last of the Lloyds died, after which it was let to farming tenants. Apart from some minor repairs necessary, it was in a perfectly habitable condition, when I saw it in 1960, but since then parts of the house have deteriorated sadly, and the dismantling of certain fixtures by thieves (arrested in due course, and suitably punished) led to further dilapidations. When I visited it in 1976, accompanied by Major H. J. Lloyd-Johnes, then Chairman of the Historic Buildings Council for Wales, we found the new proprietor, Mr Morris, in the process of restoring the house with skill and discrimination, and with regard for the surviving historical features that distinguish the fabric.

Reed of Laques

An English family, the Reeds settled in the south-west of Carmarthenshire during the reign of Edward III, with principal residences at Green Castle (otherwise Castell Moel), Roches (otherwise Maccwells Walls), Piloath, Laques, and Carmarthen town. They intermarried with Welsh freeholding families, and one at least, Nicholas Reed of Green Castle, patronised the bards and was eulogised by Lewis Glyn Cothi in an ode extolling his liberality and describing the delights offered by the elegant residence on the bluff above the Tywi. Green Castle continued in the family until the ultimate heiress, Maud Reed, in 1615 settled the property on her

husband Henry Don Lee, and he, about ten years later, sold it to Humphrey Brown, a rich merchant of Bristol. Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, Edward Reed of Carmarthen, in a letter to a kinsman, blazoned the family coat-of-arms as "a golde griffwn in green feld and 3 ffeasant or merliwms, for there is men alyve that saw there a glas windo in the sayd housse of gren kastell and in the housse of Edwrt Reed in kaer merddin, but the buk of armes is lost and the window perished" (NLW Peniarth MS 136, fo 391). In the *Golden Grove MS* the arms of "Thomas Read hên, justice Caerfyrddin" are described as *azure a griffon segreant or*.

Another of their residences, near Laugharne, namely Roches, a castellated house, described as "the manor of Eglewiskimen and Roches" with 1,000 acres or thereabouts, was granted by Griffith Nicholas and Thomas Nicholas, by way of marriage settlement, to William Reed, his wife Joan (Wyrriott) and the heirs of their body in fee tail (PRO. *Chanc. Proc.* R9, no 30, undated). The family remained there until the end of the Tudor period, one of them, James Reed, being described in 1598 as Steward of the Earl of Essex "for the royal lordship".

From the early fifteenth century the family had been associated with the Llanstephan district. Five generations of a branch lived at Pilloath during the reign of the Tudors. At the beginning of the fifteenth century Thomas Rede held the castle of Llanstephan in his demesne as of fee from Henry, Prince of Wales. However, he was obliged to "release" it to Owain Glyndwr and other "Welsh rebels", whereby it forfeited to the Prince (*West Wales Historical Records*, xiii, 43). The next reference brings us to Laques, when, in 1492, Maurice Rede is described as of Llanstephan parish, and ten years later the Crown demised to him lands in Penreth Vachen, Holmore, Brodeley, a parcel called Le Hook of Mondegy and the pasturage in the Park. By his wife Elen Gravell he had an only son, Hugh Reed, described specifically as "of Lakes". Hugh married Janet daughter of Robert Don, by whom he had three sons, Owen, Thomas, and John. Owen and Thomas died young and unmarried, so that it was the youngest brother who inherited Laques. John Reed married Catherine John of Llanedy, and had three children, a son Morgan Reed who died unmarried, and two daughters, Elen and Janet, who, on their brother's death inherited the estate as co-heiresses.

Elen Reed married William Philip of Llandeilo (Abercywyn), but on being "divorced from him she sold her land". Janet Reed, whose share included the homestead of "Lakes", married John ab Evan David Gwilym Fychan, by whom she had an only son, Griffith

John ab Evan of "Lakes" (pedigree in *Golden Grove MS.*, Advenac Carmarthen). Griffith died before 1616, the remnants of the estate were sold, and the Reed connection with Laques finally severed.

On 13 and 15 September 1616, Griffith Thomas Richards of Carmarthen, tanner, sold a fourth part of the messuage called "the Lakes alias Tythen y Laackes", formerly tenanted by Griffith John Ievan, "now deceased", and a messuage at Llanwyber, to Rice (Rees) Lloyd of Llanstephan, gentleman (*B.R.A. deeds*, Carm. Rec. Office). This marks the beginning of the tenure of the Lloyds at Laques.

Lloyd of Laques

The Lloyds derived from one of the most distinguished families in Cardiganshire, whose founding ancestor, the *uchelwr* Cadifor ap Dinawal of Castell Hywel had secured a place in Welsh history as one of the leaders, under The Lord Rhys, of a force which stormed Cardigan castle in 1165, an exploit commemorated in the coat-of-arms of his descendants, and which brought him the hand of a princess of Dynevor dowered with extensive possessions. His descendants, most of whom adopted the surname Lloyd, spread in a vast network throughout south Cardiganshire, where they are still represented today. From one of these, Ievan Llwyd Fychan, whose estates lay around the inlet of Cwm Tydy near New Quay, the Lloyds of Plas Llanstephan and Laques derive their lineage. It was the wedding ring that led to the coming of Ievan Llwyd Fychan to Carmarthenshire, when he married Elen, heiress of Madog Foel of Pwll Dyfach, a hillside hall in the parish of Abernant, as we are informed by Lewys Dwnn, "a'r Ievan Vachan yma a gavas Pwll dyfach gynta o'r gwaed hwnw".

Ievan's great-great grandson, Morris Lloyd (a younger son) marched to Bosworth with Henry Tudor, who, after his coronation, appointed him an Esquire of the Body. In 1509 he was appointed Seneschal of the Lordship of Llanstephan, an office held later by his son and heir Jenkin Lloyd, Groom of the Chamber to Henry VIII in 1520, and, in 1541, the first High Sheriff of the newly formed Carmarthenshire. The Llanstephan appointment seemed to have become hereditary, for Jenkin Lloyd's son, Thomas Lloyd (High Sheriff in 1579) also followed as Seneschal. This Thomas Lloyd was succeeded by his son Rees, and Rees by his son Rees Lloyd the younger, and it was to the last-named that Laques was sold in 1616. By his wife Elinor, daughter of John Lloyd of Blaenhiroth, Rees Lloyd the younger had ten children, among them a younger son, Daniel, who inherited Laques when his father died at the beginning of 1623. The main line had lived at Plas Llanstephan since the

reign of the first Tudor monarch and was destined to remain there until the eighteenth century, to be outlived by the cadet house of Laques, which lasted until the latter part of the nineteenth.

After Ievan Llwyd Fychan's marriage to the heiress of Pwll Dyfach, he discontinued his paternal coat-of-arms, and adopted the heraldic insignia of his wife's family, thereafter borne by descendants and found on their deeds and documents, and monuments in Llanstephan church, blazoned as *gules*, on a bend *argent* a lion rampant *sable*, between three trefoils *or*; and the crest, on a wreath *argent* and *or*, a mound *vert* and thereon a merlin preying on a hapless bird.

Daniel Lloyd's birth date is not known, but he is described in a document as being under 24 years of age in 1622, so that he was a young man when he inherited Laques. He married Sarah the second daughter of a Cardiganshire landowner David Evans of Llechwedd Deri, High Sheriff of his county in 1641, son of Ievan Coch of Dolau Gwyrddon near Lampeter, a descendant of the Castell Hywel family. Of Daniel's career little is known. He died in 1665, apparently intestate, and on 16 October of that year administration of his goods was granted to the widow Sarah. The inventory, confined almost exclusively to his farming pursuits, included household stuff (valued at £6), two yoke of oxen (£6), seven cows (£8), fifty sheep (£4), five horses and mares (£7), eight pigs (1s 4d), and corn of all sorts (£8)—an unusually modest list of possessions comparing unfavourably with those of gentlemen-farmers of that period. Mrs. Sarah Lloyd was still living in 1670, when she was assessed at 5 hearths in the taxation list for that year. Daniel and Sarah Lloyd had an only son, William, who succeeded to the estate.

William Lloyd was educated at Jesus College, Oxford, where he graduated BA, and proceeded MA. He took Holy Orders, and became Rector of Llansadurnen and Vicar of Laugharne. He married Susannah daughter of a John Davies, of whose antecedents nothing is known. He was probably responsible for improving the house at Laques in 1703, as his initials and those of his wife appear on a plaque on an outer wall.

It seems not unlikely that Laques was let during the vicar's period, to his uncle Rees Evans of Talybont, in the neighbouring parish of Llandeilo Abercywyn, who had married Anne daughter of Francis and Janet Lloyd of Plas Llanstephan. In her will made in 1690 Mrs Janet Lloyd of the Plas appointed Rees Evans, therein described as 'of Laques' to be one of her executors, which probably means that he held the land there for it is known that he continued

to live at Talybont till his death in 1697. The Revd William Lloyd died on 24 January 1706, aged 49, and his widow survived him until March 1718. They had an only child, named after his father, William, who succeeded to Laques.

Like his father, William Lloyd received a good education, studied at the Inner Temple, became a barrister-at-law, and was a Justice of the Peace in 1723. He was thrice married, but had issue by his third wife only. The first, Elizabeth, was the daughter of Morgan Davies; the second, Anne, born in 1691, was daughter and coheirress of Reynold Jenkins of Carrog and Blaenpant, Cardiganshire; she died in March 1718-19. The third was Jane daughter of John Davies of Dolau Gwyrddon near Lampeter, widow of David Lloyd of Clyn y March, Llansawel, High Sheriff in 1721; the pre-nuptial settlement made on 29 March 1733 describes her as Jane Lloyd of Dole, [Gwyrddon] widow. William also owned Dole Gwyrddon, probably in right of his third wife, but it should be noticed that his mother's family had once owned it.

William Lloyd, the barrister, died at Laques on 10 May 1747. His will has not been found, but the inventory of his goods, preserved among probate records in the National Library, shows that he farmed on a considerable scale, not only at Laques but at two others of his properties. As it is likely to be of value to historians engaged on economic and social studies I feel justified in including it here *in toto*:

At Laques

Wearing apparel, horse, and furniture, valued at £14. 18 cows and a bull, £49.10.0 53 sheep, £11.8.6. 61 sheep, £21.7.0. 11 yearling beasts, £11.11.0. 2 sows and 7 young pigs, £3.15.0. 2 pairs of wheels with long-bodies and tumbrells, £5. 2 horse carts, £3.10.0. Ploughs and other implements of husbandry, £2.1.0. 11 teals of wheat, £6.12.0. 5 teals of barley, £1.15.0. 300 strikes of oats, £11.5.0. Old pewter, copper, and brass, £8.17.11. Earthenware, 5s. Spits and other irons in the kitchen, £1. 3 tables and 3 chairs, 6s. 2 iron pots and an iron kettle. Lumber in the out-kitchen, 15s. 3 cheese presses and other things in the dairy, 19s. A malt mill and some lumber in the 'killroom', 15s. 2 beds and ye furniture of ye old parlour, £5.10.0. A press bed and furniture of ye Little Hall, £1.10.0. A bed and furniture in ye girls' room, 15s. Furniture of ye room over ye old Parlour, £3. The Study of Books (£15). Furniture of ye Hall, £1.15.0. Furniture of ye little Parlour, 15s. A clock and case, 10s. A quantity of wool, £1.10.0. 2 bedsteads in the Large Garrett, £1.5.0. 2 beds and furniture in ye Boys'

Garrett, £1.1.0. 2 beds and furniture in ye forestreet Room, £5. A bed and furniture in ye Best Room, £9. Furniture of ye Clock Room, 15s. 7 old guns, £2.12.6. Plate, weight 368½ ozs at 5s, £17.2.6. Wheat, barley, and oats in ground, £17.8.6. Tallow weight 50 lbs, 12s 6d. A gold watch with its appurtenances, £10. Ready money in the house, £29.6.0. arrears of rents and other debts due, £309.12.3. *Total*, £589.17.8.

At Maes Gwynn

9 cows and a bull, £20.4.0. 51 sheep, £10.4.0. 12 lambs, £1.2.0. A cart and other implements of husbandry, £2. 4 oxen, £15.10.0. 3 horses and a mare, £4.5.0. 20 teals of oats, £3.15.0. 28 teals of barley and 3 teals of wheat, £10.9.0. 25 strikes of oats and 16 strikes of barley, £2.6.9. *Total*, £69.15.9.

At Wainfoil

2 old oxen, £8.10.0. 2 young oxen, £7. A fat cow, £3.15.0. Old hay, £7.7.6. 70 strikes of oats at 9d per, and 10 teals of barley at 9s per, £7.2.6. *Total*, £33.15.10.

At the Lords Land

71 lambs, £11.10.9. 15 three-years old wethers, £8.5.0. 77 sheep, £21.3.6. 2 oxen, £8.5.0. 2 bull-taggs, £5.5.0. 4 steers, £13.15.0. 9 calves, £3.3.0. A cow and calf, £2.12.6. 6 two-years old cattle, £11.5.0. 2 two-years old heifers, £2.15.0. A mare called Phillis, £4.4.0. An old bay horse, £1.15.0. An old horse called Shanko, £1.15.0. An old mare called Cherry, £2.2.0. A filly called Miss, £4.2.6. An old grey mare and colt, £3. A mare and colt called Katty Vaur, £2.17.6. A grey three-years old colt, £2.10.0. A black three-years old colt, £3.10.0. A sorrell two-years old colt, £3.17.6. A sorrell three-years old colt, £5.5.0. A bay filly called Patch, £2.12.0. A bay filly called young Cherry, £3.3.0. A horse called Jolly, £4. A horse called Robin, £3.5.0. A mare called Katty Vach, £2. A horse called Cardoc, £1.7.6. *Total*, £139.5.9.

At Dole Gwyrddon (Cardiganshire)

A yoke of oxen, £6.10.0. 4 steers, £11. A heifer, £2.2.0. 2 horses, £5. Poultry, 6s. Corn in the house, £6. Hay in the hay-yard, £1. Household stuff, £8. Implements of husbandry, £4. *Total*, £43.18.0.

At Laques

Linen at Laques, £10. 4 gross of bottles there, £2.16.0. Wooden lumber of several kinds in ye storehouse, £2.10.0. A small old boat, £3. *Total*, £17.16.0.

Grand Total, £894.8.2. (*sic*).

The widowed Jane survived her husband by some thirty years. She died in February 1777, and in her will, dated 29 August 1776, is described as formerly of Laques, but "now" of the county of the Borough of Carmarthen, widow and relict of William Lloyd of Laques, esquire. She stated she was entitled to an annuity of £50 during widowhood which had been paid regularly until Michaelmas 1759, since when their son Daniel Lloyd of Laques had not paid it; Daniel also owed her £442 at 5% by a bond made in 1759. She left £1000 to be set out at 4%, and the income paid to her son the Revd John Lloyd vicar of Holywell, for life, then to this widow, and issue; an annuity of £5 to Anne wife of Richard Hall of the Court of Chednor, Herefordshire, gentleman; an annuity of 8s to Jane widow of David William, blacksmith, of Llanstephan, deceased; the remainder of her property she left to her grandson William Lloyd, eldest son of testatrix's son, Daniel; and appointed the said Revd John Lloyd to be executor. The will is endorsed 'I desire to be buried in the most private manner that can be thought of, with decency, and without bearers'. The will was proved on 3 June 1777.

William and Jane Lloyd had the following children:

1. Daniel Lloyd, baptised in 1736, see later.
2. John Lloyd, baptised in August 1742, entered the Church and became vicar of Holywell, Flintshire. He married an heiress, Miss Oatbridge of Oaksey, Wiltshire, but had no issue.
3. Jane, baptised in April 1734 and died on 7 June following.
4. Sarah, baptised on 8 July 1735, married Gwynne Davies of Cwm, Llangynog, by whom she had two sons. She died in October 1758, at the early age of 23.

Daniel Lloyd succeeded to Laques. He matriculated at Balliol College, Oxford, in 1753, was admitted to Lincolns Inn in 1754 and became a barrister-at-law in 1759. He was a Justice of the Peace for Carmarthenshire, and in 1762 appointed a Justice for Cardiganshire in right of his ownership of the Dolau Gwyrddon estate, and six years later served as High Sheriff of that county. In March 1760 he married Katherine daughter of Francis Meares of Corston near Pembroke, by Katherine daughter and eventual heiress of Griffith Elliott of Earewere in Amroth. Through this marriage some of the Elliott possessions in Narberth and Amroth came to the Lloyd family. By the post-nuptial settlement, £1000 per annum was assured to Katherine should she survive her husband, and power to raise £1000 as portions for the younger children.

Daniel Lloyd died on 5 January 1795, and by will made on 8 December of the previous year, bequeathed as follows:

To his brother the Revd John Lloyd of Holywell, and to his son-in-law Thomas Lewis, esquire, of Llandilo, he left all his realty in Narberth parish of the yearly value of £108, and the properties in Amroth parish called Comrath or Cwmrath, the field called Carthouse Park, a moiety of Little Killanow, tenements called Green Plain, Poor Shipping and commons, with all collieries thereon, together with the colliery that testator had reserved under lands he had sold to James Howells, gentleman, to be held in trust, to raise £3,300.

To his younger sons Daniel, Henry, Griffith, a shilling each out of the £1000 that testator could raise on lands in Llanstephan parish. To his daughters, Sarah (eldest) £1,000, Catherine Lewis (to whom he had already given £600 on her marriage) £200, Jane, Alice and Anne, £800 each.

To his son Daniel ('to whom I have already given several hundreds') £100; and to testator's youngest son Griffith, ('to whom I have already given £400 to begin the trade of a merchant') £400. Also to the same trustees, all testator's stock (except two chaise horses, and all his crop on Laques, and on the tenement called Lords Park, and on two fields called Gilvach y Park newydd, all in Llanstephan parish), on trust, to pay any bond or bonds amounting to £600, due from testator to his eldest son William.

To his son Henry, property called Garne and Garne Mill, Gorse otherwise called Skibwr Vach, in Llanddarog parish, lands and three tenements called Rylands or Reynold's Hill in Amroth parish, and a tenement called Blake Vingionce.

To his son Daniel, the tenement and fields called Park y pystill in Llangyndeyrn parish, and three fields at East Lake, Amroth. He confirms that he released all his property in Lampeter Pont Stephen, Cardiganshire, to his eldest son and heir on his marriage. He left the rest and residue of his personalty to his dear wife Katherine whom he appointed executrix.

The seal to the will showed the Lloyd crest, a large bird preying on a smaller one.

The will was proved on 17 July 1797, and the widow's will dated 19 July 1810 was proved in London on 2 January 1813.

Daniel and Katherine Lloyd had a large family:

1. William Lloyd, eldest son and heir, see later.

2. Francis Lloyd, matriculated at Jesus College, Oxford on 26 March 1779, aged 17, BA 1782, MA 1785; died unmarried.

3. John Lloyd, died in 1768, aged 7 years.

4. Sarah Lloyd, baptised in May 1764, lived in Llanstephan village where she died on 3 December 1811, having made her will on 12 November.

5. Daniel Lloyd, baptised 5 December 1765, became a solicitor, and is said to have been one of the Six Clerks in Chancery. He died on 13 November 1839 at the King's Arms, Carmarthen, aged 76.

6. Henry Lloyd, baptised on 28 March 1767, entered the Royal Navy and rose to the rank of Commander. He lived at various places—Robert's Rest, Ferryside, 1809, Court Henry 1829, and Picton Terrace, Carmarthen, from 1835 till his death in 1841. He married a widow, Sarah Rasbotham of Pentre Parr near Llandeilo, the pre-nuptial settlement dated 28 January 1809. Their three children, baptised in Llangathen church, were (a) Henry, entered the Royal Navy and became a mate on HMS *Recruit*: the vessel foundered on a passage to Bermuda with all hands on 7 May 1832; he was aged 27 and unwed. (b) John, born about 1811, married one Sarah Phillips, and lived at various places—Hamburg 1835, Newcastle upon Tyne 1839, and finally at Park Glas. He had no children, and was buried at Llanstephan on 31 March 1866, aged 55, the last in the male line of Lloyd of Laques. (c) Georgina, born about 1812 married on 20 September 1843, Dr William Lloyd, MD, of Lampeter (son of Revd Thomas Lloyd of Gilfachwen isaf) who died on 2 April 1855; she survived him and was living at Ivy Cottage, Carmarthen, in 1883, then aged 71; their two sons died unmarried, Henry on 15 February 1894, aged 50. and John, MRCS, LRCP, on 4 February 1886.

7. Katherine Lloyd, baptised on 11 March 1768, married Thomas Lewis, solicitor, of Llandilo, later of Stradey. He died on 10 March 1839, and Katherine on 21 May 1840, both aged 72. They had issue, and their great-great grandson, Mr D. C. Mansel Lewis, JP, of Stradey Castle, was High Sheriff in 1965, Lord Lieutenant of Carmarthenshire 1973-4, and is now Lord Lieutenant of Dyfed. He is the senior representative of the Lloyds of Laques.

8. Jane Lloyd, baptised on 26 June 1769, married Jeremiah Price of Glangwili, Llanllawddog, son of Jeremiah Price, excise officer, of Carmarthen, by Jane ultimate sole heiress of her father John Lloyd of Glangwili. From them descended Mr Llewelin Pryse Lloyd, formerly of Glangwili, later of St Clears, who died on 5 January 1980.

9. Alice Lloyd, born on 18 November 1770, lived for some time with her sister Mrs Anne Hughes at Chichester, and died at Llanstephan village on 22 June 1870, in the 100th year of her age. She was the last of the family to bear the name Lloyd of Laques.

10. Anne Lloyd, married John Conway Hughes of Chichester. They were living in London in 1808, and had three sons and two daughters.

11. Griffith Lloyd, baptised on 6 February 1773, was drowned in the river Cywyn near St. Clears on 13 June 1804.

12. Harriet, died an infant in 1774.

William Lloyd, eldest son and heir of Daniel, was baptised in March 1761, and in due course succeeded to Laques. He married at St. Peter's, Carmarthen, on 21 February 1792 Maria Eleanora only child of John and Grace Colborne of King's Swinford, Staffordshire, descended through a female line from the Lewes's of Abernantlychan, Cardiganshire. The pre-and post-nuptial settlements were executed on 27 January 1792 and 17 March 1823. By the former the Dolau Gwyrddon estate was settled to the use of the bride and bridegroom, for lives, with remainder to trustees to raise £1000 portions for younger children; and the farms called Clawddown and Tyrbach alias Pant Llacca in Llanfynydd parish, and a field called Flaxfield in the borough of Carmarthen, being the bride's property, were settled to similar uses. The deed of 1823 settled Laques, Cwm-livery, Terbach, and Waynfort, in Llanstephan, on William and Maria Eleanora, for lives, with remainder to their son and heir William Lloyd the younger, and his issue.

William and his wife lived for some time at Job's Well near Carmarthen. He took part in county affairs, as a Justice of the Peace and a Deputy Lieutenant, and in 1807 served the office of High Sheriff. In 1825 he sold the Cardiganshire estate of Dolau Gwyrddon (then comprising 333 acres let at £239 per annum) for £7,250. In 1834 he had trouble with the ebullient Baron de Rutzen, lord of the manor of Narberth, who disputed William's rights to picage and stallage dues in Narberth market inherited from his Elliot forebears.

Maria Eleanora died suddenly, from water on the chest, on 8 September 1829 in her 67th year, and William on 19 September 1840, aged 80. By will dated 15 May 1835, and proved in PCC on 27 March 1841, he stipulated that should his heirs succeed to Laques through female descent, they were to take the surname of Lloyd

only, and to quarter testator's arms with those of their paternal family. In the event the clause remained inoperative, for his four children died unmarried.

They were:

1. William Lloyd, born on 19 August 1794 at Job's Well, succeeded to Laques in 1840, and died unmarried on 31 July 1854, aged 60. Following his death, a detailed particular was made of the Laques estate, a precis of which is given in Appendix A below.

2. Elizabeth ("Bess") Lloyd, born on 20 February 1793 at Job's Well, died at Laques on 14 May 1870. Her will dated 1 November 1869, was proved in London on 23 June following.

3. Anne Lloyd, born on 12 August 1795 at The Parade, Carmarthen, died on 23 April 1831.

4. John Lloyd, born on 21 July 1796 at Laques, died on 31 August following.

All were buried in the vault in Llanstephan church, where a side-chapel opening from the north side of the chancel is called "the Laques chapel" and on its floor are tombstones of several members of the family. According to J T Evans, (*Church Plate*), it was also known as "Capel y Llwydiaid".

After the death of Elizabeth Lloyd in 1870, the family ceased to be associated with Laques, although a descendant through the female line stayed occasionally at the old mansion. Remembered as a particularly hospitable squire, Captain Lloyd of Laques and Glangwili 'with his usual liberality at this season' (records the *Carmarthen Journal* in January 1878), distributed 40 tons of coal amongst the poor people of the neighbourhood.

From the available evidence we note that the Lloyds of Laques were not involved in stirring and tumultuous events, content to pass quiet and orderly lives devoted to the conduct of their own and local affairs, charitable and humane, the Roger de Coverleys of their age. Their inheritance has passed to others, meagre memorials of their sojourn alone remain, preserved in monuments that inevitably will succumb to the erasing hand of Time, and in uncertain folk-memory now largely replaced by contemporary fashions affording fewer opportunities for reflection and contemplation of the past which can only be the product of more leisurely days. It remains for the patient antiquary to burrow among genealogical rolls, faded folios, family archives, and legal documents, often widely scattered, always

incomplete, so that the most we can recover are fleeting glimpses of our forebears, as when the sun struggling through dark clouds, shines for a while on a distant field.

APPENDIX A

Precis of a Particular of the Laques estate owned by William Lloyd at the time of his death in July 1855

In Llanstephan parish

Laques mansion and demesne of 175 acres, worth £266 yearly, then held by Miss Lloyd. 8 farms—Maesgwyn, Cwmlyfre, Winfort, Lower and Upper Ffordd, Tir bach, Tynwydd, and a moiety of Heoldown. 14 fields in and around Llanstephan and Llanybri and elsewhere in the parish. 25 houses, cottages, with gardens, etc, and a moiety of Albion House in Llanstephan. Poor-houses, being 6 rooms and a small garden, now called Bridgend Row. A small piece of sand-bank on the shore under Pilroath, and a small sand-bank on the shore under Mr Morris's house. Llanstephan Mill. 3 Allotments of common land.

Total acreage—640 acres 1 rood 39 perches, and rental therefrom, £825.10.0.

In Llangynog parish

Bankyffynnon farm, being 37 acres 2 roods, rental £15.

In Llanddarog parish

Clynhebog farm, being 72 acres 2 roods 20 perches, rental £40.

In Amroth parish, Pembrokeshire

4 farms—Cwmrath, Poorshipping and common, Duncow Hill, and Long Park. Fields called Skerryback (32 acres). A cottage and common. Total acreage, 119 acres 16 perches, and rental therefrom, £75.10.0.

In Narberth parish, Pembrokeshire

Eastwood farm. A house and garden called The Old Swan in Narberth. 5 fields. 3 and more cottages and gardens. The site of the Talbot Inn, and the site of the old market ground at the Cross (2931 square feet). Total acreage, 56 acres 3 roods 12 perches, and rental therefrom, £71.2.6.

The grand total acreage of the estate amounted to 926 acres 2 roods 7 perches, with a rental of £1027.2.0.

A Caballero from Hendy

In his last years before he died in 1957 William Samuel Thomas of Llettycaru, Croesyceliog, Carmarthen set down something of his life-story. What follows is an edited and condensed version told in his own words, except where it has been desirable to paraphrase. Much of the omitted material includes personal reflections, sometimes self-critical, and describes life and conditions abroad. E.V.J.

WILLIAM Samuel Thomas was born in January 1870 at Llangennech, but when he was six months old his father Thomas Thomas, "gave up his work as a mechanic at Llanelly to work as a pickler at the practically new tinplate works at Hendy. This tinplate works was the first to be built in the neighbourhood of Pontardulais—by a firm from Birmingham . . . and was fairly successful up to the passing of the McKinley Tariff Bill¹ in America in the early 1890s. Soon after that many of my youthful friends and acquaintances left Hendy for the tinplate works in America and many of them made good there.

"I went to the primary school at Hendy which was built by the owners of the tinplate works. It was a Church of England school . . . and the only schoolmaster in my time was a Mr. D. Jones . . . He had hoped to make me a school-teacher and during the last year of my time there I was at times a pupil teacher. Mr. Jones (Rev. D. Jones M.A.) was afterwards Vicar of Sandringham and chaplain to the then Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII.

"At the age of eleven I obtained the School Certificate, as also five other school-mates, entitling us to eighteen shillings a year for three years. The school fees were two pence a week for each child and this was deducted by the Company from the pay of the parents. During my last year at school Mr Jones had the six who obtained the School Certificate to attend classes in the evening to teach us magnetism and electricity at his house and also at eight o'clock in the morning. However, we all failed at the examination as our papers were exactly the same. Probably the examiner came to the conclusion

¹ The McKinley Tariff Act, 1890 erected an extremely high protective barrier against imports into the U.S.A. which had serious effect on the steel and tinplate industries of south-east Carmarthenshire.

that we had copied the answers from each other." William Thomas never forgave this "foolish" examiner who failed to recognise thorough teaching.

"On my thirteenth birthday I went early in the morning to ask for employment and was immediately taken to start work with my father at the pickling department. It was very hard work for a youngster and the wage was nine shillings for a six day week, starting at six in the morning and finishing at five o'clock. After a short time I was promoted to the tinhouse . . . where the steel sheets were tinned and finished to make tin cans." This tinhouse had nine 'sets', each comprising a tinman, a washman and a raiser. "I started at the bottom as a raiser at the rate of one penny per box of 112 sheets. Our task was to turn out 36 boxes per shift. We had half an hour for breakfast and one hour for dinner. Next—promotion to washman . . . and at the age of seventeen I was at the top of the sets, which only handled the large plates."

"The owners of the Hendy tinplate works, at the same time as building the factory, also built about forty five-roomed houses on the land belonging to the Company. These were the nucleus of about one hundred other houses built by the workmen themselves, mostly detached houses containing five rooms. My father built two semi-detached houses . . ." How he and others could do this never ceased to amaze William Thomas, "considering they nearly all brought up large families—we were eight children in our family. No workman at that time at the tinplate works earned more than £2 per week. The lower grade workmen earned only 18/- per week."

More houses made Hendy an appreciable village, which "had practically no truck with Pontardulais on the Glamorgan side of the river. We worked, played, studied and prayed on our own. The only difficulty was that there was no Congregational Chapel, with the exception of the old Hendy Chapel about two miles uphill, which was not so convenient for us to attend. So Hendy Congregationalists joined up with the Pontardulais folk to build the Hope Chapel on the Glamorgan side of the bridge." One pastor there was the Rev. Penry Evans, "who lectured often and was always most instructive. He went on a trip to London and visited Drury Lane Theatre to hear Sir Henry Irving and soon afterwards lectured on the subject . . . as a result, there was an awful hullabaloo by some members that their Minister had been to the theatre."

"Hendy had a Methodist Chapel from the start," but "there were no Wesleyan or Baptist Chapels at that time". By the time he

was 21 Hope Chapel had built a place at Hendy for Sunday School and week-day services and William Thomas became the secretary. Cantatas were performed at the Market Hall, which had been "built by the workmen of Hendy, who mostly took £1 shares, but the owners of the tinplate works held the majority of the shares. There was no Hall at Pontardulais." The Hendy Hall "was a large building, the ground floor being used as a Market place, and the first floor was used as a Hall. It was a boon to the residents of Hendy to have a Market, as everything needed by the household was sold there every Saturday. As a youngster I remember having a stall for the sale of garden produce and flowers. My father had built a small greenhouse in his garden and we could therefore sell choice flowers. His was practically the only greenhouse in the district and he was one of the first to grow tomatoes—they were new in the country then. Most of the employees of Hendy had one eighth of an acre of land for each house and the gardens were always well looked after. Each house had a pigsty at the end of the garden, thus the people provided themselves with nearly sufficient vegetables and bacon for the year . . . There was no sanitation then, only a small closet in the garden. There was also a small run for fowls to provide eggs and a chicken now and then for Sundays and especially for Christmas dinner."

The Hall "was the only one for Hendy and Pontardulais. All concerts etc. were held here by both sides of the bridge . . . also we had various touring theatrical companies visiting us all the year round and what a pleasure that was to all of us, especially such plays as East Lynn. Hendy was much more go-ahead than its neighbours in starting nearly everything first. At Hendy the first football team was organised" and Bancroft of Swansea and Pitt of Llanelli were invited as mentors. "Eventually Pontardulais organised a football club and Hendy joined them."

"The McKinley Bill in the U.S.A. played havoc with the tinplate industry, especially the Hendy works . . . Due to lack of orders we were often on stop and this, coupled with frequent strikes, was too much for the works and it closed down. During the slack periods after the McKinley Act there was a flow of young men as well as families emigrating to America. The cost of passage was £8" William Thomas contemplated joining the flow, but fate sent him in another direction.

"There were five public houses and they were well patronised in the evenings, especially on Saturday, but . . . there was practically no drunkenness . . . Everyone was very religiously minded and dis-

cussed chapel matters freely, but as soon as anyone was appointed a deacon in any chapel he would cease to attend the public houses. These houses were not often frequented by the young men of the place. They had other amusements, such as football, cricket, quoits, and some belonged to choirs in the chapels You would always see crowds of young men and girls going to choir practice in the evenings." There was also a drum and fife band of "about twenty young men dressed in red coats and black trousers and red and black caps and looked fine marching through the streets."

The rugby football club rented a field on the Forest road and "often in the week we took a six mile run from Hendy to Llannon and back (twelve miles in all) We went to the Away matches nearly always in Dai Neddy's two-horsed coaches . . . fifteen players and perhaps ten supporters singing all the way . . . and the crowds alongside the roads cheering People were rather keen on football those days, except the Ministers of various chapels, who looked upon it as a sin I, as well as others, were often pointedly referred to in the sermon on Sunday evening."

"Fishing was another pastime . . . and our favourite river was the Gwili which ran through the lower part of the village and emptied into the Lougher." A friend was John Jenkins, who would later win the acclaim of his fellow-countrymen for his poetic talent practised under the bardic name of Gwili.² "The mother and father of Gwili the Bard lived on the banks of the Gwili They brought up a large family of eight or more children. As Gwili was about my age, in fact he was a little younger, we often went together to fish . . . he knew every nook where the trout lodged" and "did his fishing by hand—he despised the boys who had a rod and line. Many a lot of fine trout I took home with the help of Gwili."

"I recollect the few old ladies—ladies in the true sense of the word—who had practically no income to live upon. They made mead and Welsh cakes and people called at their houses for a glass of mead with a cake—at one penny. We enjoyed this in many of the poor ladies' houses on the outskirts of Hendy."

2 The Rev. John Jenkins, M.A., D.Litt. (Oxon.), (1872-1936), educated at Bangor University College and Jesus College, Oxford. Distinguished as a poet, theologian and man of letters, he held academic appointments at Cardiff and Bangor, edited *Seren Cymru* (1914-27), was Crown Bard in 1901 and Archdruid from 1931.

"The ground floors of the houses were paved by big stone slabs and once a week a donkey cart came from the nearest seaside—six to ten miles away—with a load of clean sand to spread on the floors. It was sold at a penny or two a bucketful to the housewives, so we had a clean sandy floor every week. Another habit was the whitening of the doorsteps

"In a kindly community the children were always the first consideration of their parents and anything that could be done for the children was done well. One of the main treats for the children was the Sunday School trip to the seaside every year, and both the children and the parents went by train, carrying baskets full of the best food to be eaten upon the shore."

"We had our Benefit Clubs, such as the Oddfellows and the Hearts of Oak. These held their meetings at the Black Horse Hotel. When any member was ill he received a small sum . . . it helped to provide a little food for their families. These Clubs had their processions through the streets, with a hired brass band preceding. I remember being taken by my father and mother with a Club to see Mr Gladstone at Singleton Park [Swansea] when the clubs marched past him. I also went with a trip to see the then Prince of Wales (Edward VII) when he opened the Prince of Wales Dock" [at Swansea].

But back to the Hendy tinsplate works, which "continued to be on stop intermittently from my age of 17 until I was 25 and the stoppages were prolonged ones at time, so all had to pick up any kind of work or starve. My father obtained work as a pickler at Gorseinon and walked there and back daily about eight miles, starting work at 6 a.m. every morning. I obtained work as a navvy on the section of the N.W.R. from Swansea to Pontardulais The wages for all the members of the gang paid by the Company was 4½d per hour We were all very grateful for even that wage."

"Next door to our house there was a draper's shop owned by Mr. J. Ll. Thomas. I think it was the only one in the district at that time. Mr. Thomas was a Member for Llanedy on the [Carmarthenshire] County Council. . . . He had to take a small party of children to Paris for treatment for hydrophobia by Professor Koch."

Some young Hendy men often "went to play billiards at the Coffee Tavern, which was the first building across the Bridge [in Pontardulais]. There we played with some of the youths of Pontar-

dulais Playing billiards was not enough for us, so we . . . bought a few daily and weekly newspapers between us. This was extended little by little to magazines and books . . . I understand that from this start the Workmen's Institute and Library were built at Pontardulais."

Italian Adventure

The migration of tinsplate workers to America is well-known and much has been written about it, but less familiar is the lure of other fields in a totally different and unexpected direction, as witness the decision of William Thomas and three of his friends to try their luck in Italy in 1897. "The last day before the four of us went along on our long journey to an unknown life was spent on the Ffosyrefail field, Pontardulais, with all the school children of both places and their parents to celebrate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria in August 1897. There I bid farewell to many friends of all ages."

The four adventurers made their "tiresome journey" via New-haven, Dieppe, Paris, Modena, Milan and Pisa, having the benefit of advice from Cook's agents en route. At Pisa they savoured the architectural and culinary delights, the latter including their first encounter with frogs' legs. The last stage of their journey was a two-hour long run to Piombino, a coastal town on the straits dividing the island of Elba from the mainland. The day of their arrival was marked by the funeral of two men who had been drowned, an occasion for "mummery and hired mourners" which the newcomers found "noisy and disagreeable."

"The four of us went to Piombino as key men for the practically new tinsplate department in order to teach the natives in the industry. It was stiff work and did not turn out very pleasant for us, what with the very hot weather of August and our lack of knowledge of the Italian language and the strangeness of our environment; Also the habits of the people, together with the difference in food and other things", which latter included the need for mosquito nets at night and the presence of "little harmless lizards on the walls of the bedrooms."

Piombino they found to be "an historical little town. It is surrounded by a high wall except that part which adjoins the sea. There is only one entrance to the place by a gate a few yards wide. This gate was closed in the night time and was always guarded." Around "was a fertile country with large muscatel grape fields. This was my first taste of these grapes and they were very fine."

"On the beaches only males were to be seen . . . My landlady told me that she and her women friends occupied the beaches a little after daybreak every morning, weather permitting.

"Two of my co-emigrants left Piombino for home after a few weeks, the weather and the change of food possibly brought on colitis, a complaint which all new people contracted. I did not feel inclined to leave and coaxed my other friend to stay on with me. He stayed after I had promised to leave with him if he felt like leaving later on. After a few months my friend wanted to leave, so I had to stick to my promise and we both left for home. This interlude was really a good thing for me in preparing me for my future It also gave me an insight into what life from home was like and mixing with other people, English and Italian. Both of us left suddenly one morning with all arrangements in our own hands and no Cook's agent to look after us. We had to pay our own passage home and had to take much care of the little money we had in our pockets."

"So back again to the Hendy tinsplate works, to the same old drudgery Sometime after I came home I went to Swansea one evening to hear Ben Davies the celebrated Welsh tenor in 'Faust'. It was a very wet evening and, walking through the rain to and from the station, the soaking I had resulted in a very bad cold. This cold developed into asthma I realised that it would be folly to continue my occupation in the tinsplate works and consequently continued my studies of commercial subjects at home."

William Thomas had earlier acquired some knowledge of book-keeping and commercial practices as a result of spare-time study and now decided to go to Pitman's College in Southampton Row, London. "This was my final break with the tinsplate industry and I became obsessed [with an urge] to get on in the world The life of a tinsplate worker at that time was a hollow makeshift merely to earn enough to keep body and soul together."

In London, "I did not have much money at my disposal and to save as much as I could I walked back and fore from [my lodgings in] Westminster Bridge Road to Southampton Row morning and evening. I worked at the College from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. or 7 p.m. every day, except on Saturday afternoons and Sundays At the College there were about two hundred students, one half male and one half female."

His Sunday activity included regular chapel attendance, often to

hear Dr. Hugh Price Hughes, a Carmarthen man who had a national reputation as the embodiment of 'the Nonconformist conscience'.³ "I also became friendly with Mr. Gibbs, a tenor with the Carl Rosa Company. I met him first when he was at Holloway Infirmary having his leg straightened before he went to the Carl Rosa Company. He also came from a town in South Wales and started in London as a clerk. We often went to hear Dr. Parker preaching at the City Temple. We always had a seat alongside the pulpit where we practised writing shorthand."

"Before leaving Pitman's, I managed to get the certificate of the Society of Arts for book-keeping and the school certificate for shorthand, typewriting. I only had a smattering of French, which I used very little."

His first jobs were with a firm of stockbrokers and later with firms selling printing machines before finding employment with a mining combine operating in Africa. "We were three clerks in the general office and I was the general factotum, doing typewriting, book-keeping and the registration of shareholders, which was onerous after nearly all settlement days on the Stock Exchange It was very hard work at this office, very long hours and small salary, but I did not grumble much because I was collecting a great deal of experience of mining nearly all over the world."

"At the time I was in London there were no motor vehicles; buses and trams were seen with horses, although a year or two before I left electric tram lines were seen. It was a sight to see the horse-drawn buses and trams in Oxford Street and Piccadilly One never to be forgotten celebration was Mafeking night on 18 May 1900. I did not go to the West End that night, as the City was gone quite mad. I have never seen anything like it. The City, and our office particularly, was interested in the gold mines of South Africa and Rhodesia. I could not get away until the early morning and had to walk all the way from the City to Kennington. Another historical event I was to witness was the funeral of Queen Victoria. I was near Buckingham Palace when the procession passed."

"I was getting a fortnight's holiday every year . . . which I spent, at my people's home, now in Carmarthen Many excursion trains were running from Paddington, the return fare being 8/-."

³ For a brief account of Hugh Price Hughes see 'A Saint and his Progeny' in *The Carmarthenshire Historian*, Vol. VIII, pp. 54-64.

A Gentleman of Spain

Amalgamation with another company in 1905 made him redundant, but he became personal secretary to the Chairman in a private capacity at his home in Mill Hill. His employer was an expert in geology and mining operations, from whom he learnt much and who in time offered him the post of secretary to the general manager of the Peña Copper Mines in the province of Huelva in south-west Spain. Having accepted the appointment, William Thomas left for Spain on 13 December 1907, leaving behind his wife and two small boys until he had established himself. He sailed in a Rio Tinto cargo ship called *Don Hugo*, with a Captain Jones as master. "The night we were in the Channel was the roughest I have ever experienced. It was so stormy that we could not lie in our bunks. The Captain . . . told us in the morning that a four-masted ship went down in the Channel that night and later we had news from home of the terrible storm in Pontardulais, where some chimney stacks were blown down." A fellow-passenger was a young mining engineer going out to his first job at the Santa Rosa mine in Huelva province. "He was young and very enthusiastic about his job and spoke nearly all day about his sweetheart Sad to say that on the first morning after arriving at the Santa Rosa mine when he went down the pit in a cage a Spaniard stabbed and killed him."

The *Don Hugo* arrived at Huelva on the morning of 18 December 1907 and William Thomas proceeded inland about forty miles to Peña del Hiero, a few miles from the small town of Nerva, and commenced duties on the following day. "My duties as secretary were very light and I was bored with it at first. I spent a great deal of my time in going over the different departments and learning something of the whole field of mining. There were no pits, the whole extraction being done by opencast, on the face of which worked a very great number of men. The whole opencast looked like a huge quarry, all work being done by hand and explosives. The costs were only a few pesetas per ton to extract the pyrites The mineral was transported to large heaps of thousands of tons of pyrites which was washed—that is, water constantly run through these heaps and thus copper was dissolved and this was then let to run out of the bottom of the heaps into fairly shallow runways filled with old scrap iron, upon which the copper content was deposited and collected daily. This is what is called the process of cementation. About 100 to 150 tons of copper was extracted monthly in this way, put into sacks in powder form and shipped to England, to be melted down, yielding about 98% copper. The mineral in the heaps after most of the copper was extracted was shipped to England in bulk as pyrites containing about

60% sulphur. This is burnt . . . to make sulphuric acid", which was "used in the pickling department of the tinplate works where I commenced work . . . there was a small sulphuric acid works at Pontardulais . . . built by Samuel Williams, where pyrites was burnt down."

William Thomas's wife and children sailed from Port Talbot in the *Don Hugo* in April 1908. When his four-year contract ended he accepted an appointment with a French company at the Huelva copper and sulphur mines, at one of which the first smelting works in that part of Spain was built some time later. "This smelter came in useful for the supply of copper in the 1914 War, and all through the war we shipped about two hundred tons a month of high grade copper for the Allies . . . I was too old at the time to serve in the Army and all who worked on the mines were exempt of army service". During the war necessary materials became scarce and "I had my hands full hunting all over Spain for supplies . . . especially coal, shipments of which from Britain had been stopped." Inferior coal was obtained at last from a small coalfield opened up by a farmer; otherwise alternative fuel was found in *cepa* (heather root). These "were round and just about the size of a man's head. We bought thousands of tons of these *cepas*, which were brought in by the small farmers for miles around on . . . their donkeys". Food also became scarce and steps had to be taken to develop agriculture as much as possible on what was poor land. "In May 1918 the influenza epidemic⁴ broke out suddenly in our village and during a week or so over ninety people died. It stopped all work and it fell on me to attend to everything, food had to be provided and about twelve food kitchens were put up at once to provide soup and other food for all the people. Our little cemetery was full and we had to carry the dead during the night along rough paths over the mountains . . . to bury them in the cemetery of the county town of Almonaster more than a dozen miles away . . . I recall speaking to our book-keeper in the office in the morning and in the evening he was carried by mules to the cemetery."

"In the first week of January 1919 I received a communication from the Governor of the province of Huelva that a royal decree (. . . Alfonso XIII was on the throne then) awarded me the title of Caballero de España (Gentleman of Spain), first class. I believe that no other Britisher holds this title except myself. It was hardly ever

⁴ The 'Spanish 'Flu' spread rapidly and reached South Wales, where, as in the rest of Britain, it had a similar devastating effect.

awarded to a foreigner. One, who is now dead, also had this title and he had a residence near Carmarthen and was also a Welshman."

* * *

William Thomas returned with his family to Wales at the end of 1921, settled at Llettycaru, Croesyceiliog and established a haulage business. He died in 1957.

Carnawllon, Commote of Uncertain Name

By D. GERALD JONES, O.B.E., B.SC.

THE Celts, who began to occupy Britain nearly 2,500 years ago, were organised in small kingdoms, and in time the land was divided into Cantrefi (Hundreds), at first, perhaps occupied by a hundred families and, later by a single tribe. Each cantref was normally divided into two or more commotes. The kingdom of Ystrad Tywi, which comprised much of what was Carmarthenshire, was divided into the Cantrefi of Cantref Mawr, Cantref Bychan and Cantref Eginog—the latter being divided into the commotes of Carnawllon, Cydweli and Gower.

By the time of the Welsh King Hywel Dda, the cantref had lost much of its original significance and the commote was established as the chief unit of administration. The commote was recognised and used by Hywel Dda in his codification of existing Welsh law at Whitland in 927 A.D. The codified laws were approved by the Pope in 930 A.D. These laws, based on the principle of personal responsibility, governed Wales entirely until Edward I's Statute of Rhuddlan 1284 and a substantial portion of the laws continued to be effective until the reign of Henry VIII. By the Act of Union, 1536, county boundaries were established. Carmarthenshire was divided into Perfedd, Caeo, Cathinog, Elfed and Derllys with the addition of the three commotes of Carnawllon, Iscennen and Cydweli. This is the only instance in the Act of the retention of ancient metes and bounds of territorial divisions.

The importance of the Lordship of Carnawllon has been largely ignored by historians. This ancient area progressed with the industrial revolution and in it developed coal, iron, copper, steel and tinplate industries, giving rise to present day Llanelli. The other two units of Cantref Eginog, namely Cydweli and Gower remained largely rural. It should be noted that despite the dominance of Norman Cydweli Carnawllon maintained its identity and has always been recorded separately.

By order of James I a survey of the Duchy of Lancaster lordships in Wales was carried out between 1609 and 1613. His Majesty's surveyor, Gerald Bromley, recorded the boundaries of Carnawllon as follows: "The jurors do present and say that the Boundaries, limits,

and mere stones of the said commote of Carnawllon lie situate as follows viz—begineth at the entrance of a river called Dulais into another river called Loughor, and so boundeth from that place upon the parishes of Penbrey and Llangendeirne as far as the bridge called Ponty-Berran, and so forwards by the side of the river called Gwendraeth Fawr to Blaenhirwen, and so from a place called Lliidiad Hirwen all along Mynydd Mawr as far as Llech-yffin, and there hence to a place called Cwm-y-Rhosdu, and so to a river called Cwm Gwili, meeting with a brook called Nant Gilfach-y-Mynydd, and so to Rhyd-y-Bar, and so hence to a brook called Fferrus, leading directly to the river called Loughor, and so the said river Loughor bounds' till it meets the river called Dulais aforesaid."

If this is traced on a modern map it will be seen that it coincides with the present day boundary of Llanelli District Council, excluding Burry Port, Penbre and Cydweli.

The name of a property is often changed under new ownership, unless there is strong reason for maintaining the same identity over centuries. Welsh history has to a great extent been recorded by foreign scribes who had little, or no knowledge of the language, and their attempts at spelling Welsh placenames have produced many variations. In the case of the Lordship of Carnawllon, original documents or certified photostat copies from the Public Record Office, National Library of Wales, Carmarthenshire Record Office and the Public Libraries of Llanelli and Carmarthen have shown the following variations in the spelling of Carnawllon:—

1100	Cornogualaun	Vitae Sancti Cadoci	(Latin)
1148	Carnwathlan	Cartae et Munimenta de Glamorgan	(Latin)
1148-66	Karwaththlan	Ewenny Priory deeds	(Latin)
1215	Charnywyllawn	Brut-y-Tywysogion	(Welsh and Latin)
1221	Kardwardlan	Patent Rolls Henry III	(Latin)
1313	Carnwathlan	Cawdor 21/631	(Norman French)
1343	Karnewolthin	Charter Rolls V.15 Edward III	(Latin)
1405	Carnwalthan alias Carnwathlan	Patent Rolls 6 Henry IV	(Latin)
1441	Karnewalthan	Patent Rolls 19 Henry VI	(Latin)
1541	Carnollon	Derwydd deeds 237	(Latin)
1544	Kaernowllon	Derwydd Deeds 261	(Latin)
1591	Carnowllan	Public Record Office (Elizabeth I)	(Med. E)
1705	Carnawllon	Cawdor 90/7505	(English)
1759	Caernawllon	Cawdor 2/22	(English)
1780	Carnawllon	Cawdor 55/6220	(English)

1813	Caernawllon	Cawdor 2/75	(English)
1841	Carnawllon	Census 1841: Ordnance Map (1st edition)	(English)
1865	Carnawllon	Cawdor 2/245	(English)

These are only a few examples, but they show the numerous changes, in particular the transposition of diphthongs which have occurred with the passing of the centuries. Today only one place, to my knowledge, carries the name Carnawllon. It is the farm Carnawllon Fawr, Ponthenri, where I was born. I am probably biased in accepting the present day name, which has been recorded and used for nearly 300 years. The spoken form used locally is Carnawllon or Carnwllon and surely has some bearing on the original form. The word appears to have two elements, Carn (Cairn) + a personal name common in early Welsh—Gwallon, cf. Caswallon and Cadwallon.

Invasion and Revolt

Following the departure of the Romans in 383 A.D. the Three Commotes of Carnawllon, Gower and Cydweli were occupied by Irish invaders, who were defeated in the north and west by Cunedda and his sons. By tradition, King Arthur sent Prince Urien Rheged to free the Three Commotes; he succeeded and was given the land from the river Tywi to the river Tawe as a gift.

Constant disputes occurred over the ownership of the Three Commotes. Litigation developed between the rival ecclesiastical claims of St. Davids and Llandaff, but the Bishops of Llandaff capitulated and Carnawllon has since been a part of the diocese of St. Davids.

The Norman victory in 1066 was followed by a gradual occupation of the whole country. Stiff opposition in Wales resulted in slow progress but the Norman baron Maurice de Londres conquered Carnawllon in the reign of Henry I. Even so Norman influence was restricted to their fortress castles, whilst the Welsh were able to follow their traditional way of life. The inhabitants of Carnawllon remained free tribesmen. Between the years 1139 and 1148 Maurice de Londres made a grant of the churches of Carnawllon to the Priory of Ogmere (Ewenny).

The Welsh organised a succession of revolts against Norman oppression. When Henry II died at Chinon in 1189 Lord Rhys of Dynefor defeated the enemy and regained Carnawllon for Deheubarth. Unfortunately one of his sons Maredudd ap Rhys was killed

at Carnawllon on the 2nd July 1201 by the Normans of Cydweli. He was laid to rest at St. Mary's Church, Cydweli.

The castle of Carnawllon was burnt and totally destroyed by Rhys Ieuanc in the 1215 revolt. Its exact location has not been established but the strongest claim is the Old Castle Farm, Llanelli. Although six centuries had passed since its destruction the first Ordnance Survey Map (1831) records a camp of ancient times on the banks of the old course of the river Lliedi. The farm, coalpit and tinplate works all carried the name Old Castle.

When the mantle of national leadership fell on Llywellyn the Great, he reconquered Wales and held it united until his death in 1240, but Henry III regained Carnawllon and ruled it as crown property. The revolt of Llywellyn II was supported by the inhabitants of Carnawllon in 1257, but the area was retaken by the Normans.

Edward I completed the conquest of Wales in 1282. In the Statute of Rhuddlan 1284, Carnawllon was retained intact as a separate administrative unit but the tenants had to pay tribute to the crown. The commote was divided into the maenors of Hengoed, Llannon, Llanedy and Berwic. Military service was a condition of land tenancy and a quota of 200 men from Carnawllon and Cydweli fought with Edward I in Flanders in 1297 and in the total rout of the Scots at Falkirk in 1298.

The vast areas of land were slowly cleared and cultivated. A 14th century rental of the commote records that the tenants were grouped into units, each of which contributed a cow towards the triennial rent (cymmorth mawr). The officials appointed to collect the rentals often charged a personal levy, which they retained.

The accession of Henry IV brought Carnawllon, as part of the Duchy of Lancaster, into the hands of the crown. Early in Henry's reign, the last Welsh military rebellion started with the proclamation of Owen Glyndwr as Prince of Wales in 1400. As he was a direct descendant in the female line from Rhys ap Tewdwr of Deheubarth, the free tenants of Carnawllon flocked to his banner in the fight for freedom. By 1403 he had freed Wales and kept this freedom, with willing support throughout Wales, for a period of ten years, but the pressure and military might of Henry V proved to be too great and Wales was again subdued. At least 36 tenants in the commote of Carnawllon died in the campaign and their lands were offered on lease, but in only eleven cases was the lessee the heir of the deceased tenant. Several holdings were also amalgamated into the hands of a single tenant.

The Last Phase

Although Henry VIII's Act of Union (1536) annexed Wales to England, the hundred of Carnawllon was still retained as an administrative unit, and when the first elected County Council was authorised by the Local Government Act, 1888, the Three Commotes—Carnawllon, Cydweli and Iscennen—remained as a legal entity (until the mid-1960's) with its own specifically appointed Coroner.

Carnawllon thus survived as a unit for at least 1500 years of our turbulent history.

The commote name survives now only in Carnawllon Fawr Farm in the Gwendraeth Fawr valley about threequarters of a mile north-east of Ponthenri. Bounded to the north by Mynydd Llangendeirn and to the south by Mynydd Sylen, the valley has a ridge in the centre rising to 300ft. Carnawllon Fawr farm, with its 97 acres, straddles this ridge which runs from the Gwendraeth Fawr river in the north to the Hafren stream in the south. The northern half of the farmland slopes steeply to the Gwendraeth Fawr river and is partially covered by the wood of Allt-y-screch.

The early Celtic Iron Age people left evidence of their life mainly in the hill forts, and I believe that a small promontory fort existed on field No. 237 called Y Banc. A deep ditch has been drawn across the narrow part of a rock projection overlooking a ravine on the steep slopes of Allt-y-screch, so named due to the clear echo received from a call in the valley beneath the hill. My Mother informed me that her Father had found several iron arrow heads in the bank above the ditch, but they were not retained. A fresh water well still exists on the site.

The whole farm is situated above the finest quality anthracite coal and because of the ridge numerous outcrop seams have been worked from early days. Land was constantly reclaimed from the scrub woodland and a shortage of timber for fuel was inevitable. Coal began to be used as a fuel in the 16th century. Carnawllon, being crown property, the landed gentry had to obtain a lease to mine the coal. A 21 year lease was issued by the crown to Phillip Vaughan, gentleman, on the 25th June 1606 to mine or quarry the fields of Carnawllon and the remainder of the Three Commotes at a rental of 20 shillings per annum.

The Cawdor collection in the Carmarthen Records Office contains many coalmining leases and sub-leases. One such lease, dated

4th September 1705, records that "Richard Vaughan leased Dyffryn Bach field for and in consideration of the sum of Five pounds three shillings lawful money of England to him in hand paid yearly rent—all that field or parcel of ground now divided into two called by the name of Dyffryn Bach, part and parcel of a messuage of lands of Richards Vaughan called Carnawllon, now or late in the possession or occupation of John Rees, farmer, contiguous and next adjoining the river Gwendraeth Fawr."

On the 3rd July 1725 a lease granted by "John Vaughan Esq., Shenfield Place, Essex to Walter Rees, gent, for 99 years to extract, sink, dig, loose and cart away at Carnawllon for eight pounds a year at or in the Town Hall of the County Borough of Carmarthen on May Day and Michaelmas Day, also six shillings duty and a further sum of thirty shillings or the best beast at the choice and election of the said John Vaughan. All colliers, workmen, labourers and other persons in his or their power to grind all the family corn at the mill of the said John Vaughan at Capel Evan. No damage to be done to grass, corn or hay of tenant, or if so, payment be made."

The rental of the estate of John Vaughan, Golden Grove for one year ending at Michaelmas 1759 shows the following tenantry: Thomas Harry, Carnawllon, rent £21-10-0, in respect of a messuage, barn, stable and cowhouse with 16 fields containing about 55 acres and about 10 acres of underwood; Margaret Harry, part of Carnawllon, £8-5-0 rent, 8 fields containing about 25 acres; David John, part of Carnawllon, £3 rent, for cottage, garden, 3 fields, about 12 acres.

A land survey carried out for Charles Vaughan in 1780 shows the amalgamation of several farms to form the Carnawllon Estate. These were Carnawllon Fawr (154 acres), Carnawllon Fach (21 acres), Capel Evan, Fancy & Hen Felin (151 acres), Pentremawr (48 acres), Pentrebach and Dyffryn Bach (33 acres). The Carnawllon Estate is also recorded in the Golden Grove maps for 1782.

A detailed map of Carnawllon Fawr farm drawn by Thomas Lewis in 1785 shows features which have long disappeared, e.g. an old lane near the Hafren stream and two coalpits which were in operation. The access road to the farm led directly to the old mill (Hen-Felin). The farm building is in a different location, whilst cottages are shown at Cwmquarre, Bath (3) and Efail Fach. It was of great personal interest to find that most field names had remained unaltered for 200 years to the present day. According to the 1841

census, there were 14 adults and 21 children living in the farm and five cottages; the adults were classified as 2 Farmers, 2 Colliers, 10 farm servants and labourers. The Cawdor estate, in 1912, sold Carnawllon Fawr to my grandmother Mrs Ann Williams and her two sons, John and David.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to record my appreciation of the prompt and kindly assistance given by the staff at the Carmarthen Record Office, the National Library of Wales, and Carmarthen and Llanelli Public Libraries.

Holiday Trains in 1865

The railways of the nineteenth century were a major factor in the development of the holiday industry and resorts like Weston-super-mare owed their rise directly to the facilities afforded by rail travel. By 1865 there was a widespread railway network which provided more comfortable and rapid transport than ever was possible before. Although there were many competing railway companies they often combined to allow through passage and tempted likely passengers with tourist tickets generally valid for a month. Even so, through tickets were not always available and journeys could be wearisome; for example travel even from Carmarthen to London involved buying another ticket en route at Gloucester.

On the G.W.R. (Great Western Railway) main line there was a choice of travel: Express (fewer stops), 1st class and 2nd class; Ordinary, 1st class, 2nd class and 3rd class (penny a mile). Thus from New Milford (now Neyland) to Carmarthen Junction the Express 1st class fare was 9s. 0d., whereas the Ordinary fare was 5s. 6d. (1st class) and 3s. 4d. (3rd class). But where holiday travel was concerned it seems that only first and second class passengers were recognised; presumably those who normally bought third-class tickets were considered to be unable to afford holidays. In fact, only some trains carried third-class passengers; for instance, there were but two down trains from Paddington to Carmarthen Junction which catered for third-class travellers and these took some fourteen hours to do the journey, e.g. the 7.5 a.m. from Paddington reached Carmarthen Junction at 9.21 p.m. and the third-class single ticket cost 20s 5d. There were also only two trains for third-class passengers from Carmarthen Junction, namely the 8.59 a.m., which reached Paddington at 9 p.m., and the 12.50 p.m. But facilities for other classes were not very much better, the last train to Paddington being the mail train, which left at 6.27 p.m. and arrived at 4.35 a.m. No one, whatever class, could hope to make a day-trip to London, as the first train did not reach Paddington until 9 p.m., whereas the last train for Carmarthen left at 8.10 p.m.

Those affluent enough to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the G.W.R. timetable of 1865 had a wide choice, including an Irish holiday, which involved travelling to New Milford—the remains of the landing-stage can still be seen at Neyland—from where a Royal Mail steamer sailed for Waterford (Adelphi Wharf) to link with a westward train for Limerick and the Killarney Lakes.

A holiday in Wales could be a choice between the north and the south. Places advertised in South Wales included Cardiff, Neath

and Swansea. The G.W.R. Timetable suggested that Carmarthen could be used as a terminal, where horse-drawn coaches were available, at the Ivy Bush Hotel, to travel to Aberystwyth, Brecon and Cardigan. Unmentioned was a rival company, the Carmarthen & Cardigan Railway, which operated from what is now known as Old Station Yard and travelled as far as Llandysul. Travel to Tenby—a direct but bumpy coach ride was available—by rail was still circuitous and involved a train journey via Whitland and Haverfordwest (conveyance for Fishguard from the Commercial Hotel, post-horses and other conveyance for St. Davids and Broad Haven) to New Milford, crossing the haven by ferry to Hobb's Point, an omnibus ride to Pembroke Dock station, whence a train completed the journey. But a direct rail link was achieved in 1866, when the Pembroke Dock & Tenby Railway was extended to Whitland.

A visit to North Wales meant a train journey to Corwen and thence by 'Cambria' coach to Bala, Dolgelly and Caernarvon, the second-class fare (including outside coach seat) from Carmarthen being 44s. 0d. Alternatively, the journey could be continued to Chester and from there by the Chester & Holyhead Railway (L.N.W.R.) service to Rhyl (44s. 0d. return), Llandudno (45s. 0d.) or Holyhead (50s. 0d.). There was also a choice of three circular tours e.g. by train to Corwen and then by coach to Dolgelly and Caernarvon, returning by rail to Oswestry or Welshpool and Shrewsbury.

For 57s. 0d one could travel on holiday to Windermere to enjoy the scenery of the Lake District; this involved a change to the L.N.W.R. (London & North Western) at Crewe. Further afield, using the G.W.R., L.N.W.R. and Caledonian Railway companies, were Glasgow (86s. 0d.) and Edinburgh (88s. 6d). Yorkshire, via Crewe, offered the attractions of Scarborough (54s. 0d), Redcar (58s. 0d) and Harrogate (46s. 0d). The route to East Anglia went by the L.N.W.R. and the Great Eastern Railway via Didcot, Oxford, Bletchley and Cambridge; alternatively, via London to Yarmouth (75s. 0d). To visit the South Coast resorts still involved a journey to Paddington and transfer to London Bridge, Victoria or Ludgate Hill to entrain for Brighton (68s. 0d) Christchurch (for Bournemouth) (75s. 0d), Folkestone (76s. 6d) or Margate (72s. 6d). using either the London & South-Western, the London, Brighton & South Coast, or the London, Chatham & Dover Railways. There was even a trip to France via London and Dover to Calais, the fare from Carmarthen being 89s 0d. Possible, too was a visit to the Isle of Man via Liverpool and thence by sea at an all-in cost of 48s. 0d. Also listed were services to Guernsey and Jersey.

In 1865 there was no Severn Tunnel to carry the railway and the journey to the West Country involved a ferry crossing at New Passage

before continuing by train to Bristol and proceeding by way of the Bristol & Exeter or the South Devon & Cornwall Railway to get to Torquay (33s. 0d) Dawlish (32s. 0d), Weston (17s. 6d.) or Ilfracombe (44s. 0d). The latter destination involved a change at Taunton to board a coach for Lynton and continuing to Ilfracombe the following morning; the fare included an outside seat on the coach and all fees to coachmen and guards.

Inland spas included Malvern (25s. 0d.) and Buxton (44s. 0d.) served by the Midland Railway. The Welsh spas like Llandrindod Wells did not really develop until late in the century.

Almost all these services were far beyond the means of the working man with a weekly wage of less than a pound, but even he was catered for in a modest way in the summer of 1865. In June of that year a new Sunday afternoon service to Ferryside was introduced. The train, available to 1st, 2nd and 3rd class passengers, left Carmarthen Junction at 2.30 p.m. and returned at 7 p.m., the third class fare being 6½d. each way, children (between 3 and 12 years old) half-fare, and babes free.

* * *

The foregoing has been written up from information researched by the late Mr. T. L. Evans, B.A., of the Queen Elizabeth Boys' Grammar School, Carmarthen.—Editor.

'THE LOCAL HISTORIAN'

The Local Historian, which is published by the National Council of Social Service on behalf of the Standing Conference for Local History, is a quarterly magazine which offers information on methods of research, sources of historical information and background for further study.

Recent articles have dealt with photographs as historical evidence, sources for a study of juvenile delinquency in the nineteenth century, a practical approach to publishing a local history, archives and the local historian, a review of some early literature on hedges, measuring industrial growth from trade directories and new tasks for the local historian.

The annual subscription is £3.00 (£3.50 for overseas subscribers) and further information is available from the Publications Finance Dept., S.C.L.H., 26, Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU. A number of publications of interest to the local historian are also available and information will be supplied on request.

Hugh Carleton Tierney 1842-1920

Like so many others, Hugh Carleton Tierney was a stranger who delved into the history of a new domicile chosen for him by fate and of which he could hardly have been aware in his youth and early manhood. He was born in Enniskillen, the small county town of Fermanagh, Ulster and was educated at Queen's University, Belfast. While still a young man he came to Carmarthen in 1874 to work as a journalist, first with the *Carmarthen Journal* and later with *The Welshman*, which latter he served as reporter and sub-editor for nine years before becoming its editor, a position he held with distinction for twenty-seven years.

The obituary in *The Welshman*, which he served so long and faithfully, described him as a 'capable journalist of the old school' and 'a gentleman of high literary attainment'. During the forty-six years he lived in Carmarthen he played a worthy part in the social and public life of the town, becoming a member of the Borough Council which he served for several years, and later of the Borough Education Committee.

An ardent Roman Catholic, he was one of the leading representatives of that faith in the town, where he was among the foremost in promoting the activities of St. Mary's Church. Yet he could readily co-operate with those of other faiths, particularly in the field of music, for he was a knowledgeable musician, who was enthusiastic in his support of Baxter Brookes, the organist of Christ Church, the new Anglican church in the west of the town, in organising chamber concerts to the delight of many townspeople.

He has been described as a man of dignified bearing, kind and courteous, yet genial and good humoured, all of which was accompanied by scholarly aptitudes which nowhere better revealed themselves than through his facile pen, whether at work or at leisure. He wrote countless articles for *The Welshman*, many of them relating to the history and archaeology of the town and county, which were prime among his leisure interests.

He was one of the founder-members of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society and Field Club and for many years was a regular contributor to the society's Transactions. He also contributed to

Archaeologia Cambrensis, and although almost nothing appeared in book form, his written work on West Wales history and lore was extensive. His acknowledged authority in antiquarian matters ensured his election to honorary membership of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society, a jealously guarded privilege which was sparingly awarded.

Hugh Tierney retired from the editorship of *The Welshman* at the end of 1915 and returned, now a widower, to his native town, where he rented a small cottage, which seems to have pleased him well enough, but, perhaps compelled by advancing years, he went to live with his only child, Miss Constance Tierney, who, having inherited her father's talent for music, was the organist at the Roman Catholic Church at Oban in Scotland; later he moved with his daughter to Southport, Lancashire, where Constance established herself as a music teacher.

Hugh Tierney died at Southport on 7th April 1920, aged 78, and was buried at St. Mary's R.C. Churchyard, Carmarthen, where his wife, a Carmarthen lady, is also buried. After his death, his daughter deposited a collection of her father's papers with the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society, which is now in the keeping of the Carmarthen Record Office (CRO Museum 264).

E.V.J.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'GOLCH TREFENTY'

Sir,

Those readers familiar with my contribution on Trefenty in the last issue of *The Carmarthenshire Historian* may recall that in the penultimate paragraph I spoke of a metaphor the property had given to the language—'golch Trefenty'—indicating a washing-day of unusually large proportions. Subsequently, I have been informed by my friend Mr. D. Emrys Williams, Assistant Keeper of the Department of MSS and Records, National Library of Wales, who hails from the Llansawel-Talylychau district, that during his youth he had often heard local housewives, when faced with a hefty washing-day or a difficult ploy, use the phrase "mae'n Drefenty 'ma heddi" (It's a Trefenty here today). The district where Mr Williams lived is about 25 miles from Trefenty as the crow flies, so that the metaphor seems to have gained a fairly wide currency.

FRANCIS JONES,
Hendre, Carmarthen.

Bibles by Sea

By *SUSAN BECKLEY*, B.A., D.A.A.
Carmarthen Record Office

Among its records of Llanddowror parish, the Carmarthenshire Record Office is fortunate to hold three original letters written by the celebrated Reverend Griffith Jones, 1683-1761, for many years incumbent of that parish. The letters are addressed to the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.).

Griffith Jones was appointed rector of Llanddowror in 1716, having become a corresponding member of the S.P.C.K. three years previously. During the years he spent in Llanddowror, he was very involved with S.P.C.K. activities, supporting efforts for a new edition of the Welsh Bible in 1717 and 1727. He is also remembered for his work in organising and training teachers for the Welsh Circulating Schools where pupils were taught to read the Welsh Bible and learn the Catechism. After his death in 1761 this work was continued very successfully by Bridget Bevan of Laugharne.

The following transcript from the earliest of the three letters in the Record Office (Ref. CPR/58/17), illustrates the deep involvement of Griffith Jones in the work of the S.P.C.K. and his concern for the provision of Welsh Bibles for the people of Wales :

Revd and dear Sir Landowror 4 Feb 1748/9

I had returned you my sincere Thanks sooner for yr Last Fav'r but yt I waited thus long in hope of being able to inform you before now yt ye Welch Bibles and Catms on Board the Racehorse of Carmarthen—Rees Master, were come safe; but that Ship is not arrived as yet but was well (as I have been informed) abt a Fortnight ago at Plimouth, and I hope will come well to Carmarthen when ye wind (which has been very stormy here for above two months past) comes to be fair.

I hope yr worthy Society have by this time concocted ye best method of distributing ye Welch Bibles to satisfy as soon as may be convenient ye () desire of some Thousands here yt want to buy ym; several good churchmen know not wt to think of ye Dissenters being served before ym and (I) am given to understand yt I am censured severely and very completely abt it as if this was come abt by my means, but ye truth is yt about forty Welch Bibles are come to every dissenting Congregation, as I am informed, from

Mr. Price of London

I beg leave to mention a Thing wch I humbly apprehend may not be improper for you to know, that there is one Mr. John Price Vicr of Llangevelach near Swansea Glamorgan-shire a very worthy clergyman, who complains yt some hundreds of Bibles are wanted in his two very large parishes and intends I think to beg leave to make his application to yr Society for ym. He wd strictly observe yr Directions abt ym and is very conveniently situated to serve severall Parishes abt him in ye Counties of Glamorgan and Brecon and some part of Carmarthenshire with little or no expense for Land-carriage in ye County if they come by sea to Swansea. I shd hardly have taken ye Liberty of mentioning this very worthy Gentleman if I knew of any Corresponding Member near him.

It is ye unanimous opinion of most people here who know ye corrupt ways of this Countrey and who have ye Instruction of ye poor and ye Interest of Religion at Heart yt if yr Worthy Society wd think proper to sell certain no. of Bibles at full price it would answer great many good Ends. There wd then be no abate in ye sale nor wd ye mony'd men buy without need or only for cheapness sake and yr society wd raise a new fund to print an Impression of ye New Testnt with larger types for ye benefit of ancient people which is very much desired That it may please God to direct and bless your wise consultations to his own Glory and ye Endless Welfare of ye poor souls you labour for in Love, shall be ye prayer of

Rev'd and dear Sir

Your obliged humble servant

G. Jones.

Other documents in the Carmarthenshire Record Office relating to Griffith Jones include two further original letters dated 1749 and 1752 (Ref. CPR/58/18+19); a volume of copy letters from Griffith Jones to Madam Bevan, 1732-1738 (Ref. Museum 347); and the earliest volume of the Llanddowror parish registers (Ref. CPR/58/1) which records in the register of burials for 1761 :

"The Revd Mr. Griffith Jones (the worthy pious charitable faithful Rector of this par. for 45 years) was buried April 11th aged 77."

* * *

N.B. This article first appeared in the Quarterly Newsletter of the Dyfed Archive Service, September 1980.

Australia's Llandeilo Flag

Reference in Vol. XV of *The Carmarthenshire Historian* at page 42 ('An Artist in Peace and War', by Miss Eirwen Jones) to the flag designed by Carey Morris, the Llandeilo artist, which was sent to Llandilo, New South Wales in the 1920s has unearthed the accompanying photograph, undated, showing the flag representing the arms



of Sir Rhys ap Thomas and, in the top right-hand corner, those of Henry VII. The other side of the flag shows the traditional Welsh Dragon. Details concerning the flag are given in Vol. XVI of *The Carmarthenshire Historian* on pages 69-70.

In the photograph, taken many years ago—perhaps when the flag was received in Australia—are leading members of the Welsh Society.
