

**BELOVED VALLEY**

**THE LAST SIEGE OF  
DRYSLWYN CASTLE**



**by**

**ANNE ARNOLD**

**B.A.**

**Drawings, Maps and plans by JOHN NAPIER, R.I.B.A.**

## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

This book is a revised publication of my first book 'The Last Siege of Dryslwyn Castle by Anne Solomon, as I was then. I have since married Adrian Arnold, who has helped me to improve this publication.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Adrian Arnold, and also to Dr Donald Moore, for their expertise in revising the first publication.

Louise Hill and her friend very kindly typed the first book for me for which they received no acknowledgement, I would therefore belatedly like to thank Louise for all her hard work in that first book. Finally I wish to thank posthumously my two old friends Miss Enid Morgan of Albert Mount, Caio, and Mrs Lorna Blandy of Dolaubran, near Llandovery, for all their knowledge both of local history and of the folk lore in the area, which they generously shared with me in my researches.

## *PREFACE*

My interest in the subject goes back to the 19th century, when my great-grandfather and great-grandmother moved into Dryslwyn Fawr, which they rented from Lord Cawdor, in the 19th century. In those days it was the largest farm in Carmarthenshire; the family remained there until 1922. Dryslwyn Castle belonged to the farm. They died at a comparatively young age within a year of each other, leaving the family to bring themselves up.

The family gained a reputation for hospitality throughout the valley, and this is an interesting story in itself. One day my grandfather came over the hill on one of the family picnics, which they had on Dryslwyn Hill, fell in love with my grandmother and married her, taking her to live in Llanelly. She died when my mother was only seven, so that my mother always longed to hear about her mother and loved to go and stay in Dryslwyn with her aunts. The magnetic influence of Dryslwyn was passed on to both my sister and me, for we had many happy childhood days there.

When as a child I sat on Dryslwyn hill, contemplating the beauty of the place and developing a lifelong love of it, just as my family had done when they lived here, I decided to find out the history of the castle. But my own life has been so full that I find myself only now telling my grown family about the promise I made as a child. As I am never going to know the answers to all my questions about the history, I am obliged to write down what I have discovered so far, in the hope that others will later be able to fill the gaps in my scanty picture of the area.

The archaeological dig has been carried out for two weeks every summer since the first edition of this book in June 1982; Chris Capell has been in charge uncovering the tangible evidence, until now buried under the grassy mound.

Dryslwyn is caught up in a much wider history - the early history of Dyfed and Dynevor (the ancient Royal seat of South Wales). At the beginning I have emphasised Grongar, because my reliance on the genealogies from the Dark Ages (only written much later) cannot be

supported and therefore I have also included all the local evidence I could find. Later in the story, Dryslwyn is caught up in the history of the House of Dynevor.

Indeed, Grongar hill also seems to have been part of the story; it was called Argol (ref: Argol, p407 BCS History and Law; ‘History of Pembrokeshire’ by George Owen p.40; and BCS vol VII 1933-35 Argoel, Llangathen). The Welsh Laws mention ‘the ancient white cattle which stretched head to tail with a bull between every twenty of them so as to fill the space from Argoel to the court of Dynefwr’. Around AD 500 Dryslwyn may thus have been connected with Argol as the favourite seat of the King of Dyfed, Aircol Lawhir. Indeed Dryslwyn Castle as “Castle Argoel” - the castle protecting Argoel or Grongar hill - may be a fruitful clue to its importance in these early times, possibly the earlier site of Dynevor.

Of the many variants of the spelling of the name Dryslwyn, one is “Traws-lyn” or “Cross Lake Castle” because of the frequent flooding of the river. Another is “Drysslwyn” (Dris = a thorn or bramble bush) “a place of encumbrance”. It probably had numerous thorn bushes growing up the slopes. The Vicar of Llangathen in the 1860s wrote that the castle hill was “full of caves” which had to be filled in, because the sheep kept getting lost. Then there are other spellings - Droselan, Drosselan, Rosselan, Trosselan.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*By way of introduction to the story of Dryslwyn, I begin with the early history and development of Christianity, the rise of the ruling dynasties in the area of Dyfed and Deheubarth, and the first mention of Dryslwyn Castle. I end the introduction with a picture of 12th century Deheubarth in the period of the Lord Rhys.*

In this lovely valley of South Wales the Tywi, a river about sixty-three miles long runs from its source, high in the mountains of central Wales, down to the sea beyond Carmarthen. It passes the small town of Llandeilo, which is itself a mile west of the town and ancient capital of the south at Dynevor (Dinefwr). The valley now is broad and the Tywi winds slowly, making ox-bows as it goes, on past Llangathen and Cilsan and under the high hillfort of Grongar, with the mansion of Aberglasney at its base.

Dryslwyn is an extension of the foot of Grongar hill, well below it in height, and set on a lump of carboniferous limestone left by glaciers in the Ordovician Period. It lies in the middle of the valley, a place of strategic strength guarding the river ford and trade routes, and is thus a blockhouse against enemy forces approaching from Cantref Bychan south of the river and from the highlands of Cantref Mawr leading to Cardiganshire.

It can warn of approaching forces coming from the west by sea via Carmarthen, preventing them from going up the valley to the royal seat of the kings of Deheubarth at Dynevor and on to Llandovery, and also conversely preventing forces coming from Llandovery to Carmarthen. It is thus both a look-out and a blockhouse for Dynevor situated four miles to the east.

Dryslwyn was one of the high points towering over the ancient wooded valley of the Tywi. There is evidence of considerable hillforts dating from the Iron Age or possibly Bronze Age for instance at Grongar, Dynevor, Garn Goch, Bryn Myrddyn and Carreg Cennen, (Caer Cynan) in Cantref Bychan, this last set on a 100 metre crag above the river Cennen which joins the Tywi at Llandeilo. There is some doubt as to whether there was a hillfort at Dryslwyn. This valley is sheltered by even higher hills at either end, Bryn Myrddyn near Carmarthen about 11 miles away to the western end of the valley and Garn Goch beyond the little town of Llandeilo at the eastern end.

So we have a broad valley surrounded by hills and like a backbone down the centre lie the two or perhaps three ancient hillforts - Dryslwyn in the open position, Grongar behind it and towering over it, and, once hidden by trees, Dynevor, standing on a limestone spur, sheer above a deep bend in the river - the valley itself left behind by the great glaciers of the Ice Age more than 12,000 years ago.

The tribe of the Demetiae occupied this area (as did the Romans until 410 AD). However, from the 3rd century AD onwards there were invasions of Demetia from southern Ireland, and both Ogham (Irish script) and Latin scripts are inscribed on stones in the district. As mentioned below, the Goidelic-speaking people, the Ui Llathain, from the tribe of the Deisi migrated to Dyfed from the area of Waterford in Ireland. They were not driven out by the Welsh but lived side by side with them and were assimilated into the population. Their leaders became the ruling house of Dyfed (see chart).

Apart from enriching the Welsh language, the Romans left roads and forts. The roads were very important in the spread of Christianity in the area. Carmarthen and Llandovery were Roman forts connected by a Roman road passing through Llanegwad and Llangathen. The Romans left local life relatively undisturbed; their interest was in the mines, silver, zinc and gold at Dolaucothi, where they must have used free and slave labour.

After the fall of Rome and their withdrawal from Britain in 410 AD, Cunedda Wledig came from Scotland with his eight sons, one of whom, Ceredig, settled in Ceredigion (Cardiganshire) to which he gave his name. He drove the Irish out of these parts and his sons were to become Evangelists and to found monasteries and churches. Their influence was felt in Demetia.

By c500 AD Aircol Lawhir ruled in South West Wales, his family were from Ireland. I quote from 'The Expulsion of the Deisi' (Y Cymmrodor XIV 1900) by K.Meyer. The tribe of the Deisi became one of the main Irish settlements in Wales:

“Eochaid son of Artchorp, went over the sea with his descendants into the territory of Demed (Dyfed) and it is there that his sons and grandsons died. And from them is the race of the Crimthann over there, of which is Teudor son of Regin, son of Catgocaun, son of Cathen, son of Cloten, son of Nougoy, son of Arthur, son of Petr, son of Cincar, son of Guortepir, son of

Aircol, son of Trphun, son of Aed Brosc, son of Corath, son of Eochaid Allmuir, son of Artchorp”.

The languages of Demetia were Welsh and Irish, with Latin for the ruling classes; it was also fashionable to take a Latin name, for there had been varied and considerable contact with Rome itself before this time. By the end of the 5th century the Christian ruler of Dyfed was Aircol Lawhir (Agricola). He gave his name to Grongar hill ‘Argol’ (ref: BCS History and Law p.407; and ‘History of Pembrokeshire’ by George Owen p.40; BBCS Vol VII 1933-35, ‘Argoel, Llangathen’).

King Aircol ruled around 500 AD and traditionally his family was Irish (see family tree), but he was also descended from the Emperor Constantine the Great, whose parents were the Emperor Constantine and Helen according to Jesus College MS 20 - XIII. In this same line the grandson of Constantine the Great was Magnus Maximus (Maxen Wledig) who married Elen Luyddog of Caernarfon, Carmarthen and Carnwyllion (Kidwelly and Gower). Elen also built a network of roads known as Sarn Elen, part of which runs nearby from Carmarthen to Caernarfon.

It was her husband, Magnus Maximus, who became Emperor in 383 AD and who left Britain with army for Rome. Elen’s brother also went with him and, when the Romans withdrew from Britain in 410 AD, did not return to Britain, but settled in Brittany, founding the Welsh dynasty in Brittany. Elen however returned Britain with her five sons after the assassination of her husband the Emperor in Rome in 388.

It was later, in the late 5th century and the 6th century, ‘The age of the Saints’, that Elen’s descendants joined with the descendants of Cunedda Wledig, together with the Breton descendants of Elen’s brother now living in Brittany, to give their lives for the Christian faith in Wales as missionary monks, travelling on foot the length and breadth of the country.



***DYFED DYNASTY***

1. Eochid Allmuir of the Deisi comes to Dyfed

|

2. Corath

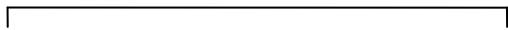
|

3. Aed Brosc or Orwain Fraisg

|

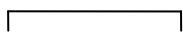
4. Tryffin Farfog, King of Dyfed

= ?Gwledyr F - Elydwyn



5. Aircol Lawhir

12. Cynan Cylched



Erbin6. Gwerthefyr l.c.540

⋮

Dywel (Vortipor) King of Dyfed

|

(6) Cyngar

|

7. Pedr

|

8. Arthur

9. Nowy (Noë)

(9) Gwlyddien

⊖ Ceindrech F Rhiwallon

10. Cathen, King of Dyfed and Brycheiniog

11! Cadwgon Trydelig

(11) Rhain Awst, King of Brycheiniog

|-----|  
Elwyst 1.

12. Tewdws Tewdwr  
King of Dyfed King of Brycheiniog

13! Mareddud d.796 13. Elise

|-----|  
Rhain 14. Owain Iddon 14. Ceingar 14. Sanan = Nowyk  
of Powys  
d.808 | d.811

13. Gwriad ap Brochwell  
Tryffin | 15. Tanwyst = Bleiddig (Bledri)

16. Hyfaidd d.893

|-----|  
17. Llywarch d.904 Rhodri (Rhydderch d.905)  
Elen d.929 = Hywel dda 17. p42

***DYNASTY OF DYFED***

Owain Fraisg

|  
Tryffin

AIRCOL LAWHIR (AGRICOLA) viv c 450-500

Erbin

|

Vortipor c530

|

Cyngar

|

Pedyr

|

Arthur c600

Njōë

Clothien

|

CATHEN c675 (KING of DYFED and BRYCHEINIOG)

Cadwgan

|

Rhein

|

Tendos

|

Maredudd d.796

┌──────────────────────────┐

Rhein d.808

Qwain d.811

Tanglwst, Heiress of Dyfed = Bleiddig

Hyfaidd ap Bleiddig d.892

Llywarch ap Hyfaidd dc 950

Elen, Heiress of Dyfed = Hywel Dda dc 950

*Dynasty of Deheubarth*

(From “God Bless the Prince of Wales” by Major Francis Jones, 1969)

GRONGAR HILL is 125 metres high; it is a hill fort measuring 3 acres, roughly rectangular in shape with two simple entrances. Until this site is excavated, its history will remain a mystery. It is well documented that the hill is named after Aircol Lawhir and therefore it seems possible that he could have ruled the tribe of the Demetiae from here. Demetia is said to have been named after Elen's son Demet and the area occupied by this tribe was roughly the area of Pembrokeshire, reaching as far as the Tywi estuary, Carmarthen and Dynevor to the east.

The first written evidence for Dynevor Castle (Gwaith Tinevur) is in the Book of Llandaff. Dynevor means fort of the chieftain Efwr (Ebros). The Book refers to the site when the 7th century King of Dyfed, Noe ab Arthur, gave the land of Llandeilo Fawr to the diocese of Llandaff. This became the centre of a powerful 'clas' (religious community). Now Hywel Dda, who died about 950 AD assembled men from many parts of Wales, to codify the long existing laws, many unwritten at that time; they formed what was to be known as "The Demetian and Gwentian Code".

It was one of these laws that made mention of the status of the Lord of Dinefwr which is adorned with white cows, each with its head to the tail of the next, with a bull between every twenty of them, so as to fill the space from Argoel to the court of Dinefwr". Now if Argol was Grongar hill, it would take a very long line of cattle to stretch from there to the present site of Dynevor castle (four miles or 3000 cattle!). The supposition that Dryslwyn was the earlier seat of Dynevor castle seems much more likely (less than one mile!).

Certainly Aircol is the more ancient form of the word Aergol, after which Argol (Argoel) has been named, showing the importance of Grongar in these ancient times; but we may never be sure of the earliest site of Dynevor itself - or when the earliest site was changed to that of the present castle ruin. It seems likely to have been in the period of Hywel Dda that the present site of Dynevor was established, i.e. 920 AD Hywel Dda inherited the whole of Seisyllwg as well as Dyfed which was his wife Elen's inheritance, and the new kingdom of Deheubarth was formed - similar to the present county of Dyfed.

## **THE BRITISH LINE TO HENRY VIII**

***From Thomas Firbanks' "A County of Memorable Honor" 1953, Harrap***

*Some of the British rulers before Rhodri Mawr are shadowy figures whose lives rest on tradition. It should be borne in mind, however, that Welsh law, for various purposes, required a Welshman to know his ancestry to the respective degrees of fourth, seventh and ninth. A litigant concerned with providing the seventh degree would need to quote all the descendants, male and female, of his 64 great-great-great-grandparents. The highly developed bardic system helped laymen with such feats of memory. There is no doubt that the self-interest of a horde of relatives is a surer guarantee of authenticity of descent than is the scrap of paper purporting to be a family tree.*

Edeyrn (Eternus)

|

Padarn Beiarudd (Paternus of the Red Robe)

|

Tegid (Tacitus)

|

CUNEDDA WLEDIG (Duke of Britain)

*- probably defended Hadrian's Wall against Picts and Scots. Drove Irish from N.Wales about AD 410 -*

|

Einion Yrth (eighth son)

|

Cadwallon Lawhir (Longhand) = *daughter of Uther Pendragon*

MAELGWYN HIR (The Tall) d.547

|

Rhun Hir

|  
Belyn

|  
Jacob

| Cadfan (*was ruling in 613*)

| Cadwallon d.634

CADWALLADR (The Blessed) d.664

*King of Britain. The last of the British blood that bore the name*

| Idwal Yrth

| Rhodri Molwynog d.754

| Cynan Tyndaethwy d.817

Esyllt (heir) = Merfyn Frych The Freckled) d.844

*King of Man. Joins the line of Gwynedd with the royal line of Ceredigion*

*continued on next page*

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\_\_\_\_\_ |  
RHODRI MAWR (The Great) = ANGHARAD (*last of the line founded by  
Ceredig, Duke of Britain, son of Cunedda Wledig*)

\_\_\_\_\_ |  
Anarawd d.916 | Cadel

|  
Idwal Føel (The Bald) d.942 | HYWEL DDA (The Good) d.950

|  
Meurig d.986 | Owain d.988

|  
Idwal d.996 | Maredudd d.999 | Einion d.984

|  
Iago d.1039 | Angharad | Cadell

|  
Cynan GRUFFYDD AP LLEWELLYN Tewdwr (Tudor)

|  
GRUFFYDD AP CYNAN d.1137 Neat = Osbern Fitz Richard

|  
RHYS AP TEWDWR d.1093

|  
OWAIN GWYNEDD d.1170 | Neat

|  
Gruffydd d.1117

|  
Iorwerth

|  
Sybil

|  
Yr Arglwdd Rhys d.1197 (*The Lord Rhys*)

|  
LLEWELLYN FAWR (The Great) d.1240 | Bertha

\_\_\_\_\_ |  
Reginald de Braose

|  
Gruffydd d.1244 Gwladus Ddu = Ralph Mortimer

|  
(*The Dark*) William de Braose

|  
Gwenllian = Ednyfed Fychan d.1246



Roger Mortimer = Maud d.1236 (*Seneschal to Llewellyn Fawr*)

|

LLEWELLYN Edmund Mortimer  
(*last independent*)

Goronwy d.1268 (*Steward of*

*Prince of Wales* d.1282

Roger Mortimer

Tewdwr Hen

(*Old Tudor*)

Gwenllian (*heir*) Edmund Mortimer

*forced to become nun*) Goronwy ap Tewdwr d.1331

Roger Mortimer

| Sir Tudor Vychan

Edmund Mortimer (*of Penymynydd, Anglesey*)

Roger

Edmund Maredudd ap Tudor

= *daughter* of

Anne (*heir*)

Owain Glynedwr Owain Tudor

= Richard, Earl of Cambridge

Richard, Duke of York  
(*grand-daughter*)

Edmund Tudor = Margaret Beaufort

*of John Beaufort, natural son of John of Gaunt.*

EDWARD IV

RICHARD III d.1485 (*Legitimised 1397 by Richard II*)

ELIZABETH (*heir*)

HENRY TUDOR

Arthur HENRY VII MARGARET = James IV of Scotland

Between Grongar and Dynevor is St Cathen's church in the parish of Llangathen. It is dedicated to Cathen, King of Dyfed and Brycheiniog c. AD 675; he was eighth in line from Aircol Lawhir. The present Church is in the medieval manor called Cilsan, but adjoining it was the manor of Alltygaer in which the original Llangathen church was sited. Professor William Rees

shows the position of Alltygaer on his map of South Wales in the 14th century; it was run in conjunction with the Lordship of Dryslwyn.

The castle chapel of Dryslwyn was supplied with a priest to celebrate Divine Service three days a week, from the parish of Llangathen. This was financed by the nuns of Chester who in their poverty petitioned the King to be released from this duty. Close to Llangathen church are the ruins of Capel Penarw with its healing spring. On the river side of Grongar hill, the vicar of Llangathen records in the 1860s that three stone graves were found containing a perfect skeleton in each; one skull was large and he sent it to Swansea museum (the records remain at the museum, but the skull was lost during the war). Each grave had four stones and the location was near the quarry on Pentre Davies' farm.

In February 1979 aerial photography showed that a medieval moated enclosure of 40 by 20 metres exists just south of Cwm Argol farm. There are two farms fairly close together here, significantly named Cwm Argol and Sarn ("bank") Argol, presumably deriving the name from Aircol Lawhir in the 5th century.

There is a legend concerning these two farms. The Lewis family of Cwm Argol say that the great king who lived on top of the hill had two daughters for whom he built these two farms, one of whom was named Angharad. Another farm close by, Cwmharad, has a later legend attached to it. Since these farms are not ancient buildings, though the sites could be, it is impossible to verify. Looking down, through the S.W. entrance on top of Grongar fort, is a full view of Dryslwyn Castle and the Tywi valley winding down to Carmarthen and the sea; the mouth of the estuary is now lower down at Llanstephan.

Aircol Lawhir was reputed to be a good Christian king, according to Gildas, writing in the 6th century. Gildas was a contemporary of Aircol's son Vortipor, of whom he had nothing good to say and whose misdeeds in his father's palace at Lydstep caused so much scandal. Vortipor's tombstone is now to be seen in the Carmarthen museum; it was found at Castell Dwyrain near Whitland, Dyfed.

DRYSLWYN CASTLE stands 70 metres sheer above the Tywi (Towy). Today the river ford is about 100 metres up river from the castle. W. Samuel wrote in 1868, "Descending the hill and hailing a boat, the visitor will cross the river". A river bridge built in the 1890s was washed away by flood in the

1930s. The course of the river has changed so much over the years, as the many ox-bows demonstrate, that in 1935 the boundaries of the parish were altered. Dryslwyn Fawr, a farm by the bridge, was in Llangathen, but after 1935 it was included in Llanarthney. Recently a picnic area was built on the site of the old ferry house.

When the foundations were dug for the original bridge in 1899, a block of stone weighing 100 kilograms was dug from the clay, striated by rubbing against the rock bed of the glacier in the Ice Age, and deeply grooved. When found, it lay 4.5 to 7.5 metres below the summer level of the river water; the block of stone was sent to Cardiff museum, but when the new museum was built, it was not kept.

Around the castle is a wall built by Richard Vaughan of Golden Grove in 1780 and finished by John Vaughan in 1781. The cattle pound was situated on the N.W. corner of this wall. Outside the wall on the north field the annual fair was held on St Bartholomew's Day. In 1900 it was called "The Folly Fair", after Admiral Foley who rebuilt the important mansion of Abermarlais. Across the roadway are three derelict cottages which are now being developed. Here once stood the public house called "The Castle Inn", (or 'The Folly' or 'Pantglas Arms'), which was used in medieval times as a court leet. Ty Castell (The Castle), a house on the northern slopes of the castle, was used for official purposes. The castle mill, situated on the river Dulas in the village of Felindre has a clear water well at the gate, which proved useful in the summer drought of 1976. Mrs Pugh at the mill says the mill race itself dried up in 1965.

Evidence from aerial photography shows the castle mound is steeply banked on the north side by earthworks, with an inturned entrance to the west, and a second entrance to the castle is on the approach ramp up the steep north bank to the north east of the castle.

The castle plan is now emerging under excavation, while in 1981 part of the north wall of the site showed where the houses of the township were to be found. The perimeter is of great size for a Welsh castle. Three of the sides are precipitous and the fourth only slightly less so. The 1314 survey of the castle gives us an insight into what it was like at that time. A later commentary by W. Samuel in 1868, says "superficial evidence shows the outline of the keep to have been an irregular pentagon". He gives the dimensions which in modern terms are: the north wall is the longest at 44.20 metres; the western

wall is 14.75 metres; the south-eastern 22.10 metres; and the south-western is 22.10 metres; the eastern is the shortest 8.84 metres. The position of this ward is on the S.W. end of the hill.

Samuel goes on to say, ‘Of these latter, portions of the walls incline to each other at a large angle and are still standing; and between, and in advance of them to the south, stands a wall pierced by three lancet windows. This is considered to be the chapel.’ It will be interesting to see if the recent excavations agree with these measurements.

Nearly a century later, Sir J.E.Lloyd gives us a description of the chapel. ‘The chapel faced east, it formed the upper floor of the oblique tower standing at the south-east angle. It was a rectangle shape measuring 5.18 by 2.54 metres and contained three long lancet windows that narrowed down from 0.91metres in the interior to 0.53m. At the north end, the curtain was cut away, presumably to allow the insertion of another window facing east. It did not project much. The chapel stood on the upper floor of a projecting turret, placed centrally on the east curtain - it measured 3.66 by 2.44 metres.

For the ‘houses, towers, walls and other building within the castle of Drosselan’, we will wait until we reach that part of the text dealing with the Norman occupation to develop our survey. What is clear however is that the masonry construction of this Welsh castle was very simple, with no decoration or characteristics to date it, apart from a portion of medieval tracery and some ironwork from doors destroyed by fire.

The early history of the castle is obscure, the castle is not named Dryslwyn before 1216. Before that it is possible that it was known as the castle of Argol (Argol now being named Grongar hill - Gron gaer, the round fort) or Aircol Lawhir’s castle, possibly the original site of Dynevor castle.

1. Mr Webster identified the early phase of the castle in a section of unmortared grey limestone wall running from north to south, a compacted stone and clay terrace, with a pit cut in it, and other evidence of this early period.
2. The major stone building forms the second phase, when all the main stone walls were constructed. Webster stated the destruction of this building was no later than the early 15th century.
3. Another stone building was later constructed on the site, the building stone being re-used from the earlier building.

These were Mr Webster's comments, and I now wish to apply them to my history: We know that Dryslwyn hill has been inhabited since the Iron Age and probably the Bronze Age, a bronze age flint being found in the first year's dig. It is probable that a fortified wooden structure occupied the site before the stone castle. Bearing in mind the importance of the site to the Kings of Deheubarth, we can ask whether the first stone castle at Dryslwyn was built at a similar time as Dynevor and Carreg Cennen castle?

These three castles are strategically built and show Dryslwyn as a defence and look-out castle for Dynevor. Should Dynevor fall, a retreat could be made to Carreg Cennen. However there are many periods in medieval times when all three castles were under different ownership and one must bear in mind that Carreg Cennen in Cantref Bychan is across the river Tywi from Cantref Mawr, so that in later times it was in Marcher territory and thus in English hands.

It was Carreg Cennen that was described by some writers as 'like an eagle's eyrie' and by others as the 'singing rock', presumably a reference to the wind whistling round it. Certainly the castle hill was inhabited in prehistoric times, and since early castles and fortresses were built of wood not stone, we have no means of tracing the early fort traditionally ascribed to Urien Rheged, in the 5th century (see pedigree of House of Dynevor).

When Rhys ap Tewdwr of the House of Deheubarth was killed in Brecon in 1093, the protection William I gave to his father for an annual payment of 40 was not extended by William II to Gruffydd ap Rhys. Gruffydd fled to Ireland. The Chronicle of the Princes states "Then fell the Kingdom of the Britons".

***DYNASTY OF DEHEUBARTH***

Rhodri Mawr

|

Cadell of Ceredigion and Ystrad Tywi

|

Hywel Dda dc 950 = Elen, Heiress of Dyfed

Owain d.988

|

Einion d.984

|

Cadell

Tewdwr Mawr

|

Rhys ap Tewdwr d.1093

|

Gruffyd d.1136

*Cadell...*

|

The Lord Rhys

|

Rhys Grug d.1234

┌──────────────────────────────────┐  
Meredith d.1271

Rhys Vychan

Rhys executed at York 1291

## *END OF THE LINE OF DRYSLWYN*

Later, Gruffydd returned from Ireland with his sons and his wife Gwenllian. But immediately after Rhys ap Tewdwr's death, chaos had reigned and many Welsh chiefs plundered and raided both castles and countryside. Among these was Uchdryd ab Edwyn, Prince of Merioneth, who we first hear about in the Chronicle of the Princes as carrying out a raid on the castle of Pembroke, plundering it and ravaging the whole land before returning home with vast spoil in 1096.

In 1138, we hear that Uchdryd ab Edwyn built a castle on the road to Llandeilo Fawr. This castle is considered to be Dryslwyn (Arch. Camb. 1865 page 76).

If we examine the political situation at the time, we see that after the death of Henry I in 1135, England became pre-occupied with the rivalry between Stephen and Matilda, whereby the Welsh situation changed rapidly.

In 1137 Owain and Cadwaladr of Gwynedd entered Ceredigion in triumph with an army and, with the support of Gruffydd ap Rhys, won the battle of Crug Mawr in this same year, but just as his fortunes seemed to be changing, Gruffydd died. His wife Gwenllian had been killed in battle in 1136, with her young son Morgan, near Kidwelly at a place called Maes Gwenllian, and her son Maelgwyn taken prisoner. This battle was fought after her husband Gruffydd had rushed up to Gwynedd to enlist the help of Owain and Cadwaladr to drive the Normans out of Deheubarth, for Gruffydd had been driven into the uplands of Caeo.

This same year 1137 the Flemings, who lived in a large colony just west of Carmarthen, 'having the art of divination and obtaining some foreknowledge of the coming storm, sold all their property and left the country'.

When Gruffydd died, his four sons were left to defend South Wales - the Vale of Tywi and eastern Dyfed. His eldest sons, Anarawyd and Cadell, were in their early twenties, the younger Maredudd only seven and Rhys even less.

Anarawyd was murdered just five years later, in 1143 and Cadell badly wounded in 1151, when he took Carmarthen, Llanstephan and the new castle of 'Dinwilier' which Earl Gilbert is said to have built in 1136. After 1151 Maredudd and Rhys took over the leadership. They controlled Kidwelly, crossed Loughor and went over to Gower. They rebuilt Dinwilier at Pencader to defend their property against attacks from Cardigan and they took Tenby.

Owain Gwynedd, no doubt secure in the belief that his response to the request for help had been fully honoured, put his brother Cadell in the north of Cardigan and son in the south and returned home to defend Gwynedd.

The question meanwhile was being raised by Bernard, Bishop of St David's, whether St David's ranked as an Archbishopric equal to that of Canterbury and York. Owain and Cadwaladr appealed for help from the Pope in 1140 against having an Englishman as Bishop of Bangor. In 1148 Eugenius the Pope was passing through Burgundy on his way back to Italy, after discussing the case with Theobald of Canterbury and the Bishop of St David's, but Bernard died before he was able to take the case to Reims the next year.

The problem had arisen because in the 6th century Samson, who was the son of a Demetian landowner and had been educated along with other noted missionaries in St Illtud's school at Llantwit Major, had gone as a missionary to Dol in Brittany. It appears, according to a story written down at a later period, that at that time the Yellow Plague was in Wales and Archbishop Samson transferred the archiscopal pallium of St David's and his successors to Brittany. This is how the Menevian church lost this outward sign of its primacy among the church in Wales. This is recorded in a letter of the Chapter to Honorius II.

There is only one Pipe Roll for the period before Henry II and that is for 1130, referring to 1129. It has two Welsh sections, one describing Pembrokeshire, which was already being organised as a county. The other is about Carmarthenshire, showing Bernard of Newmarch appointed Bishop of St David's over the heads of the Welsh. Carmarthen was the centre of Royal administration for the Normans, but Cantref Mawr was still mainly held by the Welsh.

The Bishop of St David's owned Abergwili, Llanegwad, Llangadog and Llandeilo. Glandulas (the site of the old house was slightly west of the present house) was in medieval times and until recently the vicarage for Llanegwad. Pentre Davis was the vicarage for Llangathen. Llanfynydd and Llanfihangel Cilvargen were associated with Llanegwad church. The parish church of Llanfihangel Cilfargen according to Professor William Rees's map of the 14th century was under Whitland abbey and this map also shows one church in Llangathen marked, together with one church appropriated to a



monastic house with a grange near Golden Grove, connected with Talley Abbey.

Talley Abbey, founded by the Lord Rhys in the 1180s was Premonstratensian, an order of canons with parochial responsibilities, unlike those other white canons, the Cistercians, who were monks. Ranulf Glanville, Justiciar (Chief Justice) for England at the time, was an important patron, while Rhys was closely associated with the Angevin court in France. This is the only Premonstratensian foundation in Wales. The order was founded by St Norbert and named after his Abbey at Premontre, Even after the death of Rhys's son Rhys Grug, when his province was divided into two Lordships, one under Dynevor and the other under Dryslwyn, Talley was patronised by both. Soon after its foundation, Talley was at odds with Whitland because of the latter's jealousy of the new foundation.

In the middle ages, Deheubarth was divided into a number of administrative units called cantrefs. For administrative purposes these cantrefs would be divided into hundreds (a tribe or hundred families) or commotes. This was a convenient size for holding the lord's court, collecting tithes and dealing with legal matters and disputes.

Dryslwyn was the head of the commote of Catheiniog, one of the seven commotes of Cantref Mawr. It is bordered by Maenordeilo, with Dynevor castle as its head on the east. The southern border was the river Twyi. The western border was the river Cothi with the commotes of Widigada and Mabudrud, and up country to Abergorlech and Brechfa from the Cressely Arms at Nantgaredig as far as Cao, in which Talley Abbey is situated; the eastern border returns to Maenordeilo again.

Catheiniog consisted of the parishes of Llangathen, part of Llanegwad, Llanfynydd (the church in the mountain) and the small ecclesiastical parish of Llanfihangel Cilvargen, which is a dedication to St Michael, as was Llangathen in the middle ages. The earliest and best known of this dedication is Mont Saint Michel in Brittany. St David and St Teilo are the other major dedications in the district. There are five churches dedicated to St Teilo in the area including Llandyfeisant to his nephew Teifi, they are Llandeilo Fawr, Llandeilo Rwnws (near Dolybont), Trelech, Brechfa in Cantref Mawr, and Llanarthney (in Cantref Bychan) Llangadog, Abergwili, Meidrim, and Henllan Amgoed are Dewi churches. Brychan foundations also are found here.

Earlier we saw how the nuns of Chester financed Llangathen. Llanegwad was also part of their property in the Middle Ages. The early history of the parish concerns St Patrick who was ordained deacon by Bishop Amator at Auxerre together with Isernius - who was ordained Bishop later by St Patrick. It is said that Isernius built a house for himself, Llan Hernin in Llanegwad, probably the earliest dedication in Wales, but it was Egwad, son of Cynddiliog ab Cenydd ab Gildas who founded Llanegwad. He also founded Llanfynydd.

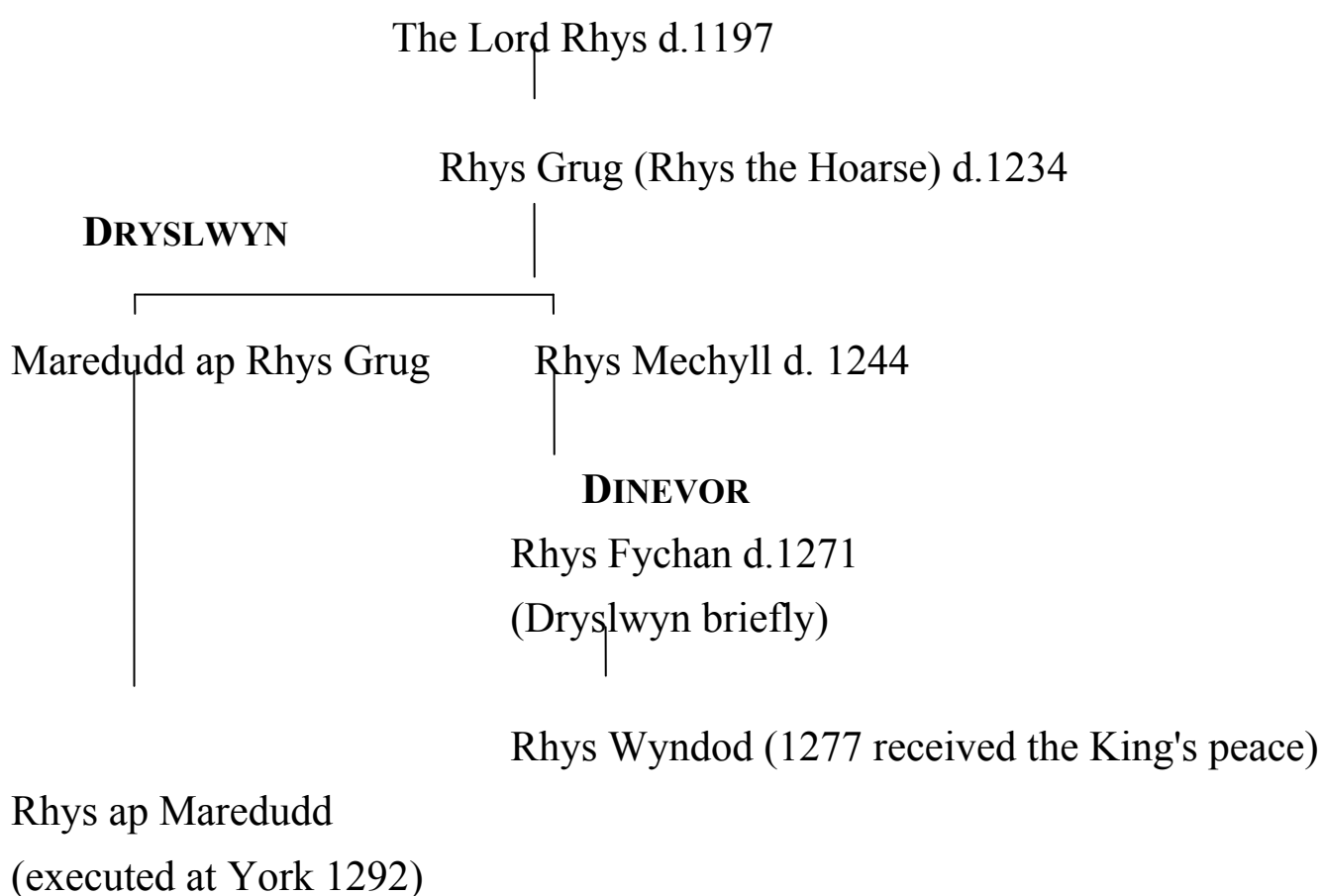
In this introduction to the area, I have tried to show something of the real interplay in our early history between the development of Christianity, the power struggles and administration. We have noted the rise of the ruling dynasties of Dyfed and Deheubarth and the first mention of the castle of Dryslwyn. We have also seen the beginnings of the creeping Norman occupation of Wales and the rise of the House of Dynevor under Rhys ap Tewdwr, who died in 1093. We end with a mention of his grandson, the great Lord Rhys, who started the first Eisteddfod in Cardigan in 1176, founded Talley Abbey and died in 1197. Henry II died before him in 1189; he was on good terms with Henry just as his famous grandfather before him had been with William the Conqueror.

## CHAPTER ONE

### **Dryslwyn becomes an Independent Lordship**

*The family of Rhys ap Tewdwr (Tudor)*

#### *THE LORDSHIP OF DRYSLWYN*



When the great Lord Rhys died at Dynevor in 1197, he was succeeded by his son Rhys Grug (Rhys the Hoarse - it is said that he suffered an arrow wound in his throat). Rhys Grug was a patron of the Physicians of Myddfai; he gave them lands and privileges to enable them to study and to help those who were sick. Glan Myddfai and the river Avon Myddfai are still marked on the map just north of Dynevor, but the family originated higher up the valley of the Tywi near Llangadog, about 12 miles beyond Llandeilo. The first of the

family physicians was Rhiwallon, who lived at the beginning of the 13th century, and he had three sons, Cadwgan, Gruffydd and Einon, who became physicians to Rhys Grug.

There is a Welsh fairy tale, "Common Form" it is called, connected with their mother, who it is said taught them the use of herbs and cures. There are many herbs in Carmarthenshire. The lake near their first home, which is now part of the reservoir near Llangadog, had many of these herbs growing near by. The descendants of the family practised as physicians until at least 1740.

Space does not permit to describe the tussle that went on for the possession of the various castles at the death of Rhys Grug's father, the Lord Rhys. The situation was constantly changing. King John played the princes off against each other all the time. However, in 1215 Llywelyn the Great, the powerful prince of North Wales, overran the South. He divided it into three and, leaving Rhys Grug in charge of Dryslwyn as part of his large domain, gave him all Cantref Mawr except Mallaen, in his Aberdyfi awards.

At Rhys Grug's death in 1234 and Llywelyn's death in 1240, a new series of divisions were made, which ended with the fall of Dryslwyn Castle in 1287.

When Rhys Grug died, at Dynevor, Maredudd, his son, went straight to the King at Westminster to do homage for his inheritance, Gilbert Marshall being told to look after Maredudd's interests. A few days later, the other Lords of Deheubarth paid homage to the King.

Deheubarth was this time divided into four parts. Maredudd's portion was east of the river Cuch, where he built his new castle of Emlyn, on the boundary between Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire - the legendary area of Pwll.

By 1240, at the death of Llywelyn, Maredudd was thus in possession of Dryslwyn (if not before). Llywelyn's son David was not recognised in the South and Maredudd's brother Rhys Mechyll, who was lord of Dynevor, held Dryslwyn for a while during the next few years until his death in 1244, when Maredudd seized it again. Two years later in 1246, the Seneschal of Carmarthen laid siege to Dryslwyn castle, but by their admission to the King's peace in 1246, Maredudd and his nephew Rhys Fychan were confirmed in possession of these territories.

Maredudd was turned out again in 1255 in favour of Rhys Fychan, but re-instated by Llywelyn (grandson of Llywelyn the Great), in spite of the fact that Rhys Fychan was his brother-in-law, married to his sister Gwladys.

In many ways 1256 was the high point for the Lords of Dryslwyn, the bards, writing in Whitland, again being hopeful of the possibility of a united Ystrad Tywi, which they had seen in the days of Maredudd's father Rhys Grug. Little did they know what an appalling chapter of bloodshed lay ahead.

### **The Battle of Coed Llathen 1257 (Coed Llangathen)**

The monks of Whitland and Talley Abbeys wrote a colourful record of this battle, which took place over about a four mile area near Hafod Neddyn and Llether Cadfan at Broad Oak.

The battle came about because Rhys Fychan had complained to Henry III at the loss of Dynevor and Carreg Cennen. The King sent Stephen Bauzan, one of his best officers and an experienced administrator and Governor of Gascony, to support Rhys Fychan.

Stephen Bauzan arrived by sea with a strong force which landed at Whitland, where the army stayed for a few days. They quartered in the Abbey, which the troops devastated, stabling their horses within the precincts of the Abbey. They plundered and wrecked extensively, including demolishing the altar and killing some of the monks. Rhys Fychan was joined by three local lords: Nicholas Fitzmartin, Patrick de Cardurcis, the Lord of Kidwelly, the husband of Hawise de Londres (their granddaughter married Henry of Lancaster, the grandson of Henry III) and the Lord of Carew. The monks lamented "This is a sad affair...the invaders, English, Norman, Fleming, were dividing the lands between them, breaking up all the old noble families and casting them adrift. Come to take their lands, their country, their houses, their all".

The story is taken up by the monks of Talley Abbey: "The English men at war came up from Carmarthen with horses in mailed panoply, and well armed, prepared to devastate the land of Ystrad Tywi. They began their journey without being harassed and arrived at Llandeilo Fawr, where they fearlessly tarried overnight. Maredudd ap Rhys Grug and Maredudd ap Owain, who between them commanded Ceredigion and Ystrad Tywi, were ready and waiting. The surrounding woods and valleys were filled with their followers and they kept up a great clamour.

Throughout the whole of Friday they provoked and harassed the English horsemen with javelins and arrows. On the Sabbath day, 10 June, the vigil of the Holy Trinity, the guide of the English, Rhys Fychan, forsook them in their great straits and danger and, unknown to them, escaped in disguise with a few of his men to his castle of Dynevor. Yet the English, being clad in steel armour, feared nothing. Still their mail could no more defend them than linen garments, as they placed more trust in them and their strength than they did in God”.

The battle appears to have started at Hafod Neddyn. Here the marshy area below gives way to woods and dingles, ditches and precipitous chasms, and stretches up the hill. Evocative names, some of which remain with us and some are now lost, are very descriptive; just as the battle names took the place of the 5th century place names in the area, so these have now often given way to more recent names. Cadfan (battlefield), Cae y Ochain (field of groans), Rhiw Dorth (hill of reinforcement), Llain Dwng (the slang of oaths), Congl y Waed (place of shouting), Cae Ffranc (the field of the Normans), Cae Dial (field of retribution) and others.

The attack is supposed to have started therefore in the wood and marsh below Cilwern, extending to the crest of Cefn Melcoed. Their plan was to take the route for Cardigan. “From daybreak till noon the battle was carried on in the deep woods. Near Coed Llathen the English lost their palfreys, whereby the Welsh became most encouraged. The provisions and packhorses bearing all their warlike material had gone and the battle by mid-day had reached halfway to Dryslwyn. Many of the English had been lost when they had been cut down by skirmishing parties who were rushing out of the thickets and crags, when the English on seeing Dynevor castle had taken a detour there”.

At this time, a detachment from the main army under Llywelyn appeared in the rear, so that part of the English contingent made a hasty retreat towards Carmarthen along the old road, pursued by the Welsh. At mid-day they arrived at 'Cymmerau' (near the confluence of the Tywi and Cothi rivers). “And the Welsh with the help of God, rushed valiantly upon the mailed English, cut them down from the panoplied steeds, and in the jungles, the ditches and the dingles, trampled them beneath their horses hoofs. More than 3,000 English were slain [at least 1000 probably] that day, and a few or none of them escaped from the battle”.

Stephen Bauzan was killed, probably near a brook, 'Styphanus' a place name probably marks the spot.

After the battle of Coed Llathen, Maredudd became more and more isolated. He could not bring himself to be subject to Llywelyn, as all the other Welsh princes were, including Rhys Fychan of Dynevor. (In 1258, just a year later, Llywelyn was recognised by the King of England as Princeps Walliae).

Richard de Clare had been sent by the Crown in 1257 to offer Maredudd extensive lands and guarantees in return for his loyalty. When Llywelyn discovered that Maredudd had been negotiating behind his back with the King, he was furious and imprisoned Maredudd and his son Rhys. He released the father back to Dryslwyn in 1259, but he still held Rhys in order to prevent Maredudd rebelling against him again.

When it was rumoured in 1262 that Llywelyn was dead, the King ordered Maredudd not to support his brother David. The following year, 1263, Civil War broke out and Henry III was faced with baronial opposition, led by Simon de Montfort. Maredudd did not take an active part, although he was obliged to make an appearance in the South East in March 1263, but he was not among those who supported the Treaty of Pipton in 1265 at the end of the Civil War.

At the Treaty of Montgomery in 1267, Llywelyn's position was officially recognised as Prince of Wales. The King forbade Maredudd to put his name to it, or to do homage to Llywelyn. It must have been a terrible moment for Maredudd, when in 1270 Llywelyn paid the King 5000 marks in order to obtain Maredudd's homage: an indication not only of Llywelyn's power at the time, but also of his wealth.

Maredudd felt his loyalty to the King had been given for nothing. He died the following year in Dryslwyn 1271 and was buried at Whitland Abbey in front of the High Altar.

Rhys Fychan also died in 1271 and King Henry III died the following year.

### **Rhys ap Maredudd**

It hardly seems surprising that Rhys ap Maredudd should have felt unfriendly to Llywelyn in whose power he found himself at his father's death; he inherited only Catheiniog, Mabudrud, and possibly Widigida.

Rhys made his peace with the King in 1277, when Llywelyn's power collapsed. The 'Annals of Waverley' record that Edward assembled all the nobility and many foreign princes to celebrate his triumph over Wales with tilts and tournaments at the Round Table of Nevin. Rhys had always hoped that the crown would fulfil the promise made to his father, to give him Dynevor. But the promise was never fulfilled. Rhys's dream of a re-integrated Tywi valley with its centre at Dynevor, under Rhys ap Maredudd ap Rhys Grug, was that as the poets and the bards, who looked back to the days of Rhys Grug with longing (that 'hiraeth' or real yearning that is Welsh at the core).

Hawise's son, Pain de Cadurcis of Kidwelly, made an agreement with Rhys in 1277, that if the castle of Dynevor came into the King's hands, Rhys's hereditary rights to Dynevor, together with the commotes of Maenor Deilo, Mallaen, Caeo and Mabelfyw, would be given judicial consideration. But when Rhys Wyndod of Dynevor came into the King's peace just two weeks before, the agreement that Pain de Cadurcis had made on behalf of the King, was never fulfilled.

With the princely houses out of the way, Welsh officials and landowners waxed higher under the Crown, reaching their zenith in 1485, when Henry IV defeated Glyndwr and this benign neglect was reversed by spiteful Acts of Parliament, until the final Act of Union under Henry VIII in 1536. From the reign of Henry I, in the 12th century, Carmarthen had been a Royal Castle. In 1130 the pipe roll records the "honour" of Carmarthen, later to be known as the "castelry". In 1241, we first hear of the "county" of Carmarthen. In 1277, before the collapse of Welsh rule in Ystrad Tywi, three commotes are attached to the castle, "the Welshery: Elfed, Widigada and Derllys". The Welsh tenants of these commotes now paid dues, served in war, and were answerable in law to the courts at Carmarthen. Previously these were the lord's dues.

In the Statute of Rhuddlan in 1284, Carmarthen came under the direct lordship of Edward I, the year the Queen gave birth to the Prince of Wales. Under the King, a justice for West Wales, a Chamberlain and Exchequer, was appointed for Carmarthen, the first appointed being Bogo de Knoville, followed by Robert de Tibetot.

Rhys was in a special position. Robert de Tibetot, as the king's representative in Carmarthen, held most of the power, but Rhys was directly answerable to



the King, while being given the privilege of being subject only to the King and being able to be judged only by Welsh law. Robert de Tibetot set out to make as much trouble as he could for Rhys and already in 1281 matters were formidable. These difficulties continued until Robert de Tibetot and Rhys ap Maredudd finally reached deadlock. Rhys had sent frequent complaints to the king about his treatment by Tibetot. In 1281, Tibetot forced Rhys to attend court in Carmarthen, to be tried by John Giffard and his wife. He remained silent. Giffard attempted to take over Dryslwyn, but was prevented by Llywelyn ap Madog the steward and constable of Dryslwyn. Goronwy Goch (the steward) and Henry ap Elidr Goch (the constable), indeed these, with seven others prevented Giffard even entering Dryslwyn.

Rhys had remained silent at the trial under John Giffard because under Welsh Law he was not to be tried by Justices, but directly under the King. Nor was he supposed to be tried under common law. Rhys ap Maredudd had ploughed a lonely furrow, the only Lord in Deheubarth to stand by the king. Rhys particularly suffered in 1282-3 at the time of the battle of Llandeilo fawr, when he refrained from taking the Welsh side, the only Welsh lord who had not fought; later Llywelyn was to take savage revenge and ravage all Rhys's lands.

In 1285 Rhys ap Maredudd married Ada Hastings when her brother, John Hastings, conveyed the Lordship of St Clears, Amgoed and Peuliiog to him. His father and grandfather had respectively married into the houses of Marshall and Clare, so that Rhys needed a special papal dispensation to marry Ada. Gilbert de Clare, William de Valence and John de Warenne were witnesses at the wedding.

Robert de Tibetot, the King's Justiciar, was a ruthless man. His deputy was Alan de Plunkenet. Tibetot took it upon himself to be the aggressor against Rhys ap Maredudd. In 1286 he compelled Rhys to attend court in Carmarthen. At last after years of harassment by Tibetot, Edward decided to send three judges to accompany Tibetot in June 5th 1287, to 'do what is right'. Edward himself was abroad fighting in Gascony; from Bordeaux, Edward sent instructions that, if they found error in the process of law concerning Rhys, they were to act, but if he was sentenced to outlawry, the sentence was not to be carried out for two months.

Rhys did not appear in Carmarthen. He was sentenced to outlawry. "The conflicts of law and jurisdiction had aroused him as they had aroused his

father the powerful Maredudd". Rhys suddenly took arms and attacked the castles of Llandovery, Carreg Cennen and Dynevor, all of which had been promised to him, but the English refused to let him have them.

Rhys had become a disillusioned and a desperate man. There were also fatal flaws in Rhys's character, his pride, impatience and the fact that he had in a sense put himself above the law; in the end he dropped his allegiance to the Crown. As an old ally of England, Rhys had been shabbily treated; he refrained from taking part in either of the Welsh Wars of Independence (1276-77 and 1282-83) and had been invaluable to the King and his cause.

Now Rhys was in open rebellion and Edward directed Edmund, Duke of Cornwall, and the Regent, while Edward was abroad, to defend Radnor and the upper Wye. Three points for the assembling of troops were agreed, Chester, Montgomery and Hereford, and Tibetot took strenuous measures to defend Cardiganshire against Rhys. It seems that that year there was an earthquake on 15 March and on 16 June a lunar eclipse, adding natural drama to a year which marked the beginning of the loss of independence for Dryslwyn under its last strong man, Rhys ap Maredudd.

### **The Siege of Dryslwyn Castle 1287**

The build-up to the siege is blood-chilling to read. The Regent, Earl Edmund, called a meeting in Gloucester on July 15th, to assess the situation. Meanwhile the lords and sheriffs of the March (March is just another form of Mark or boundary), were forbidden to trade or to communicate with the rebels. It was decided to assemble a great army at Carmarthen, made up of four armies from other parts.

*The Local Army*, under the *Justiciar Robert de Tibetot*, raised 1100 men from around Carmarthen; from the commotes of Widigada and Elfed another 300 men; 450 more from Cemaes, the Lordship in Pembrokeshire, and 30 Englishmen. (All the rest were Welsh.) Roger and Hugh Mortimer and John de Knoville were among the officers.

*The Southern Army*, under the *Regent, Earl Edmund*, arrived in Carmarthen on August 8th, rested and on the 13th started moving up the right bank of the Tywi, together with Tibetot's men. They secured the approaches to Dryslwyn at Llanegwad on 11 August. (This army consisted of 10,600 infantry and 600 horse, 52 crossbowmen from London and 28 from Bristol.) There were a

further 280 infantry from the Midlands, Nottingham and Derby, 1600 from the Border (500 from Shropshire, 280 from Hereford, 360 from Monmouth). Edmund's army had collected at Monmouth and, instead of continuing on the shortest route through Brecon, made a detour to avoid a battle which Rhys had started in Brecon, while they collected more men on the way through Usk and Newport.

*The Third Army*, under *Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, Lord of Glamorgan*, consisted of 5,300 men, with 3,000 more under Edmund de Mortimer; 600 with Hastings, 800 with Giffard, 360 from the March of Monmouth, 300 with Fitz Reginald, 100 with Audley and 2,000 with the Earl of Hereford, 12,260 in all.

There were also 200 trained woodmen from the forest of Dean, cutting paths down the old Roman road through the Usk valley to Llandovery. Another group of woodcutters, up to 650 at one time, and 300 more elsewhere were cutting another path from Glamorgan to Brecknock (via Morlais and the Taff valley). By August they were finished and disbanded. The third army was at Brecon fighting a battle against Rhys's men from August 3rd until the 7th, when they set out on their way to Dryslwyn. A large force was sent to Carreg Cennen and likewise to Dynevor.

*The Northern Army* were under the leadership of *John Pennard, Otto De Grandison* as Justiciar *Grandison* and his household, and *John Havering* his deputy; John Pennard, the man in charge of Edward's castle building in North Wales, was to lose his life in the siege. They brought with them 2,000 men from Snowdonia and Merioneth, 120 carpenters, masons, smiths, mechanics and quarrymen and 20 archers and crossbowmen. Reginald de Grey, Roger le Strange and Stephen de Grangton were among the officers. Reginald de Grey had 20 infantry and thousands more were swelling the numbers daily. By 10 August there were 2,000 infantry from North Wales under Robert de Stanton and 2,000 more from Welshpool, Staffordshire and Shropshire, as well as 400 locally from Cardigan; Queen Eleanor sent 330 men and 20 woodcutters. All these northern forces gathered at Llanbadarn.

Earl Edmund was met by 6,600 men and 47 officers at Carmarthen on 13 August. John Havering's mechanics and sappers made a siege engine which cost £14 to erect (hides, timber, rope and lead were needed); 20 quarrymen and 4 carters made and brought up stone bullets to fire from it; pickaxes and other tools were also made. Woodmen and ditchers under Huntercumbe and

Leyburn were all employed for the mining and battering operation, which took place between August 20th and 30th, at Dryslwyn. These skilled men were from John Pennard's new castles in the north. Supplies and money were shipped from Bristol to Carmarthen with bows, arrows and money from the merchants of Lucca. The bankers and banking houses of Europe supported the English.

Rhys, meanwhile, was carrying out guerrilla attacks. After taking Dynevor and Carreg Cennen and killing the constables, he took Llandovery, went west to the gates of Carmarthen, causing destruction all the way, and then on to Oystermouth to burn Swansea; whence he turned north to Llanbadarn and destroyed the town, but not the castle. Rhys made a sudden invasion of Brecknock and was met by a force under the Earl of Gloucester. Rhys had left his wife in one of the castles, possibly Dynevor, but he now carried her off under cover of darkness.

Rhys then went to his castle of Dryslwyn and prepared to face the coming onslaught. On August 15th all the armies met. The siege engine was brought up and the attack was in full swing between the 20th and 30th August. Rhys refused to give battle, for Dryslwyn was almost impregnable, so that a decision was made by the English to undermine the castle wall at the southeast corner under the chapel walls, always the most vulnerable and undefended part of a castle. The tunnel being dug by the English was propped up by stakes, which were inadequate for the purpose. It has been suggested a tower collapsed. There must have been a heavy fall of stones and debris; a number of the English were killed, many being buried alive.

Of those who lost their lives one was John Pennard, another William de Montchesney, whose sister Joan was married to William de Valence (Henry III's half-brother). Two more named knights were Gerard de Insulis and Nicholas Caro. John Havering took John Pennard's place. The Regent's troops who were conducting the siege and making the breach under the wall, were reduced by 700 men. Many of these were from Shropshire. Another 150 from Herefordshire were lost between September the 1st and 4th. The castle surrendered on the 5 September, but of course Rhys was not in his castle - he had escaped.

It was rumoured that Gloucester, who was not unsympathetic to Rhys's cause, had treacherously persuaded the Regent to make a truce (Gloucester and the other Marchers had more in common with Rhys than upstart royal

officials like Tibetot). Gloucester was also rumoured to have let Rhys escape through his land in Glamorgan to Ireland the following year. The Regent returned to Westminster. No sooner had he gone than Rhys renewed his attack.

Rhys escaped by night to the castle of Emlyn which his father had built and Ada had brought to him as part of her dowry. Now he seized it, killing the garrison and capturing Mortimer the constable, on November the 2nd. On the 4th he descended on Llandovery and took 200 cattle. By the 14th, the Marcher Lords were told to keep their castles defended, until Rhys had been captured, but some Marcher Lords were sympathetic to Rhys, while Gloucester himself was related to him.

After the damage inflicted by Rhys, he was officially declared an outlaw. Tibetot had to make good the damage to Dryslwyn castle and supplies were sent to him from the Tower of London. The crossbowmen and others that Tibetot raised to help him scour the woods of Brechfa to find Rhys, amounted to 1,450 men by December 3rd, and they were able to relieve Dynevor. These men were to carry out a great deal of plundering up and down the Tywi valley looking for Rhys.

The siege of Emlyn began on December 28th, the great siege engine being trundled from Dryslwyn to Carmarthen by 40 oxen and 44 wheeled wains and then by way of St Clears to Cilgerran. They repaired it at Cardigan and 60 oxen pulled it on to Emlyn by January 10th. With it went 20 horse and 463 of de Breos's men, blacksmiths with pigs' grease, woodcutters and men to pick up 480 stones on the beach at Cardigan and to transport them by cart to Llechryd on the river, and then take them on 120 packhorses to the camp.

Emlyn surrendered on January 10th, but Rhys was not in the castle. No English soldiers lost their lives and all Rhys's possessions were given to Tibetot, under the Crown, until he was ordered to the war in Gascony in 1294.

The search for Rhys was intensified. On 25 January 1288, a search party was sent up the Tywi as far as Llangadog, to scour Ystrad Tywi, going through the woods and taking hostages in the town. More rumours of Rhys's activities continued in November that year. In January 1289, Tibetot took another army up the Tywi to catch Rhys. Many of the men sent to find Rhys were Welsh; even his old constable Goronwy Goch is named as being in charge of a search party of 400 men looking for him.

It was said (but never proven) that Gloucester helped Rhys to escape the country, to his property in Ireland. Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Glamorgan, with power over the see of Llandaff and other privileges, and enormous force at his command, was able to entertain the King in impressive style, when Edward passed through Glamorgan on his Royal Progress in 1284. After divorcing his wife, Gloucester married Joan Plantagenet, the King's daughter, but was forced to surrender all his lands to the King on his marriage and only received part of them back. Brecknock was not included in this settlement to Gloucester and, after the siege of Dryslwyn, the land at Brecknock remained in dispute.

Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, was married to Elizabeth, second daughter of Edward I. He was not as powerful as Gloucester and, although he had held this land for some years, was now in danger of losing the southern strip to Gloucester. Hereford was also defending his territory against John Giffard, who had held Builth and Llandovery and the March of Iscennen which bordered Hereford's lands. Hereford felt especially slighted over this, since, as he had conquered the Fychans of Dynevor, he ought to have received Iscennen years before. In 1284 it was granted to Giffard. With Giffard and Gloucester harrying him on both borders, Hereford felt particularly hard done by, since it had been Gloucester who had been sent for to quell the riot in Brecknock just before the siege of Dryslwyn at a time when Hereford, the owner, had been absent.

Gloucester had carried out the programme of tree-felling and road-clearance for the army, which had opened up the borders with Giffard and Gloucester's land. This and the fact that, when the siege was over, Hereford had been given command of Carmarthenshire, and had put down the risings in Iscennen, which was then awarded to Giffard, meant that there was a very uncertain state of affairs, and war was brewing between Hereford and Gloucester about their Glamorgan boundaries. The King was determined to put a stop to this.

A trial was ordered under Robert de Tibetot on 12 March 1291. Hereford attended, but Gloucester did not. The case proceeded without the presence of a number of Marcher Lords who had had writs to appear.

Later that year the King was at Amesbury and gave out that he and the Council of archbishops, bishops, earls, barons and others, would take the case to Abergavenny at Michaelmas. Hereford appeared - the former trial had

gone in his favour, but now there were new facts, for Hereford had in the meantime taken the law into his own hands by carrying out raids, implying that the law and the King were so weak that he had to protect himself, instead of going to law. The King found this unforgivable. Hereford was imprisoned and all his lands confiscated.

A number of nobles came forward immediately to offer themselves for bail: Reginald de Grey, Robert de Tibetot, Robert Fitzwalter and Walter Beauchamp acted for Hereford; Edmund, William de Valence, the Earl of Lincoln and John Hastings acted for Gloucester.

As Gloucester had married Joan, the King's daughter, and part of the marriage settlement included the ruling that they owned their lands jointly but only for life, the Council decided that Gloucester should again be put in prison and Joan should retain the lands. The same arrangement was made for Hereford. The two Earls were released to their lands in July. Gloucester lived only another three and a half years, but Hereford lived on. Edward's tough policy with the Marcher Lords continued and in 1292 he started to tax them, beginning a policy of crushing the Marchers' privileges, which continued until his death.

It is interesting to see in the "Subsidy of 1292" both the taxors and jurors for Dryslwyn named. Meanwhile the King was busy raising an army for Gascony, while the trouble was brewing in Wales. This was the year that Rhys was finally put to death.

Eventually Rhys was betrayed by his own men in the woods of Mallaen. These traitors, the four sons of Madog ab Arawdr, who had formerly been men of the Lord of Dynevor, Rhys Wyndod, until he was received into the King's peace in 1277, had never had any deep affection for Rhys ap Maredudd. Their names were Trahern, Hywel, Rhys Cethyn and the eldest Madog Vaughan. Madog ap Arawdr was given Cilsan in Catheiniog as a reward, having inherited the bedelry and bailiwick of Mallaen, official posts, from his father.

Tibetot triumphantly sent Rhys in chains to Edward I, who was on his way to Scotland. At York, on 2 June 1292, Rhys was convicted of murder, arson, theft and the destruction of Royal castles. The sentence of hanging and drawing was carried out the very same day and his lifeless body was left hanging on the gibbet at Knaresmire for three days and three nights, before being cut down.

Rhys's son, who must have been a small boy, was arrested later and by 2 January 1297, was a prisoner in Bristol castle, where he stayed for forty years. Rhys's wife, Ada, was allowed to hold her own lands, being the sister of John Hastings, Lord of Abergavenny.

The rebellion of Rhys in 1287 brought into the county of Carmarthen the six commotes of Cantref Mawr, up till then independent and under Rhys ap Maredudd as Lord of Dryslwyn.

Thus fell the last Welsh Castle to the English. Suffice it to say perhaps, that we must ensure that our bards today will be able to recount a chapter of peace in modern times, to replace the appalling bloodshed of the past.



## CHAPTER TWO

### **After the siege:**

### **The Town and Settlement of Dryslwyn Castle under the English**

*It is clear that the castle was a focal point in the development of South Wales at this time*

The earliest detailed minister's accounts for the county of Carmarthen are at the end of Edward I's reign. They consist of three portions, the third being the six commotes of Cantref Mawr - Mabelfyw, Mabudrud, Cao, Catheiniog, Mallaen and Maenordeilo, which, after the fall of Dryslwyn castle, were all granted to Alan de Plukenet, who was responsible for their revenue. Though a Lordship and stewardship of their own, they were ultimately dependent on Carmarthen and the Royal Justiciar, but they had their own steward and beadle. The word Drusselan (Droslan) first appears as a borough (17 Edward II - Rot Chart no 21). Some confusion arose between Drosselan and Rhuddlan, as when someone wrote in the 'Customal of Hereford' referring to the reign of Henry II the words 'the city of Drusselane' in mistake for Rhuthlan (Rhuddlan).

Dryslwyn was never incorporated into a borough in the Middle Ages, its burgesses always being treated separately. As the centre of a Welsh Lordship under Rhys ap Maredudd, Edward I had allowed an annual fair at Dryslwyn in the small settlement at the foot of the castle, and the tenants held 'messuages and curtilages' on the land below the castle. This was in a charter of 1278. The annual fair was held on St Barthowomew's Day (August 24th) up to the year 1324, when Edward II gave the grant of a weekly market, every Saturday.

Confirmation charters were made in 1355 and 1391 in Richard II's reign, when additional letters patent assured the English burgesses equal immunity from certain legal customs/oaths of Welshmen, as the Englishmen of Dynevor, Carmarthen and other English boroughs in Wales enjoyed. The last Dryslwyn charter is a confirmation of this immunity and is dated 1444. The commercial privileges of the townsmen meant that the burgesses were quit from toll, murage, pontage and pavage throughout the realm.

After 1287 a deliberate policy was pursued by the English. This was established in 1291 when thirty-seven new burgages were deliberately created as a new urban settlement in Dryslwyn, free tenants who formed an aristocratic urban group, inaugurated by Robert de Tibetot, based upon the settlement of 'foreign burgesses'. This was confirmed by Edward I on 27 April 1294. It comprised fifty-seven and a half acres of demesne land as well as eighty-six and a quarter acres of Welsh land. The former land was the land cultivated by the old tenants and the Welsh land belonged to the free Welsh; both were given to the new burgesses.

The burgages were in part surrounded by walls with the remainder in the street beyond the town walls called Bridge Street. The new burgesses were not local men and only four came from other parts of Wales. Ralph le Blunt received a great deal more than anyone else and became constable of Dryslwyn in 1298 (he came from Belton in Rutland). These men were appointed as part of a deliberate policy to attract immigrants and they were lured by economic and administrative privileges to come west. They were treated as a superior group to the local tenants to whom such privileges did not apply: for instance they were charged rent at a different rate and tried by a different court, the "Court of Alltygaer". The constable of the castle presided over the town courts and the stewards (appointed for holding courts leet, enforcing judgements and collecting taxes) held their courts locally, either in the public house (originally named the 'Castle', but now just three derelict cottages being restored in the village), or in the house called Ty Castel, on the northern slope of the castle.

It is most interesting to read about life in the castle after the siege and the financial aspect. A large part of the money that England found to finance the siege came from Italian merchant banks viz: Francisco Bandini, a merchant of the Ricciardi of Lucca, alone lent Edmund (the Regent) £1,000. The Northern force cost more, £3,250, and the Brecon force £3,875. The Bank of Lucca was still helping out after the siege and Alan de Plukenet received funds for the rebuilding and victualling of Dryslwyn. In spite of this regular sum coming in from Lucca by way of Bristol and Carmarthen from Lucca, Alan de Plukenet was raising funds selling off all he could from Rhys's land and property.

Indeed the constable of Dryslwyn had a great many uses for money at this time. The first things we hear about in 1287 are bows and quarrels being sent down to the castle from the Tower of London, by order of the King. "18

bows, 12 of wood and 6 of horn, of which 6, 2 shall be at a yard, 2 at 2 feet and the remaining 2 at 1 foot, and 2,000 quarrels for the yard crossbows to protect the said castle.” Cattle, hay, apples, nuts and ox-hides were found, left behind by Rhys in his hasty departure, and these were sold, together with pigs and other sundries. The sheriff of Gloucester, the sheriff of Somerset and the sheriff of Wiltshire had all sent money to contribute towards such expenses.

Alan de Plukenet’s salary expenses were certainly formidable. He employed 2 knights, 11 squires, 1 receiver and other sergeants with barded horses and one esquire with an unbarded horse, bowmen and tunies and archers with their captain. As Rhys was still at large, scouts were sent out to explore and take him, while at night 5 watchmen were set up on the battlements. Men were set to work around the castle to cut down the woods and, elsewhere around the town, to repair the ditches. Others were set to clean the castle and break the rock at the entrance to the castle.

Goods sent up to Carmarthen by boat included thread, feathers and glue, for the repair of the crossbows and their quarrels and other arms. The portage of the arms from the boat to the land and their carriage from Carmarthen to Dryslwyn had to be paid for, together with two mares and a colt, bought for “Our Sovereign Lord the King's stud”. Iron and steel, a brass pot, a cauldron, casks, barrels, tins and other utensils were brought, two boats and wheelbarrows being also purchased for the works. £300 of silver was sent from London to Bristol and thence to Dryslwyn. One bakehouse and another in the castle store house were constructed anew for grain, while there was the mending and making of fences for the fair.

These were just some of the immediate expenses incurred, John the Chaplain being the receiver for this first year. It builds up into a fascinating social picture of the day; he had to pay the wages of 4 sergeants, 20 crossbowmen, 30 archers and 1 captain, as well as those of 3 porters, 5 watchmen and 6 workmen doing divers repairs in the castle. Simon the mason, with John de Harry and Edward Bishop assisting him, together with contract workers both within the castle and outside, cutting the forest, keeping the King’s stud and making the necessary enclosures, to keep the horses in at night, all of these needed of course to be paid for, including the parchment which had been found necessary.

They lost 300 quarrels in one battle on the bridge at Llandeilo, and 200 quarrels defending the castle against a sudden attack from the district of Mallaen, and yet another 200 defending the passes towards Carmarthen, so that they only had but 1300 remaining. Thus 6 pairs of trappings were bought and 8 haquetons, 18 basinets, 1 iron helmet and 2 darts. Of these 1 crossbow was taken by Richard de Bolisor, who also took 1 haqueton with him when he left, about Easter time, without licence, never to be returned. The essential things of life were certainly somewhat different in those times!

A silver cup with pedastal stand and gold cover, found in the district below the castle. Could this have been the silver gilt cup with pedestal and cover valued at £5 6s 8d, given by Edward I, in February 1287 to Agnes, wife of John Pennard, who had been killed when the chapel wall was undermined and fell, smothering all those English knights - including the great William de Montchesney himself.

Then it is surely of social/historical interest to know what they ate; for instance when the besiegers entered the castle they found in the store: 'a quarter of poor wheat, 2 ½ quarters of oatmeal and one tun of salt. along with 60 quarters of wheat and 3 quarters of flour, 3 quarters of best malt and 6 quarters of coarse malt, with 2 pipes of honey and 11 tuns of wine, and 8 quarters of meal in two casks.'

Back then to the few surviving references to the general administration of Dryslwyn:

On John Pennard's death, John Havering his deputy took his place. The Exchequer accounts record a sequence of cash payments for masons, quarriers, smiths and ballistarii (those who set off the ballistic missiles!)

1. To John Havering at Dryslwyn on August 28th Thursday.
2. To John de Beviliard's clerk on August 30th Saturday. (Pennard is spelt variously Bevilard, Beuilard, Pennardd).
3. To William de Grandison at Dryslwyn on September 4th Thursday.
4. Mention of John Havering at Carmarthen on September 13th Saturday. Later in the Exchequer accounts for Dryslwyn in 1313, we find John Havering's office mentioned in the castle of Dryslwyn.
5. A £50 payment was made to Alice, Havering's wife, on 28th August and 13th September 1287.

The major operation of repairing the damage done to the castle wall by the fall during the undermining assault was effected at the cost of £300.

The lord of the manor of Dryslwyn derived considerable profits from the local water-mill, gardens, meadows, fishery and the celebrated “Park of Dryslwyn”, all of which belonged to his lordship. A lord's castle was like a fortified court house, to which tribute was paid by the serf village, the water-mill demesnes, forests and so on - and the chapels attached to almost all administrative units. The system of payments now continued in Dryslwyn under the Crown. These included the profits of the mill of Dulas, near the castle, and rent of a certain part of the mill of Brechfa which came into the King's hands in 1289, as also the mill of Cilsan which returned to the King on the death of Madoc ap Arawdr, who had been rewarded with the mill on the betrayal of Rhys by his four sons. Alan de Plukenet had to rebuild a new mill at Dulas at the cost of £109; several carpenters, smiths, colliers and others were required for this in 1289.

In 1288 Edward sent the Prior of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England to the Marches and to Wales, to survey the state of the castles there and other matters concerning the king's business. The accounts for that year (1287-88) show that rents came to £15 9 0. and one named Grono ap Ieuan was allowed to pay his rent as 6 pairs of shoes plus 1s. Indeed later in the 19th century Llangathen became well known for its shoemakers.

Profits from the land in one period came to £31 18s 6d, which included the price of 7 bulls, 14 oxen, 12 calf hides and 7 hides of mares and cobs of the King's stud, dying through murrain (foot and mouth disease today) £32 9 7d. from pleas and perquisites. The total annual sum was £1022 5s 11d.

Expenses of Sir Alan and his household came to £364 for the year 1287-8. Sergeants with barded horses required £502 7s and Llewelin ap Philip with his unbarded horse cost £38s 6d. Crossbowmen came to £131 9s 2d and archers a total of £41 7s.

The account for the year 1289-90 is fuller, although the strength of the garrison was reduced, and Sir Alan himself went twice to court and left the castle in the hands of a Welshman Philip ap Howel ap Meyrick in 1290. Sir Alan had reduced the size of his garrison in 1289 and he handed over the constableness in 1290. Tibetot was to take charge of all the castles of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire later in 1290. The cost of the garrison of

Dryslwyn after capture had been enormous - £1,936 and Alan de Plukenet had a lot of rebuilding to do. He had accounted directly to Westminster for the estates of Rhys ap Maredudd until 16th February 1290; when he left he took his chaplain John de Ceresie with him. John had possibly originated from Normandy from the abbey of Ceresy la Foret.

Ralph le Blunt who was constable of Dynevor in 1287-88 moved to Dryslwyn, where he became chief burgess in 1294 and later constable of Dryslwyn; we are witnessing at Dryslwyn a complete change of regime. During Alan de Plukenet's constableness, things had settled down and, in 1290, when he left, Robert de Tibetot was granted the custody of the estates of Rhys ap Maredudd, with John Giffard of Brynamman's field as constable at Dynevor under Robert de Tibetot as Justiciar.

Around Dryslwyn the old families were becoming established in Llangathen, though many had been there for generations. Goronwy Goch lived in a house named Glanlash today, formerly called Lanlash, on the side of Grongar near the present A40.

Llywelyn Foethus (the luxurious) lived in a house below the churchyard in Llangathen, then called Porthwrydd, now known as Berllandywyll, and on the site slightly higher than the original house, which was across the road. There is a chapel in the present church called after Berllandywyll, but originally named after Llewelyn Foethus, who lived in the first half of the 14th century. He traced his ancestry back to one Elystan Glodrudd, eight generations before, one who ruled the land between the Wye and the Severn. Llewelyn Foethus had a son Gruffydd who was constable in Maenordeilo from 1355-58. Gruffydd had two sons, Rhys and Ieuan, and two daughters, Jenet and Janet. Jenet married Nicholas ap Philip. They were the great-grandparents of Sir Rhys ap Thomas KG of Dynevor.

Gruffydd's eldest son Rhys, like his father, held Crown appointments, but during the rising of Owain Glyndwr, the younger son joined the Welsh side, with the result that his lands were forfeited to the Crown and given to his brother Rhys, who remained loyal to the Crown. Further offices were showered on him - sheriff of Carmarthen in 1400, and Constable of Dryslwyn castle and Forester of Glyncothi and Pennant in 1402. However Rhys himself let Owain Glyndwr into Dryslwyn castle in 1403 and for this was declared outlaw. Later his lands were restored to him in 1409 and also the constableness of Catheiniog and Maenordeilo.

This is just one example of how old families participated fully in the new Norman administrative regime. Families belonged to the area, who took a leading role in affairs of both state and local government.

In contrast, in 1294-95 a general revolt broke out in almost all parts of Wales, caused by numerous civil duties being imposed on the people. One especially which brought anger to the Welsh was when the King claimed all land left by the holder on death (particularly if the man had risen in the revolt or had left no heirs eg during the Black Death in 1349, 1350, 1360 and 1369, whereby common land was increasing at an alarming rate. The 1294-95 uprising had many causes and was the fore-runner to that of Owain Glyndwr from 1400-15. The revolt took place when the French wars had depleted many garrisons in Wales. Robert de Tibetot was one of those called to the wars in Gascony; he returned in 1298 and died the same year, having just taken up his old position as Justiciar of South Wales.

Alan de Plukenet was one of those strong supporters of the Crown left behind to control the newly conquered land, and also to keep the peace between quarelling factions around them, viz: Marchers who otherwise could become too overbearing. Meanwhile, men who were fighting with the King, both in France and later in Scotland, had their retinues increased, men such as Hugh le Despenser for instance, whose retinue had been increased to 57 lances in 1297.

We have already seen that at Dryslwyn in 1294, new burgesses had been created and the King's land shared out between them, while the castle itself was much strengthened after it became a Royal castle. A stone keep, was found, three-floored, with an inner ward, a middle ward and an outer one lower down the slope of the hill. The wards were surrounded by walls and in most places also by ditches. The gatehouse is barely visible today. This was Mr Webster's phase 2 period, when he stated that extensive building and rebuilding were carried out. Minister's accounts, transcribed by Dr E.A.Lewis in MS 455D, describe this building work in great detail - all quite fascinating.

There was a new bakehouse and granary built in 1306; in 1313, 1315, and 1316, work continued with repairs to houses, walls, towers and other buildings within the castle. I found some entries especially intriguing, amusing little details explained. For instance in 1306 the description of the guttering round the stable, and the guttering of a new office for John Havering (Justiciar for North and South Wales). Simon of Ibernia, the mason,

made a gutter from the said office, but directed it through the middle of the wall, because it would damage the castle's new bakehouse; instead Simon made an aperture in the castle wall near the stable to clean the court of the castle. There were the usual problems, such as repairs to the windows under the hall in the cellar, where all the garniture and victuals were stored, for which sand, lime and iron were bought, but the cellar walls were just white-washed.

Quantities in those days of course appear the same, but it all took much longer! One hundred shingles of wood were made in the forest of Concarno by Geoffrey, the carpenter, and carried to the castle; he used it as covering for John Havering's office. It took him 6 days to make the door for the 'handering' hall: 7 days to repair the roof of the stable. He then repaired the planks in the middle storey of the High Tower, but the planks of the Hall of the said castle took 4 days; 2 large hammers were bought for breaking the rock, other necessities in the quarry, including 4 wedges, 1 crow and pickaxes. The chest for holding the chapel ornaments had of course to be bound in iron.

Further details of this building work conjure up memories of the minutiae of ironmongery, all in their rows of little boxes of scales of measurement long since defunct and a real toil of caterers, builders and gardeners!

### *The Granary*

The measurements of each piece of wood - the numbers of nails and their different lengths and types, the (monotonous) breaking of stone quantities in the quarry and their transport to the castle are all faithfully recorded. A pit, 8 feet deep and 5 perches round was dug for the foundations of this granary and then the lime had to be burnt for use as mortar. The foundations of the granary being finished, then must be made flush for 8 buttresses of iron to be set in ladders bought to help with the erection and 2 pairs of hinges with fastenings to fix the door and 2 locks, with nails and rings. The carpenter was hard at work and then the roofer named Adam Scot had to obtain the various slates and their fixings. When the granary was complete, the new bakehouse alongside required a step from the granary house, the cost of the vast granary was just £10 1s 5½d.



### *The Bakehouse*

They had to first dig the pit for the foundations and then break the stones for the walls, and carry the lime to the foot of the castle to be burnt. Simon Ibernica now had to break the wall of the castle near the bakehouse in order to place wall plates thereon, having of course, first made it even and level with the new wall of the said castle. Boards are now bought as centres for the arch over the well with 2 doors and 6 windows in the said castle, plus 4 hinges together with fastenings for 2 doors and iron for the 6 windows in the wall - and also locks. There were two carpenters with six assistants. The roofer now places in position 9 cartloads of slates from the quarry in Carmarthen. In fact it took two men 16 days to break enough rock for the bakehouse and another 4 days to plaster a certain wall over the oven in the bakehouse.

1314

The Chamberlain of South Wales was sent to survey the castle of 'Rosselan' and the dead garniture in it and to provide the castle with garniture (ornamental appendages!) victuals and armour as affirmed by Thomas le Blunt constable.

In August the same year an order was sent by Edward II to the chamberlain to repair the houses, walls, towers and other buildings within the castle of Dryslwyn. Up to 20 marks was given to Thomas le Blunt for the work. (a mark being an old English coin worth 13s 4d;)

1316

The work continued. Repairs to houses and other buildings. Thomas le Blunt does now ask, however, for an allowance for those men at arms kept by him - above the usual number, on account of recent disturbances in certain parts of Wales. The characters of several of the men concerned also show through. Thomas le Blunt was an active man who had a liking for the castle in his charge, and went to King's Langley in Hertfordshire to request the allowance, which King Edward appears to have readily granted. This was even while the King was burying the headless body of his friend, the wretched Piers Gaveston. During these three years, there was a terrible famine, and it was prohibited to brew beer on pain of death, because the corn

seed was needed for making bread. We were to see much the same problem in nearby Dynevor.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **Constables of Dryslwyn Castle**

*Constables. Continuing repairs to the castle. Welsh landed families become established*

The constables changed fairly regularly until Thomas le Blunt became constable in 1312-18. Two notable constables before him were firstly William de Brebelschete, who was appointed by the Justiciar and also held Dryslwyn mill with Sir William de Roshale in 1307-08, and secondly John Giffard le Rych of Brynamansfield, whose family had many connections with the area during the previous century.

One could go fully into details about many of these men, but the picture of Dryslwyn, conjured up by the description of rents roles and court details are probably are more amusing. Court rolls, such as an account of Edith de Wernnie complaining about Elen the dressmaker, or Robyn who shed the blood of John the chaplain, makes one wonder about causes behind it all. Why was a fine of 2s. 2d. paid by Lucas the carpenter? Did “Nothing from the garden this year because there were no apples”, refer to the only saleable item in the castle garden and was it said in criticism, shame, or plain sorrow?

But first the background saga of the country in general.

In 1307 King Edward I died leading an army on his way to Scotland. His son Edward II was a young man of very different character, then aged 23, young and 'gay', extravagant and pleasure seeking. One of his friends, Piers Gaveston, was particularly close to Edward, but a homosexual and the barons were not prepared to show any patience for a King who could not stand alone.

Edward gave Gaveston the earldom of Cornwall, which was only intended for royalty, and married him to his own niece, Margaret de Clare, at the same time making him Lord Chamberlain. When young Edward himself went abroad to marry Princess Isabella of France, he made Piers Gaveston Regent in his absence. On his return the barons insisted Gaveston be sent abroad, whereupon he made him Governor of Ireland, a position Gaveston handled

well. However poor Edward felt that he could not live without him and ordered him to return home, in fact his death-knell as we have already heard.

What should we make of another instance in 1309? The Court in 1309, was at York in October and from this city the King ordered Roger de Mortuo Mari (Mortimer), Justiciar of north and south Wales, to deliver to him the King's yeoman, John Giffard of Brynamans field (the King's demesne there with the “mills fisheries and other appurtenances”, which the King had granted to him to hold at His Majesty's pleasure at the rent heretofore paid by other “fermors”). Roger was asked to say whether or not this was injurious to him.

Under Thomas le Blunt work continued in Dryslwyn with repairs to houses, walls, towers and other buildings during the years 1313, 1315 and 1316. We also read of the survey that the Chamberlain was ordered to make of the castle in 1314, and his subsequent order for more funds for the interminable repairs to be continued. Later in 1316, Thomas le Blunt is asked for a stronger garrison to defend himself against local disturbances; he had needed assistance to obtain entry to Dryslwyn castle in 1312, the year that Piers Gaveston was beheaded. This order for assistance to Thomas le Blunt including 60 quarters of wheat, 20 carcasses of oxen, 30 bacon pigs, 10 tuns of wine, 3 barrels of honey, 60 quarters of charcoal, 400 pieces of iron and 20 quarters of salt.

But this period 1314-16 was one of famine, and administrative changes were again considered requisite. In 1317 the King's new favourite, *Hugh Le Despenser*, was granted the castle of Dryslwyn for life, and the “Cantref Mawr in Wales with the knight's fees, advowsons and other appurtenances”. Thus the King at this time ordered Thomas le Blunt to deliver the custody of the castle to Hugh and his “minister”, and to administer the castle town and cantref as seemed good to them; “to remove himself (poor Thomas now) and his ministers wholly therefrom, and not to intermeddle further in the same and to deliver to Hugh and his ministers any issues therefrom levied by him; to release all those he has imprisoned in this connection and to discharge their mainprise” (a writ for sureties).

Roger Mortimer was no more pleased with this order than Thomas le Blunt. Walter de Fulbourne, who had been chamberlain of Chester and was to become chamberlain of South Wales, also opposed Hugh being foisted on the Welsh and had no intention of welcoming him with open arms. He hindered

his ministers and prevented them from receiving the issues taxes and rent, and extorted issues by distraint from men and tenants of the castle. Some he arrested and imprisoned until they gave him security not to answer to Hugh or his ministers for the issues.

In 1317 the same order was issued to Edmund Hackelut by the King. He was ordered, as constable of Dynevor, to hand over office to Hugh le Despenser the Younger. In return, Hackelut was to receive 50 marks a year for life.

But even faster change was in the air; in 1318 (originalia Roll 12 Edward II m3) Dryslwyn was granted to Giles de Bello Campo (signed by the King at Clieston) with orders to Hugh to deliver up also the castle of Dynevor. The order was repeated by the king on September 15th. On November 21st at York, the King ordered Giles de Bello Campo to deliver the said castle to Hugh le Despenser. The King also wrote to Roger Mortimer of Chirk, Justice of Wales to deliver the castle and town of Dynevor.

On 10 January 1319, pardon was granted at the request of Hugh le Despenser the Younger to the good men of Droslan and Newton and to the knights and good men and the commonality of Cantref Mawr in Wales, respecting the 15th of their goods lately granted for subsidy for war in Scotland - clearly a bribe from Hugh to the local people.

Hugh le Despenser had married the eldest of the Earl of Gloucester's three daughters. When the Earl died, his Countess Matilda feigned pregnancy, but when no heir was forthcoming a great argument broke out between the heirs of Gloucester. It was Hugh le Despenser's ambition to hold the position in Wales that the Earl had held. Margaret, the second daughter, had married Piers Gaveston and after his death, Hugh D'Audley. The youngest was married to Roger Damory who was well in Royal favour.

The partition of land duly took place in 1317, on November 15th. Despenser obtained the lordship of Glamorgan, which included the castles of Llanblethian, Kenfig, Neath, Llantrisant, Caerphilly and Whitchurch as well as the towns, manors and other appurtenances which were situated round the castles together with a great acreage of land in various districts to the total value of £1,319 6s 9d, estimated annually. The total grants to Despenser in Glamorgan alone reached £1,936 15s.

No sooner had the partitioning been completed than the three husbands started intriguing against each other. As Chamberlain to the King, Despenser was in a powerful position to gain the King's ear and he cultivated the King's

affection; he used this affection to deprive his brothers-in-law of their inheritance and went on to deprive the Marcher Lords of their privileges. He had become a threat.

Civil War broke out in 1321-22. Le Despenser had enemies everywhere. John Giffard of the neighbouring Cantref Bychan came to blows with him, while disputes broke out in various parts of Wales, all his castles being taken with very little resistance, as the constables did not defend them. Dryslwyn and Dynevor were taken and the whole land of Cantref Mawr was taken into the King's hands by the Justices of Wales. Once the castles had been taken, raiders plundered the surrounding countryside for five days, removing everything they could, plundering and pillaging.

Constant change in the leadership of Dryslwyn remained the order of the day. The King ordered Walter de Bello Campo to take charge of Dryslwyn in 1321. That was altered on May 7th 1322 by an order to deliver Dryslwyn to le Despenser. On May 8th Dryslwyn was entered and destroyed by the enemies of Hugh le Despenser. By July the emergency was over. Considerable sums were again spent on repair to the castle when le Despenser fell in 1326. After the death of Edward II in Berkeley castle in 1327, Edward III came to the throne at the age of 14. He did not begin to rule for 4 years. Mortimer and Queen Isabella the Queen mother acted on his behalf.

Meanwhile life at Dryslwyn seemed to have settled down. In 1324 Edward II had confirmed the grant of a weekly market at Dryslwyn on Saturdays, and the inhabitants were quit tolls, murage, pontage on all their goods throughout the realm. There are incidents recorded at this time as in 1326 when Joan de Bohun, daughter and heiress of Alan de Plukenet, was charged with receiving money which had already been awarded to Alan for repairs. They had to check that he had not received the money twice! Again in 1327 Arabella, wife of John de Clare, was forcibly carried away from the castle of Dryslwyn to Carmarthen and Kidwelly - just another provocative statement with no indication of the story behind it.

In 1328 we find Richard Pembridge, a Herefordshire gentleman, who had successfully lived down his anti-Royalist feeling in 1321-22 and become a trusted member of local society, finally vacating "our Castle of Dryslwyn with appurtenances in Wales, together with our town of Dryslwyn, desmesne lands, mills, meadows, pastures, fisheries and rents with appurtenances in the

said town and in our wood which is called 'Le Parkes' to have and to hold for life of the said Richard. With rent at £14. The castle was now granted to Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd I (1283-1356)

Sir Rhys we find was described as Edward II's "trusty squire", whose liberty was as "regal in scope as that of any other Welsh baron after the conquest". Deputy Justiciar of South Wales in 1321-22, he owned amongst other properties and estates Abermarlais, near Llandovery. A man of ancient lineage he inherited a great deal and added to it both to it by marriage to the heiress Joan de Somerville and through his own effort. He supported le Despenser, and was ordered by Edward II to raise men at arms to put down the rising of Llywellyn Bren in 1316. He commanded 1,200 men. His life makes interesting reading. In 1330 he was made constable of Dryslwyn, although his duties constantly called him away. By 1330 he was a knight of the Royal Household. In 1343, when the King granted the lordship of Dryslwyn to the Black Prince, Sir Rhys was confirmed as constable of Dryslwyn until his death in 1356, when Gilbert de Felfersham took over.

Sir Rhys was fully involved in state affairs and because of his support of the Despensers in 1322 he became deputy royal Justice of South Wales. At the death of Edward II in 1327, Sir Rhys was deeply involved in the crisis. He fled soon after the death of Hugh le Despenser, the younger, firstly to Scotland and by 1330 abroad, because he had tried to unseat the Queen and Mortimer, the regents. He was however recalled by Edward III and given the constablership of Dryslwyn and gradually his offices were restored to him. Then Thomas ap Gruffydd ap Nicholas married Elizabeth (daughter of his son John) to become the parents of the great Sir Rhys ap Thomas, whose son Sir Rhys the younger succeeded him.

During Sir Rhys's constablership another round of extensive repairs was carried out at the castle. By 1338-39 one wing of the castle had completely deteriorated through old age and fallen to the ground, including the eastern side of the King's hall, and the top of the collateral wall of the Hall under the wall plates, together with various other walls, towers, turrets without and within the castle; all needed pointing and repairing.

The workmen took ten weeks on this work. They also built a new doorway arch, into the King's Hall (which I was uncovering on the first years' dig) and a new window in the hall. The second dig uncovered more of this "cellar" which is said to be as big as any. The builders also repaired one wing on the

western side of the hall, not only mending it, but fixing several large stones called corbels under the gutters and wall plates into the collateral wall of the Hall. The new window was made with 'free stones'. A considerable part of the large tower in the Inner Keep of the castle had to be repaired and restored, as were the walls again both within and without the castle. New large joists were cut from the forest of Gluncothi to repair the roof and its tiling with slates from the quarry.

During the first year of Mr Webster's investigations (1980), quantities of nails were found and in 1981 many more, confirming those invoices of the vast numbers required. In addition the slates were all lying there to be dug out by the excavators. William the tiler put all these up. The bakehouse and kitchen and other houses had also now to be repaired, while the plumber was melting and casting the lead to repair the gutters.

From 1343 the Black Prince's responsibility included the rebuilding of the wall around the inner bailey and the restoration of the "Great Tower", that is the tower at the end of the Hall in the middle of the castle, the tower called *Appeltour* (E168/4/42).

The 1353 offer of Dryslwyn to Rhys ap Gruffydd for life was again only on condition that he made himself responsible for the repairs. He died three years later, but the Chamberlain spent £25 and £39 on repairs. During the latter half of the 14th-century the "Great Pestilence" - the Black Death - swept the country. In the summer of 1339 it reached West Wales, possibly coming by sea, and spreading through Carmarthen, Cardigan and Cantref Mawr. Many of the inhabitants of Cantref Mawr fled or died their rents being lost and their tenements laid vacant for many years. The office of Escheator for South Wales was specially created to deal with this; trade was seriously affected and there were no fairs nor receipts from mills and fisheries, while market tolls showed heavy losses. It died down in the autumn, but was to break out again in 1361 and 1369, so that by 1409 about a third of the burgages were still vacant due to the pestilence.

The economic strain on the Welsh was severe and the fact that so much property became common land due to death in the period only added to their taxes; although survivors were encouraged to buy the plots. The whole tribal system in Wales was fast breaking down and the conflicts between Welsh and English law were driving the population to breaking point. The Welsh felt themselves to be thoroughly exploited by the English, while the English



petitioned to be protected from the Welsh. There was bitter distrust and resentment particularly over the great monetary burden which the communities were expected to bear, as well as the burgeoning administration, close supervision and public duties also expected of them.

By the beginning of the 15th century, local administration in South Wales had reached its last major stage of development. The constable gradually lost his importance and shed duties, as the bailiffs widened theirs. This illustrated the power shift in the commotes, for instance in Cantref Mawr the reeves had long since vanished, each commote being administered at this level by a beadle acting alone. His duties, both financial and judicial, were equivalent to two offices further north.

It seems almost unbelievable that, in this period of unhappiness and unrest in the second half of the 14th century, there should have been a Welsh literary revival. The bards must have irritated Edward I with their predictions and prophecies, for he is reported to have massacred the Welsh bards of Anglesey and at another time to have dug up the graves of Arthur and Guinevere at Glastonbury, to quell the rumours of their return. Perhaps it is at times of stress that one can expect poetic inspiration to blossom; certainly it seems many were aroused from their lethargy to a lively awareness of things aesthetic rather than material. Prophecy was common, Owain Glyndwr being one of those who inspired it.

Our special area was particularly well-blessed, several famous poets living locally in Cantref Mawr and the vale of Cothi, while the Laws of Hywel Dda gave bards a prominent position at Court. The Lord Rhys had held the first known Eisteddfod of Wales in Cardiganshire as early as 1176, to be revived by a later house of Dynevor under Gruffydd ap Nicholas in 15th century Carmarthen (1451), where Tudor Aled was to figure prominently.

In the old days the bards would sing the praises of their local prince, but by now they were sounding a more popular note and it is from them, for instance, we learn so much of contemporary life in Sir Rhys ap Thomas's time. The popular mode brought a less strict bardic metre with it, and since it was no longer necessary to praise the warlike attribute of their lord, the themes changed and became more pastoral. Love and nature were becoming the themes of the troubadours, while in Wales a more lyrical quality also prevailed.

The constables did not fire the imagination of the poets as the old lords had done. The new movement was led by Dafydd ap Gwilym (1340-80), to reach its peak at the end of the 15th century. It seemed that prophecy was being fulfilled when the Welsh Tudors came to the throne, leading many Welsh families to leave for England, taking with them Welsh musicians, some of whom were to reach as far as the Tudor court.

The Welsh literary revival came along hand in hand with the rise of the indigenous Welsh gentry, Gruffydd ap Nicholas being a key figure in the Dryslwyn and Dynevor area. His ancestry was traced back by the Elizabethan antiquary Lewis Dwnn to Goronwy ab Eion, ancient Lord of Iscennen and Kidwelly. His grandfather, Philip ap Elidir Ddu (Knight of the Holy Sepulchre) had been one of the attorneys deputed by Gilbert Talbot in 1362 to deliver Carreg Cennen to John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. He entered the Duke's service in high rank, in 1386-87 receiving £50 from him, and the following year 100 marks - about £600.

But now we should complete the list of the constables of Dryslwyn during our period with a few notes about them.

In 1374 William Houghton was appointed constable of Dryslwyn castle. He was again ordered to repair Dryslwyn castle, this time because there were rumours of a French invasion of Wales, a fear of which his predecessor Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd II had been also aware. In 1359, while the Black Prince was abroad, he had been ordered to put two watchmen on the walls of Dryslwyn at night. Now in 1380 William de Bradewardyne came as a young man to help the ageing William Houghton, who died the following year. In 1399, the castle now belonging to the Younger Despenser, was seized.

Richard II died the same year. He had started his reign with the goodwill of the people, but later lost it through his own imprudent actions. It was an extraordinary time in England, for Henry Bolingbroke, the son of one of Richard's uncles (John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster), though having no strict hereditary right to rule, was acknowledged King by Parliament.

Now William de Bradewardyne took over as constable of Dryslwyn under the Earl of Gloucester. He had been surgeon to Richard II and served in his household, and was later to become esquire to Prince Henry and his surgeon, and lead a distinguished career with various other appointments. In 1423, for instance, he was to become Marshall of Marshalsea prison.

In 1402 Rhys ap Gruffydd ap Llywellyn Foethus became constable; it was he who let Owain Glyndwr into Dryslwyn. There is no account of the siege nor of the recapture of Dryslwyn, and it disappears from the annals in 1403. It must be assumed that Glyndwr burnt it to the ground, just as he fired many castles on his retreat in 1405, so that they could never again be used as garrisons against him.

### **Constables of Dryslwyn Castle**

1281 Goronwy Goch (later one of the 3 foresters of Glyn Cothi and Lord of Llangathen)

1287 Alan de Plukenet (1287-1291).

(Deputy 1290 Philip ab Owen ap Meurig under Robert de Tibetot)

1298 Sir Ralph le Blunt

1301 Gererd del Espiney

1303 William de Rogate

1307 William de Brebelschete

1308 Sir Thomas de Roshale

1309 John Giffard le Rych of Brynamansfield

1312 Thomas le Blunt

1318 Sir Giles de Beauchamp

Sir Giles de Bello Campo (senescal of Cantref Mawr)

1321 Walter de Bello Campo (Walter de Beauchamp)

1322 Sir Hugh Despenser Jnr.

1325 Hugh le Despenser

1326 Llywelyn Ddu ap Gruffydd ap Rhys

1326 John Laundry

1327 Sir Roger de Pembridge

1330 Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd ap Howel

1331 Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd ap Howel

1343 William de Emeldon (under the Black Prince)

1356 Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd (died 1356)  
1357 Gilbert de Ffelverysham (Felfersham)  
1358 Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd II  
1374 William Houghton  
1380 William Houghton and William de Bradewardyne  
1399 Castle and Manor of Dryslwyn belonging to Younger Despenser seized  
1399 Restored to the Earl of Gloucester. William de Bradewardyne  
1402 Rhys ap Griffith ap Llywelyn Foethus  
1403 Edward, Duke of York  
1406 Prince Henry of Wales

## **Farmers of Dryslwyn Castle and Town**

1407 Rhys ap Thomas ap Dafydd

1409 John Wodehouse

1429 John Scudemore and John Wodehouse

1432 Rhys ap Thomas ap Dafydd

1446 Rhydderch ap Rhys ap Gruffydd and Thomas ap Thomas Fychan

1460 Henry ap Gwilym

1461 Henry ap Gwilym

1462 Thomas ap Thomas Fychan

1462 Owen ap William ap Rhys

1464 Henry ap Gwilym

1465 Thomas ap Gruffydd ap Nicholas

1468 Henry ap Gwilym

1506 Elena (daughter of Henry ap Gwilym)

1514 Henry ap John

1521 Sir William Thomas

1522 Walter Bowles

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Dryslwyn in the Glyndwr revolt**

*The castle destroyed, possibly by Glyndwr*

In 1402, Rhys ap Gruffydd ap Llywellyn Foethus, was made constable of Dryslwyn castle. He was the uncle of Gruffydd ap Nicholas, appointed in March and given an annuity of £30 4s for life by Henry Bolingbroke, “Prince of Wales, Duke of Aquitaine and Lancaster and Cornwall, Earl of Chester, first begotten of our illustrious King of England and France”.

During Richard's reign, Carmarthenshire had not been drawn into political struggles. In 1398 the King passed through the county and stayed at Kidwelly on his way to Ireland in 1399. Before the King's return Henry landed in Yorkshire, announcing that he had come to claim his Duchy. He executed many of Richard's friends and, finding himself isolated, the King surrendered to Henry at Flint and agreed to give up the throne. Henry was therefore holding the Carmarthenshire lordships as defacto King rather than as Prince of Wales.

The Glyndwr rebellion had its origin in a private quarrel between Owain Glyndwr and the Lord Grey of Ruthin as to boundaries between their lordships. It developed into widespread national rebellion, which began in the north in 1400 and by 1403 the conflict had spread to the south. The Welsh supported it strongly because of the many injustices and oppressions they had suffered from the English. A typical case in point may be taken from the Dynevor records for 1394:

“Know ye that we of our special grace and for a fine of 10 marks have granted to our faithful men and English people living in our town of Newton in South Wales, that the town of Newton shall be a free borough, and that all Englishmen having lands and tenements ... shall henceforth become free burgesses ... they shall have a gild merchant with house for all Englishmen residing in the same town.” (Patent Roll Richard II p.m9.)

But now in 1400 English settlers everywhere were forced to take shelter within walled towns or castles. The administration of the lordships largely

broke down. Rents could not be collected and courts were only held with difficulty.

Glyndwr was descended from the princes of Northern Powys and related to those of Gwynedd. Through his mother he was also descended from the old Dynasty of Dynevor. In September 1400 Glyndwr's friends and supporters proclaimed him "Prince of Wales". It might help at this juncture to indicate his career to date. He had spent some time in London at the Inns of Court, as a courtier, and during a further period as a soldier he served the Crown on several campaigns, amongst them the Scottish Expedition of 1385. In 1387 he may have supported Henry Bolingbroke, the future King Henry IV, at Radcot bridge. In 1386 he appeared as witness in a notable case heard before the Court of Chivalry - indicating his knowledge of heraldic and military law. The poets who frequented his houses in Carrog and Sycharth show him to be a Welsh gentleman of country tastes giving no indication of the impending rebellion which he was to lead.

The results of the Glyndwr rebellion proved to be even more destructive for the Welsh than if they had suffered in silence, for not only were they incited to ravage their own countryside, but after it was over they were punished by yet heavier taxes and harsher laws.

By spring 1401 the movement had gained such momentum that a force sent up from Dyfed and Cardigan by the king was defeated. As a result, a number of men joined from Ystrad Tywi (the Towy valley). Henry IV arrived in the autumn of 1401 with an armed force. The army came down through Strata Florida, where his soldiers were quartered in the Abbey church, and pillaged the district around. Talley Abbey was also damaged. At Llandovery Henry ordered and watched the hanging of Llywellyn ap Gruffydd Fychan whose sons had joined the Glyndwr rebellion. The lands of some twenty Welsh magnates in northern Carmarthenshire were confiscated and granted to John Havard, constable of Dynevor, and to Dafydd Cam who was captured by Glyndwr in 1412 and later killed at Agincourt in 1415.

The rebellion spread rapidly. Welsh students from Oxford, Cambridge and the Inns of Court, Welsh labourers from the Marches and borderlands and Welsh soldiers from the continent all hurried home to fight; and when in early July 1403 Glyndwr reached Llandovery, Welsh Carmarthenshire rose in rebellion. Its leaders were Henry Dwnn of Kidwelly, William Gwyn of Llanstephan and Rhys ap Gruffydd of Dryslwyn, who had previously sided

with the King. Glyndwr was received and acknowledged in the area as Prince of Wales.

Following the burning of Llandeilo, the castle of Dryslwyn was handed over to him by Rhys and a few days later Carmarthen castle was surrounded and the town set on fire. Constable Robert Wigmore surrendered within 24 hours. Shortly afterwards the constable of Newcastle Emlyn Jenkin ap Llewellyn, opened up his gates. Panic seized the other castle constables.

In July 1403, a letter from John Scudamore written on the 5th, a Thursday, from the castle of Carreg Cennen where he was constable, and addressed to John Fairford receiver at Brecon, gives us details of Glyndwr's visit to Dryslwyn. "He (Owain Glyndwr) lay last night in the castle of Drosselan with Rhys ap Gruffydd and there was I to speak to him upon a truce, and prayed for safe conduct under his seal to send my wife and her mother home, and their company, and he would none grant me; and he is this day about Carmarthen and there thinketh to abide till he may have the town and castle; and his purpose is hence into Pembrokeshire, for he feels quite sure of all the castles and towns in Kidwelly, Gowerland and Glamorgan, for the same countries have undertaken the sieges of them until they be won".

John Scudamore's wife and mother-in-law were staying at Dynevor. Jenkin Havard, besieged in Dynevor, wrote "in haste and dread" to Brecon, asking for permission to retreat there under cover of darkness and stating that Glyndwr's next attack would be on Kidwelly.

Having captured the centre of Royal rule in the south west, Glyndwr moved to St Clears and Laugharne. By this time the Lord of Carew had collected a large force to oppose an attack on Kidwelly. Glyndwr tried but failed to make terms with Carew. On 12 July 1403, Owain was compelled to raise the siege of Carmarthen and advance to meet Carew. This move also relieved Dynevor castle which was very hard pressed. "We fail in victuals and men", wrote Jenkin Havard, constable of Dynevor. "The profligate rebel Owen Glyndwr" was supported by 140 French sail and 12,000 Frenchmen who had landed at Milford.

The Local Authority instead bought off Owain with £200 from the coffers of Thomas Carew. They also slew 770 pioneers of the French force. Baron Carew was thus able to engage Glyndwr's attention in Wales and prevent him from joining Hotspur. Owain took Carmarthen, the day of the battle of Shrewsbury. This was a turning point. As Hotspur rushed to the Welsh



border, Henry met him at Shrewsbury before he could join forces with Glyndwr. Hotspur was outwitted and killed in 1403. Northumberland was not able to assist him, as he was waiting to be joined by the Scots, who had agreed to support the rebellion.

Henry as Prince of Wales was sent to subdue the Welsh and, though he succeeded eventually in this, he never caught Glyndwr, who lived in hiding probably in Herefordshire at the home of his daughter Alice Scudamore until about 1415.

With the death of Hotspur, Henry was able to march into Carmarthenshire unhindered and by the end of 1403 the castles were all held for the King, but the countryside was still supporting Glyndwr. "Owain however sustained a serious loss in the defection of the nobility of Ystrad Tywi, who returned to the allegiance of the King". To secure his retreat northwards, he sent a small party of his army of 8,000 to hold the uplands of Ystrad Tywi. This detachment was routed and ambushed. Glyndwr then turned towards Glamorgan. It is said that he visited an old bard in Gower, who had the power of foretelling events. The bard told him that, if he did, he would be captured and defeated between Gower and Carmarthen. So Glyndwr turned north on another route and the old bard no doubt proved to be right!

When the Glyndwr revolt broke out, the vested interest which Rhys ap Gruffydd ap Llywelyn Foethus had in royal government in the area and his appointment as constable of Dryslwyn ensured his loyalty. He welcomed Henry IV to Carmarthenshire in 1401 and the estates of the rebels Llywelyn ap Gruffydd Fychan and Rhys's own brother were granted to him to sustain resistance to Glyndwr (value £46 13s 4d). But in 1402-3 his loyalty turned sour. Certainly when Owain Glyndwr was in the Tywi valley at the time of the Percy (Earl of Northumberland) rising in July 1403, Rhys threw the gates of Dryslwyn open to him. As a result Rhys lost his property in Carmarthenshire and it was forfeited to the Crown on 26 September 1403. A portion of it went to Thomas Dyer.

In 1405 when Glyndwr, Mortimer and the Earl of Northumberland agreed to divide the realm into three, "The Tripartite Indenture", with the south-east to Mortimer, the true heir to the English throne, the north to Northumberland, and the border country and Wales to Glyndwr, it seemed that Glyndwr was on the road to success. They planned to set up a parliament at Machynlleth and agreed to make the Welsh Church subject to the Avignon Pope, thus

breaking away from Canterbury and elevating St David's. It is worth remembering that the English Church was also divided at this time, as shown by Archbishop (of York) Scrope's rebellion in 1495; furthermore Henry had just resisted Parliament's demand for all church property to be confiscated and applied to poor relief. He needed church support and such Lollardy was to be driven underground until the Reformation.

Glyndwr planned to institute two universities in Wales, one in the north and one in the south. As well as developing relations Ireland and Scotland, he also planned to develop relations with and a treaty with France, in 1404. But the French invasion of 1405-06 was a complete failure and the tide turned against him whereby he lost control of the Tywi valley about 1406. In 1409 the network of government was functioning once more in the Tywi valley, although Cardiganshire was not subdued until 1413.

The country was left desolate and impoverished and the authorities demanded complete tax repayment for the war years from the stricken people. Owain died on the eve of St Matthew on 20th September 1415, in his 61st year.

As Glyndwr fired most castles, and it is likely that Dryslwyn was also burnt after 1403, because from now on no constables of Dryslwyn castle are mentioned. From this date the title becomes 'Farmers of Dryslwyn castle and Town'. We do not know where the constable's official residence was. The most likely house would have been my own family residence or rather its predecessor where the farm of Dryslwyn fawr is today. It has apparently stood there since about 1450, but there is no proof of this. Until the beginning of the 20th century it was certainly reputed to be the largest farm in Carmarthenshire. Owned by Lord Cawdor, until 1935 it was in the parish of Llangathen. Dryslwyn castle belongs to the farm or at least it did until 1979, when it was purchased by the Electricity pension fund and later transferred to the Guardianship of the Welsh Office, Ancient Monuments branch.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **The Rise of the House of Dynevor**

#### *THE NEW MEN*

*Wars: 100 Years' War. Wars of the Roses - leading up to a Welshman taking the throne of England helped by Sir Rhys ap Thomas of the House of Dynevor.*

*Farmers of Dryslwyn castle and town:* - JOHN WODEHOUSE was appointed in this position in 1409 for twenty years, for 10 yearly with all the commodities pertaining to the town and also the perquisites of Alltygaer with the service of tenants there for 20 years.

The nominal appointment of Edward Duke of York, as constable of all other castles of Carmarthen, Cardigan, Aberystwyth, Dinevor, Dryslwyn, Newcastle Emlyn, Kidwelly and Carreg Cennen, was renewed until 1406 when Prince Henry of Wales took over the title.

One can only guess at the state of affairs that must have existed with the castle burnt down, and the tenants of Bridge Street impoverished and over-taxed and reduced in number by plague and plunder. It must have been a sorry place at this time. But life has a habit of rising from the ashes of the past, and Dryslwyn of all places is bursting with natural life, birds, flowers, and the everflowing, gentle Towy, watering its lush meadow banks. However sad it may be, no one can ever resist the throbbing life of the valley around Dryslwyn; nevertheless none could deny that John Wodehouse, who took over from Rhys ap Thomas ap Dafydd (who only lasted one year as "Farmer") must have had a very big task ahead of him. One should add that at John's death in 1429, Rhys ap Thomas ap Dafydd was to return, in 1432.

Rhys was a descendant of Goronwy Goch of Catheiniog, perhaps even living in Goronwy Goch's own house of Lanlash. He had a remarkable career as an Esquire for both Plantagenet and Lancastrian Kings, and as a stout supporter of the Crown during Glyndwr's rebellion. His services to Richard II by whom

he was retained as an Esquire of the Household, ensured both rewards and opportunities for public service before 1394.

### **Gruffydd ap Nicholas**

By 1443, his great opportunity came, a chance to become Humphrey Duke of Gloucester's deputy as Justiciar, just as he had been Aydley's deputy Chamberlain for South Wales. In 1447 therefore Gruffydd was in Humphrey's retinue on the fateful journey to the Parliament at Bury St Edmunds, in the company of approximately 80, about 42 of whom were men from Wales and the Marches. Gloucester had been planning a rebellion but was captured.

His death on 23rd February did not however affect Gruffydd, who was soon back in Wales and by the late 1440s had virtually supreme control over the government of the principality of South Wales, holding the highest courts of justice and supervising castle building and repairs. This did not include Dryslwyn castle, for after the Glyndwr rebellion, no repairs are mentioned in his accounts. Gruffydd and two others leased the whole town of Carmarthen by 1446, his influence spreading much further than Carmarthenshire.

He leased lands in Cardiganshire too, amongst them two tenements of John Dyer in 1441, while his son Thomas was put in control of much property in this west Wales area, becoming farmer of Dynevor in 1460-61. His second son Owain lived at Cwrt Bryn y Beirdd (Bards Hill Court) near Carreg Cennen, and was in charge of Cerreg Cennen Castle. The youngest son, John lived at Newton, Dynevor, helping him with the farming of the castle from 1425-26 and with Sir John Perrot between 1439 and 1456.

In short around the 1440s, there was a rapid weakening of Royal Government in South Wales. In 1439, a commission headed by Sir Robert Whitney was apparently sent to West Wales, Gruffydd himself going to meet it at Llandovery. Relations were amicable at this stage of the journey to Abermarlais, Newton and Carmarthen; Gruffydd taking the opportunity to present his sons to Whitney, rather pointedly perhaps surrounded by their present armed retainers.

At Carmarthen they were so well entertained for supper that they 'forgot quite the errand they came for', and Gruffydd's son Owain stole the King's commission, while Gruffydd ap Nicholas sat humbly waiting, but they could

not find it. “Gruffydd ap Nicholas starts up in a furie, clasping his hatt upon his head, and looking about upon his sones and friends; ‘what’, says he, ‘have we cozeners and cheaters come hither to abuse the Kinges majestie's power, and to disquiet his true harted subjects?’ Then turning about to the commissioners he rappes out a greate oath, and says ere the next day were at an end, he would hang them up for traitors and imposters. Then they were hurried off to prison and only released on condition that they assumed Gruffydd's blew coats, and were his cognizance and admit their offences to the King”.

Gryffudd ap Nicholas was to marry three times and, as mentioned above, had three sons. Owain was like his father, inheriting the lordship of Efelffre and Narberth. John was a quieter character, quite content farming Dynevor, with John Perrot between 1430 and 1456. But it was through the eldest, Thomas, that the line passed to Sir Rhys ap Thomas and Rice Fitzurien.

The Wars of the Roses began in 1455. They were caused by the fact that on the death of Richard II in 1399, Henry Bolingbroke, (an epileptic) son of the Duke of Lancaster, the fourth son of Edward III, had snatched the throne, with Parliamentary approval, when it should have passed to Edmund Mortimer, the second son of Edward III, of the Yorkist line. When he died in 1413, his eldest son Henry took over.

Henry's great aim was to conquer France, indeed a careful King, he brought England to the first rank in Europe after Agincourt etc. Henry married Catharine of France, the daughter of mad Charles VI as regent and dauphin of France, disowning his own son Charles, who in the event became Charles VII of France. It staggers the imagination to consider what Europe might have been otherwise. When the English King Henry V died in 1422, his baby son was only nine months old. Henry was only 34 and had died suddenly of some illness in France. Parliament ordered that the baby King's uncle should rule for him until he was of age. John Duke of Bedford ruled in France, and Humphrey Duke of Gloucester with the help of Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, ruled in England.

Bedford did what he could in France to hold the lands that Henry had won, and he was successful. In 1429 he laid siege to Orleans but here the discouraged French were rallied by Joan of Arc. The tide turned; the French believed that God was on their side and for a while they started to win their battles. However Joan's countrymen sold her to the British, who burnt her to

death in 1431. By 1453 the other long drawn-out war with France, the hundred years' war was over, the English only retaining Calais. Henry V's widow, Henry VI's mother Catherine of France, eventually married the Earl of Richmond, Owen Tudor, their sons Edmund and Jasper, becoming half-brothers to the King of France (Henry VI).

Henry VI was not suited to be King; but was crowned King of France in Paris in 1431, although Charles VII had been so crowned in Reims in 1429; a truce was soon to follow. He however married Margaret of Anjou, the niece of the French Queen, but was prone to fits of insanity, and a Protector, Richard Duke of York, was appointed, but on the birth of his son he recovered, and the Protector was dismissed. The Duke of Somerset was called in meanwhile to help the King. The nobles began to fight among themselves with their developing private armies called 'Livery and Maintenance'. Shakespeare depicts it all so well, those who wanted the Yorkists to rule took the emblem of the White Rose, and those who called themselves Lancastrians took that of the Red Rose, and so in 1455 the Wars of the Roses began.

Welsh help was secured for the Lancastrian King, by his half-brother Edmund Tudor, son of Catherine of France and Owen Tudor of the family of Penmynydd in Anglesey. On the death of Edmund Tudor, his place was taken by his brother Jasper Tudor, who was made Earl of Pembroke, thus retaining the strategic region for the Lancastrian cause and keeping open the connection with France, Ireland and Scotland. Edmund had died two months before his son Henry (VII of England) was born in Pembroke castle in 1456. Margaret Beaufort, his mother being a descendant of John of Gaunt. Carmarthenshire was strongly Lancastrian, although one family especially, the Dwnns of Kidwelly, and a few other families were Yorkists. The fact that Jasper Tudor was Earl of Pembroke and Lord of Llanstephan made the Lancastrians more powerful throughout West Wales.

Gruffydd ap Nicholas and his sons were close associates of Jasper Tudor. They had spent a large amount of money repairing and strengthening the castle of Carreg Cennen, inspecting troops and guarding the coastal defences, and in 1456 Gruffydd was expelled from Dinevor, and a Yorkist, William Herbert, put in his place. This was the probable cause of him resolving his differences with Jasper, and being granted a full pardon for remaining Lancastrian. Margaret and her baby son (later Henry VII) settled in Pembroke under the protection of her brother-in-law Jasper Tudor in 1456; he had in fact become a leading figure in West Wales, and Gruffydd ap

Nicholas found himself outshone. He died in his 70s probably in 1460; our last report of him being in February 1460, when he granted that Lordship of Narberth and Efelffre to his son Owain.

During the late Lancastrian period, Thomas maintained the position in Cardiganshire for which his father had fought so hard in 1439. Thomas and his sons Morgan and Henry had led a discontented element in Cardiganshire, although he had been escheator of the county and deputy constable of Aberystwyth castle. In 1461 after his father's death he returned to Carmarthenshire, to become 'farmer' of Dynevor. After the accession of Edward IV he garrisoned Carreg Cennen, but Herbert with a powerful Yorkist force of soldiers and engineers attacked and dismantled it.

The Dynevor family were temporarily eclipsed at this period. In May 1461 William Herbert, later Earl of Pembroke, was appointed Justiciar of South Wales. Thomas ap Gruffydd stayed on at Dynevor and farmed it with David Berkeley, and in 1464 he leased the mill in the town of Carmarthen. He leased the Towy fishing rights in Maenordeilo from 1463-65, and profits of the mill and forest of Glyncothi for 1461-63. But because of his Lancastrian sympathies he was excluded from all public offices in South Wales from 1465 until he died in 1474.

During 1464-65, Thomas ap Gruffydd and his bitter enemy, a Yorkist, Henry ap Gwilym of Court Henry, together farmed Dryslwyn. During that year there was a Lancastrian uprising in Dryslwyn, but before the insurgents could do much damage, John Dwnn of Kidwelly aided by Roger Vaughan of Tretower, attacked and completely overwhelmed them. For this Dwnn received additional lands in the Kidwelly lordship, and his cousin Henry Dwnn of Picton castle, a veteran of the French wars, an annuity of £20 from the issues of the same lordship.

Henry ap Gwilym was continuously constable of Dryslwyn until 1468 and in the years 1500-02 and 1506-07 his daughter Elena was constable held this honour, most unusual for a woman in those days. There were only three more constables, Henry ap John from 1514 and Sir William Thomas from 1521, followed by Walter Bowles in 1522. He was still holding the lease in 1534.

It is not certain where the constable lived during this period. Certainly Henry ap Gwilym lived at Court Henry, a house which still stands on the cross roads at Cross Inn, Dryslwyn, just off the A40. Henry built this house in 1450, and had many other properties in the area in which various members of his family

lived. His daughter Elena became sister-in-law to Sir Rhys ap Thomas, who married Mabli (or Eva) her sister. Lewis Glyn Cothi, poet of the period and living locally, addressed several poems to Henry ap Gwilym. He may have been imprisoned at Harlech castle by the Lancastrians and released by Sir William Herbert.

Thomas ap Gruffydd was thoroughly disenchanted by life in Britain during the Wars of the Roses, and enlisted in the service of the Duke of Burgundy after the disturbances in Dryslwyn in 1464, taking his son Rhys with him. Rhys returned with him and, after his father's death in 1474, married Henry ap Gwilym's daughter, which healed family feuds. Henry's wife Mabli was the daughter of Llywelyn Ddu of Ystradffin, so that he named one of his daughters Mabli after her, which leads to confusion when trying to sort out relationships.

Sir William Herbert was given the job of bringing the Lancastrian parts of Wales under control. John Dwnn of Kidwelly was given the constablership of Carmarthen and Aberystwyth castles and made sheriff for both counties. When Pembroke castle was taken by Herbert, the young Henry Tudor fell into his hands. The boy was well treated by Lady Herbert who brought him up with her own children and hoped to marry him to their daughter Mary. When Warwick the 'King Maker' heard of this he objected and Herbert was dismissed. Warwick and Herbert fought at Banbury. Meanwhile the two sons of Gruffydd ap Nicholas seized the Royal castles of Carmarthen and Cardigan. When Richard III defeated Edward IV, he put his brother in charge of Carmarthen castle, and Warwick fled to France to join Queen Margaret who was there with her son Henry and Jasper Tudor.

They returned with an army, and at the battle of Barnet 1471, Warwick was killed by Edward, who then met Margaret at Tewkesbury, where he took her prisoner and her son Edward was killed. Edward IV then returned in triumph to London, the day that Henry VI died - no doubt murdered in the Tower also. Five years later Edward IV was also to die, having first put to death George, Duke of Clarence, his brother, a constant threat to his rule.

In 1483, Edward's two young sons were shut up in the Tower and never heard of again. Richard of Gloucester was proclaimed King, and Buckingham, who was Lord of Brecon, was given custody of Carmarthen, Dynevor and Llanstephan (and many other castles). He was also made Chief



Justice and Chamberlain of Carmarthen, thus becoming the chief baron in Wales.

With the fall of the main Lancastrian line, Lancastrian claims to the throne came to be vested in young Henry Tudor, (now aged 14), who with his uncle Jasper had taken refuge in Brittany. The Bishop of Ely, Morton, was sent to France to see if they would come to England, and if Henry would agree to marry Edward IV's eldest daughter Elizabeth. The families of York and Lancaster would then be united, and he would agree to support and help them, and aid Henry in taking the throne from Richard.

Richard III heard of the plot, Buckingham made a disastrous rising and Bishop Morton was lucky to be able to escape to Brittany. The plot was thickening - or more correctly, the union of England, Wales and Scotland was beginning to emerge.

*THE HOUSE OF DYNEVOR (ended 1531)*

URIEN RHEGED

(Historical Society of S Wales Transactions Vol.1)

***NEWTON or DYNEVOR Genealogy***

URIEN

*King of Rheged in Scotland (some say Ireland), and King of Gower in Wales  
also, Lord of Iscennen (Caerwillion and Kidwelly Castle)*

*and one of King Arthur's princely knights of the Round Table, married  
Margaret le ffay, daughter of Gwrlais, Duke of Cornwall, and half-sister to  
King Arthur.*

.....

*(approximately 800 years missing here)*

.....

| GRUFFYDD AP NICHOLAS

THOMAS

|

SIR RHYS AP THOMAS

|

| GRUFFYDD

|

| RHYS

|

(Sir Rice Griffith Fitz Urien) RHYS AP GRUFFYDD m KATHERINE  
HOWARD *beheaded Tower Hill, 1531, (left widow and son).*

The present house of Dynevor is reputedly descended from Urien Rheged, who is said to have married the daughter of Gwirlais, Margaret, the half-sister of Arthur. According to Burke's Peerage the descent begins: Uryan Reged, Lord of Kidwelly, Carunllou and Iscennen m. Margaret La Faye daughter of Gerlous or Gerlois, their son was Pasgen.

These figures have passed into the mists of time, and whether Urien ever came south from Strathclyde or whether it was his son Owain, one cannot be certain. However Carreg Cennen has traditionally been ascribed to him, in the 5th century.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **The House of Dynevor**

#### **Henry VII; Henry VIII**

##### **Sir Rhys ap Thomas 1449-1525**

BUCKINGHAM had received no support from Carmarthenshire in his revolt. In contrast Rhys ap Thomas, the most influential of the county magnates, was awarded an annuity from the Royal Exchequer at Carmarthen for not aiding the rebellion. He promised Richard that Henry Tudor would only invade over his belly, a promise he kept, although it required the cunning of the Abbot of Talley (a secret Lancastrian and his counsellor), and the Bishop of St David's help. Similarly Lord Huntingdon, later to become the second Earl of Pembroke and another of the Herbert family, was appointed Justice of Wales.

Rhys ap Thomas was at this time with his father at the court of Burgundy, a boy of 16. One of the first things he did after the death of his father, when he came into his estates, was to marry Eva, daughter and heiress of Henry ap Gwilym of Court Henry. This alliance nearly doubled his property, "His household and hospitality matched his wealth, and displayed the magnificence of a Prince rather than a private gentleman. He acquired popularity and formidable power. He instituted games and amusements of every kind, on different parts of his estates in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. By converting some of the commons into race courses, and by liberal rewards for feats of skill and by training young men in the use of arms in sham fights and military spectacles, the poet described him in glowing terms by saying 'The King owns the island, save what pertains to Sir Rhys'. He could call at short notice on 19,000 tenants bound by their leases to attend him on horseback".

Two years had passed between the time Bishop Morton had fled and Henry Tudor's immanent landing at Dale in Pembrokeshire. During this period secret negotiations were going on between Rhys ap Thomas and the exiles

through the offices of Traherne Morgan of Kidwelly, who had married one of the Dwnn family. Richard III had commanded “all noblemen and gentlemen dwelling about the sea coast and especially Welshmen to keep watch so that his enemies could not land without resistance”.

During the long years of Tudor exile, many Welsh bards had prophesied the coming of a new deliverer, their poems passed by recitation from mouth to mouth through the countryside. Henry Tudor had also proclaimed his ancient Welsh lineage, his descent from Cadwalladr, and so many people of Wales were eager and kindled with hope. Jasper was sure of a welcome in Pembrokeshire, his old Earldom, while Henry himself was born in the castle.

On 1 August 1485, Henry, Jasper, Bishop Morton, and the Earl of Oxford, with 200 English and Welsh supporters, and a ragged ill-equipped army of 2000 men set sail for Pembrokeshire from the mouth of the Seine. They landed on 7 August at Dale on the northern side of Milford Haven, unfurling the flag of the Red Dragon upon Welsh soil.

Early the following morning the army marched to Haverfordwest. The constable of Pembroke fled, carrying the news of the landing, and Haverfordwest immediately surrendered. The end of the Wars of the Roses was only a fortnight away.

There is a rumour that Sir Rhys ap Thomas kept his oath to Richard by crouching under Mullock bridge near Dale, while Henry and his troops passed overhead, but he had in fact long since decided to join Henry's forces.

Henry took the route through Cardigan, Aberystwyth, and Machynlleth to Newtown and Welshpool. Sir Rhys ap Thomas took the southern route, both armies growing all the time. Sir Rhys returned past Dryslwyn and Dynevor, Llangadog, Llandovery and Brecon. On 13 August the two armies met and were joined by more men from the north. Two days later they were at Shrewsbury. Sir Rhys had an army of several thousand Carmarthenshire men riding under the banner of the Black Ravens, Sir Rhys's ancient crest. Cattle and supplies to feed the armies were brought by followers. The King himself, marching from Leicester was now approaching Bosworth. For the Welsh bards this was a fulfilment of prophesy. “The Boar (of England) was cold and the Bull of Anglesey had won the stone towers (of London) of the three crowns”. The Red Dragon of Cadwalladr and the Dun Cow of the Tudors, with the Black Raven of Urien Rheged, were joined against the foe including

the Herberts of Monmouthshire , who with the north Wales chieftains had joined them at Welshpool.

In the fierce fighting against the King, Richard III charged his way through Henry's bodyguard and killed his standard bearer. At the height of the battle Lord Stanley, who was watching from a nearby hillock, threw his troops on Henry's side. Richard was killed (by Sir Rhys himself possibly), his diadem or headband worn as a mark of royalty, which had fallen from his head during the struggle, was picked up from a bush. Henry was crowned on the spot, on the battlefield itself, one of his first actions being to bestow a knighthood on Sir Rhys ap Thomas for his valiant services.

At last the ancient prophecies had been fulfilled. A Welshman was now the ruler of England, to be crowned again at Westminster Abbey at the end of October. The following January he, a descendant of John of Gaunt of the Lancastrian line, now married Elizabeth of York, herself a descendant of Llywellyn the Great. Surely the future of both England and Wales was assured.

Indeed Henry was to take much pride in his Welsh descent. At last the dream of the bards had been realised. They had pinned their hopes on Owain Glyndwr as their leader, but now in Henry VII they were not disappointed. There was no grandiose declaration of the fulfilment of prophecy. But Henry and Elizabeth's first son was significantly called Arthur, a second Arthur as their future King! - sadly however he was to die young. Jasper Tudor, Henry's half-brother was created Duke of Bedford, and appointed Justiciar of South Wales and later granted the Lordship of Glamorgan.

As for Sir Rhys ap Thomas, as well as being knighted, he was appointed steward and constable of the Lordship of Builth and of Brecon, and also Chamberlain of Carmarthen and Cardigan, William Gruffydd being appointed Chamberlain of North Wales.

Henry also opened the doors to the Welsh at the Royal Court and to the city of London. Several became members of his personal bodyguard and acquired positions at court or in administration. They established themselves in the business life of the capital and, in increasing numbers, equipped themselves for the professions.

Administration in Wales had three main aspects in the late 15th century:

1. The Welshries, where native law and custom still held sway.

2. The English system, where English laws were at work.
3. Those areas under the Lords Marcher, often resented and feared by others.

After the death of Jasper Tudor in 1494, Sir Rhys rose further as Chief Justice of South Wales. Now he was virtual ruler of the south west when in 1505, he was made Knight of the Garter he became also a privy Councillor. in princely style at his renovated Castle of Carew. Henry however, being slightly wary of him, never made him a Peer of the realm, though he would call him “Father Rhys” and was fond of him. Henry's primary task was to consolidate his position, and to make the throne secure, for although the Wars of the roses were over he had many obstacles to overcome. On his deathbed he was to beg Henry VIII to have care for the people of Wales, the inference being perhaps he felt that he owed them more than he had ever been able to repay, even slightly guilty that he had not been able to do more for Wales. I will develop this a little further at the end of the chapter.

In South Wales, Cardigan and Carmarthen were the centres of administration. A form of Shire government had been introduced in Carmarthenshire as we have seen, in the early 13th century and it was much the same for Cardiganshire. These territories were under the jurisdiction of Sir Rhys now as Chief Justice for South Wales. The system was run under English law and administration was in English style, the Marcher Lords, like the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Worcester, also retaining a lot of power.

Sir Rhys's career shows him to have developed into a formidable warrior for Henry VII and also Henry VIII. He was always ready with aid for military expeditions to France, or against Lambert Simnel, or to raise taxes, or in fact to follow any other command of the king. He was a friend Cardinal Wolsey, and his grandson married the Duke of Norfolk's sister, Katherine Howard, aunt of Anne Boleyn.

In 1507 Sir Rhys held a great tournament at Carew Castle to celebrate his knighthood. Festivities included jousting, wrestling, archery and so on. We know of this because of the bard Lewis Glyn Cothi's description of an earlier tournament held at Abermarlais in the time of Sir Rhys's father, Thomas ap Gruffydd. Sir Rhys's great possessions included mansions, castles and estates in Carmarthenshire and Cardigan, among them were Abermarlais (Llansadwrn), Dinevor (Llandeilo), Derwydd (Llandebie), and Newcastle Emlyn, which like Carew he reconstructed as a place of residence. Around Dryslwyn there were several other places associated with him, for instance,

Rhydarwen, which has his Raven and other carvings revealing the connection. Also Court Henry ...?

At one time the castles of Kidwelly, Laugharne and Carreg Cennen were in his hands, together with those of Narberth and Carew in Pembrokeshire, which came to him through his second wife, daughter of Thomas Mathew of Radyr, Glamorgan, widow of Thomas Stradling of St Donats.

Shortly before he died he entered the Franciscan Friary in Carmarthen and was buried there, his remains and those of his second wife, now being buried St Peter's church, Carmarthen. Like his grandfather Gruffydd ap Nicholas before him, his praises were sung by the bards, including Lewis Glyn Cothi, Tudor Aled, and Lewis Morgannwg. Tudor Aled being his household bard. He left illegitimate progeny (all well provided for. under Welsh Laws of inheritance they must inherit equally with the legitimate children). He died in 1525, at the age of 72, a few years before the Tudor Act of Union united both our countries.

### **Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd (Rice Griffith Fitzurien) 1509-1531**

Thus in 1525 Sir Rhys's wide estates but not of course his judicial position, were inherited by his senior grandson Rice Griffith Fiturien, as he styled himself, to show his illustrious descent from Urien Rheged, the shadowy leader from Strathclyde in about the 5th century. Rice's father Gruffydd, (Sir Rhys's eldest son) was killed in a duel in 1521. Sir Rhys ap Thomas had therefore taken the boy under his wing, had him educated at court, and seen to it that he married well.

As Rice Griffith was too young at 17 when his grandfather died, to take old Sir Rhys's place, Henry VIII took the opportunity to reduce their power as The Dynevor family. The King appointed Walter Devereux, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, to the post of Chief Justice and Chamberlain of Carmarthen and West Wales. Rice's father had also fought for Richard III and there was no sympathy between the two families.

When Ferrers therefore came to Carmarthen to hold his first sessions in June 1525, a number of the local gentry in the town came to show loyalty to Rice, quarrels breaking out between the retainers about accommodation in the town. A fight followed and one of Rice's men was arrested, Rice entered the



Justiciar's court in the castle and demanded his release, but instead was arrested himself and taken to London under armed escort.

Supporters from all the surrounding country appealed for him, eventually Katherine his wife appealing to Cardinal Wolsey “for the love he bore old Sir Rhys”. Trouble flared up again eight weeks later, when one of Ferrer's men was killed. Rice was called before the court of Star Chamber. Both he and his aide were acquitted with stern rebukes Rice remaining at his Islington house in London. In 1529, even Wolsey was to fall from power owing to his failure to obtain a divorce from his sovereign from Queen Anne Boleyn.

The fact was that Rice was a devout Catholic, whose sympathies were with the Queen, and he was therefore against the approaching break with Rome; likewise his wife, though closely related to Anne Boleyn, was probably guilty of making indiscreet remarks about her in the wrong company.

In October 1530 a kinsman of Rice, James ap Gruffydd of Emlyn was arrested. Shortly afterwards Rice was himself imprisoned in the Tower (on 10 October 1530), to be released in June because of ill-health, and to remain at liberty on bail until 21 September 1531, as were his retainers Edward Lloyd and William Hughes of Carew.

In November Rice was tried before the King's bench on the charge of treason, Lloyd giving evidence against him, and did James ap Gruffydd also. He was beheaded on 4 December 1531 aged just 23.

The charge was that he was guilty, with two of his countrymen, of trying both to raise a rebellion and, with the help of King James of Scotland, to make himself Prince of Wales. Part of the indictment against him stated that the conspirators had often repeated that there was an ancient prophecy that “King James with the Red Hand, and the Ravens, should conquer all England”. The reference to the Ravens was clearly that ancient Raven crest of the Dynevor family, referring back to Urien Rheged, The reference to the Red Hand is more obscure.

The following year, Parliament passed an act of attainder. All Rice's property was forfeited to the Crown. The annual income of Dynevor was said to be worth £10,000 a year in Sir Rhys's time, while his personal property was worth £30,000.

So fell the House of Dynevor, and with it went all the hopes and fears of the ages in this area, with which Dryslwyn had also been so closely associated. It

all passed away, the whole chapter closed for ever. But it was only a chapter and something new took its place. I do not subscribe to the extreme elements of today, those that hanker after past glories, for I believe Wales and my countryfolk have something valuable to contribute in the future. It is a fruitless waste of time trying to live in yesterday, for days of the petty princes in our principality must also now become the day of world kinship. Why should it be significant that one speaks English with a Welsh accent or Welsh with an English accent? What is relevant to us is that the spirit of our fathers helps us to create a future for our world, and in a wider context, that we encourage those multiple cultures the world over, which represent those extraordinary abilities of the human role, made in the image of God, rather than those destructive almost satanic qualities, based on greed.

Note: At a later date, Queen Mary returned a portion of the estates of the family in Pembrokeshire, to Rice's son Griffith Rice in 1554-5, but two years later they were forfeited again, because he killed a man in a duel. However Queen Elizabeth took on her conscience her father Henry VIII's guilt in this matter, and during her reign much of the property was again returned to Rice's family. Katherine kept a little property in Cilsan, Llangathen and Court Henry and was in fact aunt to both Anne Boleyn and to Katherine Howard, who was to marry King Henry VIII later.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **Conclusion and Postscript**

The Excavation at Dryslwyn finishes at the end of 1994, but Chris Cappel continues his ongoing work and will no doubt be producing his conclusions very soon. We will then be able to see how it tallies with the literary sources, on which I have for so long had to rely. Meanwhile I have begun some lateral research, unsure whether to start at the end (for me), when my own family lived there in the nineteenth century and until 1922... or to begin at the beginning, which in the event I did, hoping quickly to publish my book on the 'Age of the Saints'. That was never to be published being 86,000 words; however, when I have trimmed it, I will publish it! This present outline therefore has taken us on a journey of eleven centuries from the sixth to the sixteenth.

Dryslwyn was the last castle to fall to the English, whereby it may appear fitting to tie up the ruin with the end of the hopes of Wales for separate identity. However for a while, with a Welsh dynasty on the throne of England, there did not seem any need for separateness any more, but even in the short term, things did not turn out as the Welsh had hoped. Henry VII was pre-occupied for most of his reign with securing his own position, for which purpose he aimed at uniformity of administration throughout the country and, also for the Welsh, equality of rights and legal standing. He allied himself with the more progressive elements in Welsh society, the main body of whom felt that with a Welshman on the throne all must be well with them in the end. Indeed Henry VII himself became clearly dissatisfied with the care shown for his own countrymen, for, as we have seen, on his deathbed he asked his son to give them special care in the future.

After the 1536 Act under Henry VIII, the Welsh were allowed representatives in Parliament, one from each Shire, while Carmarthen was the centre of legal administration in West Wales. Eight JPs were appointed, chosen from the local magnates, meeting four times a year, dealing with breaches of the peace, local government, local defence, repair of highways and administering the Poor Law. The sheriff was the chief officer. The wheel of good fortune was turning in favour of the Welsh.

The Shires were divided into hundreds, in which parishes were the smallest unit. After the Reformation, Catheniog was still an administrative unit, while Gower was included in Glamorgan for the first time, it having been with Deheubarth and West Wales previously, since ancient times.

Dryslwyn had been in a special position. Although Rhys Wyndod of Dynevor capitulated in 1282, Edward I granted some of his estates in Cantref Mawr to Rhys ap Meredith of Dryslwyn, but Dynevor castle and the commote of Manordeilo were withheld and put in the custody of the King's Justiciar. The wheel was again beginning to turn against the Welsh, but when Alan de Pluckenet on behalf of the King received the whole of Rhys's inheritance after the 1287 rebellion, he was to become, from 24 September 1287, directly responsible to the Westminster Exchequer for revenues.

In July 1290, when the King's Justiciar in South Wales, Robert de Tibetot, received Rhys's former castles and estates, the independent existence of the stewardship of Cantref Mawr was severely curtailed; the wheel had turned full circle for Dryslwyn although Cantref Mawr continued to have its own stewardship for the next two centuries.

With the death of Sir Rhys ap Thomas in 1525 in his 72nd year, a period of change ensued. Firm government now became possible, as when trouble broke out in Carmarthen between Ferrers and Rice Griffith Fitzurien. The main areas of government were the Marches with 150 lordships and the Edwardian shires, formerly ruled by the Princes of North and South Wales. In 1534-43, Rowland Lee was appointed to the Presidency of the Council of the Marches. Lee was Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and was responsible for helping Henry VIII to divorce Katherine of Aragon, and to marry Anne Boleyn.

The Reformation and the dissolution of the monasteries made it imperative that a strong policy be developed for Wales, to accept these changes peacefully. Rowland Lee was ruthless. He relentlessly hunted down people who had been made homeless and become outlaws, and strongly opposed the appointment of JPs and the participation of the Welsh gentry in local administration. The Act of Union in 1536 made all Welshmen citizens of the new realm of England and Wales, giving them full constitutional rights. The Marcher Lords were deprived of their privileges, but were allowed to keep their lands.

Court law and administration became English, that is in the English language. Henry VIII was not satisfied with political incorporation but wanted cultural assimilation too. The Welsh language was forbidden because the Marcher Lords abused such practice by using these people as thieves and raiders. Complete unity and uniformity in religious belief and practice throughout the land was as important to the Tudors as political uniformity.

The Dissolution of the monasteries, as erstwhile bases for the Pope, and the 1534 Act that said that the King was supreme head of the church, meant that religious houses, which had made such a big contribution to Welsh life in religion, scholarship, learning and agricultural development (especially in the 12th and 13th centuries), were removed. In the church itself the four Welsh Bishops were amongst the poorest in the Kingdom. Queen Katherine of Aragon's Spanish Chaplain was Bishop of Llandaff, and he could not even speak English. Many Bishops seldom if ever went to Wales, which was also the case for canons and other church officials. Marriage was permitted for Welsh abbots, monks and priests, since until then the Welsh church had followed the ancient customs of their fathers. The Welsh were very devout, wayside crosses often being seen, as in Carmarthen where there were three: out side the Priory, the market Cross and in Lammis Street. Worst of all from posterity's point of view was the loss of the monk's libraries, illuminated manuscripts and music, most of which were destroyed.

Bishop Barlow hated St David's and was inordinately zealous in stripping the Monasteries. Neither did he believe in St David as a saint, which made him even more violent. He succeeded in moving the Bishop's residence to Abergwili, which was but a manor of the Bishop of St David's and a medieval borough, with a collegiate church, but after handing to his godson, Sir Richard Devereux, the fortified palace of Lamphey, even that college was removed from Abergwili to Brecon, where it became our present Christ's College.

A decline had set in at the Abbeys of Whitland and Talley, with the disappearance of the Prince in 1287, due to lack of support and protection; Whitland Abbey as we have seen, had had political sympathies with Rhys ap Meredith in the 13th century. The 100 years' war with France had taken away their support from the continent, and the Black Death was disastrous - many monks dying, while Whitland, and Talley were in severe debt by the 15th century. The monks' behaviour was becoming quite scandalous. By the end of 15th century conditions were better; there were eight monks in Talley!

Within a few years of the dissolution of the monasteries, the houses and lands were sold to the new governing classes, who held political control until well into the 19th century. In Carmarthenshire, the families of Golden Grove and Abermarlais added mainly to their estates, but the major share went to the Devereux family. Sir Richard became MP for Carmarthenshire, Lamphey becoming his principal seat. His son, named Walter after his grandfather, was born in Carmarthen and became the first Earl of Essex, obtaining the property of Whitland Abbey, Carmarthen Priory and the Nunnery of Llanllyr, while being a prime mover in the foundation of Carmarthen Grammar school.

Dryslwyn is not today so very much changed from the quiet rural valley that it was before our story started. All the tumult of war has gone over it. Political rivals and noble families have long since ceased to quarrel over the land. The last siege is a very peaceful long-drawn out affair.

Many interesting people have lived in the houses up and down the valley - the post-medieval story is almost as interesting as the early story of Dyfed, where we started with the story of the expulsion of the Deisi from Ireland, to become one of the main Irish settlements in Wales.

*A few notes for consideration on some of the important houses in the area including those which are now falling into disrepair:-*

In CANTREF MAWR:

Aberglasney, Berllandywyll, Court Henry, Parc Henry, Lanlash, Hafod Neddyn, Brynhafod, Penhill, Llethr Cadfan, Edwinsford, Newton (Dynevor), Glandulas, Abermarlais and Dryslwyn Fawr (until 1935 when due to the change in the course of the river Towy it went to Cantref Bychan).

In CANTREF BYCHAN:

Golden Grove, Derwydd, Cwrt Bryn y Beirdd, Tregyb and Rhydarwen.

EDWINSFORD Llansawel SN 6312 3457

There are two almost separate houses on the same site; one dating from about 1660, square with a central chimney; the other adjoining it with central staircase, two later Victorian wings and a porch. They have some beautiful 17th century plaster ceilings, several regrettably falling down. The structure of the roof is framed by upper crucks, with full hipped ends and over-hanging eaves. (Vide R.C.A.M.) The Welsh name is 'Rhyd Odwyn'- 'Edwin's Ford' in English - but it is a corruption from the old form 'Rhydodyn', or 'Ford at the lime kiln'. Sir Nicholas Williams lived here from 1660, and the best plaster ceiling was in Sir Nicholas's room. Leaden statues were placed upon the ridge line of the roof, the best of them being a figure of Mercury, others in the grounds representing a Milkmaid, a Gamekeeper and a large Boar. The style of building is called 'Unit houses', in this case there being Edwinsford uchaf (upper), and Edwinsford isaf(lower) - just as today we have our 'Grannie flats'! In Elizabethan days this duplication was also fairly commonplace, that is, these houses were intercommunicating. One of the houses was at times a Dower house, but each house was able to function separately. Both these houses were physically linked, in Victorian times appearing to be one building, now that the house is becoming a ruin, one can see this quite plainly. Through the centuries the family married into other famous Welsh houses; the Morgans of Tredegar, the Vaughans of Golden Grove, the Philipps of Cilsant, and the Vaughans of Llethr Cadfan.

### LLETHR CADFAN, Llangathen SN 5785 2316

This house was built in two parts. An Elizabethan Hall of the 16th century with a 17th century parlour block. The Elizabethan block is falling into disrepair, but still has a first floor hall and enormous fireplaces. It was a very grand house in its day. This later block had an enormous kitchen below with a large fireplace to the south and above this is another equally big room. In this room was an ornate plaster ceiling in early Renaissance style. Above this it is very unsafe to clamber about, but there were attics, with upper scarfed crucks in the roof. The windows are original early 17th century. The other building is two storeyed, and is still inhabited. This 17th century building is in a good state of repair, though altered. This house had been important in medieval times, and was owned by the Vaughans. A chapel in the northern side of Llangathen church is named after it (the Cadfan Chapel). The battle of Coed Llathan was fought near here in 1257, and the fields around are called by the names they acquired then (see earlier history). The brook Nant Steppanau is named after Stephan Bauzan, the English leader, who was killed there.

### COURT HENRY, Llangathen SN 5566 2256

This house lies north of the A40 at Dryslwyn. It took its name from Henry ap Gwilym who built it in the second half of the 15th century. At that time the family would have lived upstairs, with the animals herded underneath on the ground floor. At the top of the stairs lies a long passage, which contains the remaining original features including an ancient doorway and window. In the 19th century, this original solar on the end of the house was used as a chapel with a small window at one corner, through which the servants were able to join family prayers. The family built the Church of Court Henry to overcome this problem! Henry ap Gwilym was a descendant of Goronwy Goch on his father's side, and of Llewellyn Foethus on his mother's side. Henry was of the Llethr Cadfan family who also held most of the other well-known houses locally, Glandulas, Lanlash, Brynhafod, and so on. Henry ap Gwilym's daughter married Sir Rhys ap Thomas, to whom the house passed. The Herbert family came to live in Court Henry later. On the death of Sir Rhys ap Thomas's grandson, Rice Griffith Fitzurien, his mother still retained some of



the land, and this house was sold to the Herbert family, when she married again Sir Piers Edgcombe of Cotehele, Cornwall.

(Taken from John A. Lloyd's article in the Carmarthen Historian on Court Henry Vol XVI).

### ABERGLASNEY, Llangathen SN 5815 2213

This is a large mansion which is falling into disrepair. The present building is mainly 19th century, but incorporates some of the walling from the house built on the site by Bishop Anthony Rudd of St Davids (1593-1614), whose descendents sold it to the Dyer Family of whom John Dyer's poem on "Grongar Hill", which rises above it, is probably most familiar. There is a mysterious cloistered courtyard over a vault with a wall-walk. The Ancient Monuments Commission are not prepared to say whether this is pre-19th century or not, although it is clearly referred to in another of John Dyer's poems, the "Country Walk". They are also not prepared to commit themselves as to a strange gate-tower, suggesting that it is an ornamental folly. In short, these buildings have never been properly investigated, so that no final judgement can be made on them. The staircase was a major feature of the entrance hall, being used, I remember at dances there, as part of the party area, as was the cloistered walk. There was also a chapel, built by Bishop Rudd, later to become the kitchen, with the laundry above. About five hundred yards away towards the foot of Grongar hill is a cottage known as the Pigeon House, attached to which is "Bishop Rudd's bath" - a stone lined bath, 19 feet by 13 feet 6 inches and 3 feet deep; water comes from a spring and one descends into the bath by way of 3 steps, which are now in the adjoining cottage.

The publisher and author, Lynn Hughes, has researched the history and legends of this place. He relates the almost Napoleonic story of how six girls, maids in fact, decorated their bedroom for their master and mistress. Sleeping with the windows fast shut, they were suffocated by the fumes of the leaden paint in their 'Blue Room'. "Now their ghosts walk together with those of the Lords of Gathen and the monks of the vanished Abbey that once stood where the ruin of Aberglasney House now nestles below the hill (Grongar), that made it famous". This is his sad but colourful description of this beautiful place with its evocative atmosphere.

My husband has an interesting link also with Aberglasney in his Napier antecedents, for General Sir Charles Napier (the one who stands under Nelson's column, on the S.W.corner of Trafalgar Square and who, on conquering Sind in India, sent the telegram back in Latin "Peccavi", 'I have sinned') married John Dyer's niece and visited Aberglasney and the area.

#### GLANDULAS FAWR, Llangathen SN 5524 2066

This house was owned by Llywelyn ap Gwilym who lived at Brynhafod, the present house being built about 1860 or possibly a few years earlier, a picture of an earlier one on the site being equally pleasant, built slightly to the west of the present building. The original house is mentioned around 1400, as having been the residence of Thomas Fychan (a descendant of Gorono Goch). It was Denise, daughter of Thomas ap Howel Fychan (vivens 1597), who married Rhydderch ap Gwilym, a descendant of the Lord Rhys. The Revd W.T.Nicholl lived in this present building in 1873, his son Theodore Nicholl being friendly with my mother's family and I remember him coming to tea at our home in Llanelly when I was a child and bringing his latest book as a present. My own family, the Harrises of Dryslwyn Fawr moved here in 1922, and their descendants, my cousins, the Olivers, continue to do so today.

#### BERLLANDYWYLL, Llangathen SN 5849 2195

Originally named Porthrwyd until the end of the 17th century, the present house was built a hundred yards away above the old orchard; hence the change of name to 'dark orchard' ( Berllandywyll). In 1330-1350 Llewelyn Foethus, who traced his ancestors back eight generations to Prince Elystan Glodrudd, owned this house; his descendants continued there until 1806 when, on the death of Miss Alice Gratiana Jones Llwyd, it passed to Lord Cawdor (Francis Jones - 'Historic Carmarthenshire Homes). The house is below the church in Llangathen, the Elizabethan orchard wall still standing.

#### HAFOD NEDDYN, Llangathen SN 5848 2398

Standing on the hill north of Broadoak, the present house is 19th century, although the earliest recorded house there is from the 16th century. The Enthovens lived there for a while and I have very happy memories of staying with them as a child, also riding there with them on a Welsh pony

'Moonstone' descendant of the famous 'Starlight' who was the first of this famous line in the breed developed by Mrs Lorna Blandy's family at the turn of the century. The earliest known family of Hafod Neddyn were the Bowens (see Francis Jones, 'Historic Carmarthenshire Homes').

#### TALIARIS, Llandeilo Fawr rural SN 6397 2798

Taliaris Park lies three miles north of Llandeilo. The Royal Commission of Ancient Monuments report that this house has not been studied, although they describe it as 'A handsome early Georgian mansion with earlier bits inside. The west wing was recently demolished (1957). It now stands as a compact unit. It has a fine 17th century plaster ceiling and staircase'. According to Major Francis Jones the first family established here was the Gwynne family, descended from a natural son of Sir Rhys ap Thomas of Dynevor in the 16th century. The Peels lived here in the 19th century (first cousin to Sir Robert Peel). It is still occupied, divided into flats today. Hed yr Milwr (or the Soldier's road) near Taliaris leads down to the Crug y bar (or 'Heap of Death), the road being that which the Roman soldiers drove their slaves from Carn Goch near Carreg Cennen to the Dolaucothi gold mines.

#### ABERMARLAIS, Llansadwrn SN 6927 2954

This house was recently burnt down. It figures in some of the history of this book and was an important house. Leland writes of it thus: "In Marleis Park is a welle favorid stone place motid [moated], new mendid and auggmentid bi Sir Reese ap Thomas. There now dwellethe Thomas by the marriage of his father Thomas ap Gruffydd ap Nicholas with Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir John Gruffydd." Abermarlais came into the family of Sir Rhys ap Thomas by the marriage of his father Thomas ap Gruffydd ap Nicholas with Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir John Gruffydd. Admiral Foley was to build an elegant mansion on the site near the Towy c1820. One room led on from another, the house and grounds became in a state of disrepair recently, the stone steps leading up to an entrance at the back was the only habitable part, with great rats in the cellar. The Abermarlais stone at the gate is sheltered by a yew tree; it is stone foreign to the area, having been brought down by the ice age, the only similar rock being found in Scotland. Captain Pelham, who owned the house at one time, dug to try and get it out, but could not find the bottom! An amusing legend about this stone tells how it picks

itself up on New Years' eve, goes for a bathe in the Towy and comes back again!

#### DERWYDD, Llandebie SN 6126 1783

The oldest part of the house is 12th century. King John is said to have stayed here in 1210 on his way to Ireland. Fragments of the older house are incorporated in the present house, with bits of what may have been a 15th century house, a Tudor mansion, and 17th and 18th century building work. There are Jacobean mantelpieces, oak carving and panels, and especially Sir Rhys ap Thomas's bedstead c1500, which has carved sides with lively scenes from his life. One wing containing 40 rooms was demolished in 1800. The carriage circle in front of the mansion was formerly a tournament or tilting yard. The first recorded owner was in 1550, the present family continuing the line being the Stepney Gulston family.

#### RHYDARWEN, Llanarthney SN 5582 1945

Rhyd hir wen - long white ford; also Owain's ford - Glyndwr (from Peter Smith's book on the Houses in South Wales and R.C.A.M.)

This house is on the side of the river Towy, opposite Dryslwyn castle. It is a two hall house, of unsure date, being possibly early 15th century. Clearly it was property belonging to Sir Rhys ap Thomas, since several doors have carvings depicting his crest and devices belonging to his family. Several interesting features of its construction may be summarised:-

##### *Ornamental roofing*

In Medieval times the northern and eastern cruck area had contained most of the ornamental roof. (In later 16th century ornate roofing declined in popularity, surviving in stone-walled regions in the north of the country, better than in S.Wales).

##### *Enriched doorheads*

These are distinguished by carving on the face of the spandrels, a comparatively rare form.

##### *Other features*

As for the fireplace, a Tudor rose was cut from one of the beams; this was another form of ornament, common in the north, being carved on the underside of the collar or tie, usually in the form of a flower; such ornaments are confined to Hall houses. There are also very interesting wall paintings.

#### CWRT BRYN Y BEIRDD (Bard's Hill Court)

This is an unfortified house on the side of a wild hill, in front of the impregnable fortress of Carreg Cennen, standing in an almost uninhabited district. One of Gruffydd ap Nicholas's sons lived here in the 15th and 16th century. The buildings are L shaped around the sides of an irregular farmstead or yard. Whole trees were used in the building as beams, which were roughly squared. It has trifoliated single windows and pointed doorways. One fireplace is 10 feet wide and 6 feet high. It could have been the summer residence of the owner of Carreg Cennen or it could have had some function to do with the bards or minstrels of the middle ages, while it might well be the house mentioned by Dr R.A.Griffiths as built by Rhys ap Thomas ap Dafydd (great-great-grandson of Goronwy Goch) in 1411.

#### DRYSLWYN FAWR (at the foot of the castle)

No one has come any nearer to finding the bailiff's house for the castle. This house, the largest farm in Carmarthenshire at one time, was once in Llangathen, but in 1925 the boundaries changed in line with the changing course of the river, and now Dryslwyn Fawr is in Llanarthney. Originally built in the 15th century, the Davis family owned it for 200 years, when it was sold to Lord Cawdor in 1773 for £10, to become part of the Cawdor estate, being rebuilt in in 1780.

My own great grandfather Henry Harris celebrated his marriage to his first cousin Elizabeth Evans at Dryslwyn fawr in 1854, moving there with their family in 1866. Both died there in tragic circumstances in 1886. My grandmother Esther had to testify at the coroner's court, having witnessed the cause of her father's death, when a horse bolted, crushing him against the stable door, while a few months later my great grandmother was to die herself of a broken heart.

The other children, John, Jane, Anne, Mary, Margaret, Elizabeth and little uncle David were all left to bring themselves up and run Dryslwyn Fawr, until 1922, when William Harris JP married his cousin Anne Harris from Dryslwyn Fawr and moved to Glandulas Fawr. The Williams family then took over at Dryslwyn Fawr and Mr Williams JP lived there until his death in the late 1970s. Previously there had been a large household with servants, in the time of the Harrises they needed their servant's hall. I remember my mother telling me of her visits to her aunts after her mother Esther died, when she was only seven, and how the aunts gave her a line in the Lord's Prayer to recite by heart during family prayers - in Welsh of course although English was the spoken language in Llanelli when she was brought up!

Dryslwyn Fawr was later altered in the time of the Williams family who decided to partition it off, while more recently there have been more changes, the house changing hands several times, most of the considerable acreage now being dispersed. Could this have been the Bailiff's house for Dryslwyn castle, I wonder, with its enormous acreage including the castle itself until the 1960s.

#### DYNEVOR CASTLE (Newton), Llandeyfeisant SN 6144 2253

The present house dates from 1660. There is no evidence of the earlier house in the 1532 survey, a year after Rice Griffith Fitzurien's execution, when the property was confiscated by the Crown. The gardens were of 17th century formal type, but were later altered to 18th century landscape garden style, including the ha-ha (R.C.A.M).

#### GOLDEN GROVE (Gelli Aur), Llanfihangel Aberbythych SN 5966 1984

This is one of the major houses in Carmarthenshire, according to Major Francis Jones ('Historic Carmarthenshire homes'). Apparently there were three successive houses built over the years; the present one was built by Wyattville on the side of the hill, in 1834; the previous two were in the valley, this present one is on the side of the hill. The first being built for John Vaughan in 1560-65. Jeremy Taylor wrote several books there, sheltered by the Earl of Carberry in Commonwealth times. It had '30 hearths', so that it was substantial and down by the river Towy, but was burnt down in 1729. Its successor was not impressive and was pulled down in 1826. Earl Cawdor

built the new mansion with fine gardens, now used by the Agricultural Institute and open to the public.

TREGYB, Llandeilo Fawr, near Ffairfach SN 6338 2130

The earliest mansion was probably built on the site of an earlier house, in the 16th century with additions made in the 17th century, and extensive additions and alterations in the 19th century, so that its appearance was thoroughly Victorian'. So wrote Major Francis Jones in his book 'Historic Carmarthenshire Homes'.

I remember it when at the age of 6 or 7, I joined the school there as a boarder, going with it when it returned to Kent. I remember the enormous oak staircase with broad landings and ideal for producing plays with the audience sitting in the large oak hall. It was a tremendous place to act on! I remember the taste of the yellow tomatoes which grew in the large walled garden behind the house, which always seemed to be filled with columbine, and the ornamental lake across the lawn on the side of the house. I nearly drowned here and all the bubbles flowed over the top of me as I struggled to reach the oar pushed in for me to grab. The bubbles came from the stream which fed the lake. What was much nicer was the large sheep dip in the river flowing down beside the house on the other side, we swam here too, it was deep and shady under the great trees, clear and very cold.

The house is very well described by Major Francis Jones, just as I remember it. The earliest owner was John ap Harry d.1555, seventh in descent from Sir Elidyr Ddu of Crug, Knight of the Holy Sepulchre.

THE PHYSICIANS OF MYDDFAI (Meddygon Myddfai)

This area has more than its fair share of folk lore, and one of the best stories in the country originates here, about 12 miles north-east of Llandeilo, near Llangadog in the parish of Myddfai. The Elizabethan farmhouse on the spot today is named Blaen Sawdde. The story has everything that a myth should have, but is known as 'common form', for similar elements of the story crop up all over Europe.

The first of the Meddygon Myddfai was Rhiwallon, who lived at the beginning of the 13th century. He had three sons, Cadwgan, Gruffydd and Einon whose mother, Nelferch in the Welsh fairy tale, was the Lady of the nearby Lake (Llyn-y-fan-fach or the lake of the small peak). The only condition she made on marrying him was that, should Rhiwallon strike her without cause three times, on the third stroke she would return to the lake.

Eventually of course this happened. Her husband was broken-hearted and with his three boys kept returning to the lake to beg her to return. One day Nelferch did appear. She told her sons that their mission in the world was to relieve pain and the misery of mankind. She took them to a place still called Pant-y-Meddygon, Physicians' dingle, where she showed them the qualities of different herbs, of which there are many interesting varieties in Carmarthenshire, the properties of which were also well known to our past generations, but much of that area has since been flooded to make a reservoir.

The physicians were patronised by Rhys Grug, ruling from Dynevor around 1230, as mentioned in our first chapter. He gave them lands and privileges, to help them to study their profession and to practise, their descendants pursuing that same profession at Myddfai until the beginning of the 18th century. Their several descendants through the female line include:

*Barbara, daughter of the Lewis's of Gwynfe House*

- Miss Lewis married Colonel Pedder, their only child Barbara marrying George Yale of Plas-ial, N.Wales, one of the family who founded Yale University, U.S.A.

*Mary Jones of Dolgarreg*

- who married John Bishop, J.P. and High Sheriff, born 1718, of Stonehouse.

*The Prices of Glanyrannell*

- but this line has now died out.

Just a few notes, which may be of interest, on the parishes of Llangathen and Llanegwad, together with mention of Capel Penarw, Llanfynydd church, Llanfihangel-Cilvargen and Court Henry churches.

LLANGATHEN PARISH CHURCH was probably built as a rectangle, a single nave without aisles. The first stone building may have been erected in



the 9th century, but this is uncertain. Cathen himself was King of Dyfed and Brycheiniog c675, perhaps ruling from Dynevor close by. The transepts may have been added early in the 14th century, giving it a cruciform shape.

The tower is built in defensive style, rising about 55 feet to battlements. It contains a spiral staircase with stair-turret at an angle rising a few feet higher. The original doorway was at ground level in the tower, where the ceiling is vaulted. The main structure of the church has been so altered that it is difficult to be sure whether it originally extended to its present length. The south aisle of three bays has been added at some time, the third bay possibly joining the chapel of Berllandywyll (previously known as the chapel of Llywelyn Foethus), now filled with the organ and hiding the old external door to the chapel.

On the southern wall are memorial tablets to two great families, one the Llwyd memorial of Berllandywyll, the other the Wade Green of Court Henry. A legend is also attached to the portrayal of the boy holding a snake. Across the chancel on the other side of the nave is a west chapel, known as the Cadfan chapel, after the house of that name close by the field where the battle of Coed Llathen was fought in 1257. The east wall has a blocked window.

The restoration of 1813 was carried out by Earl Cawdor and Thomas Phillipps of Aberglasney, who restored the arches in the aisles, removing the facing stone, whereby today they stand in stark contrast to the older Gothic type. Adjoining the chancel is an addition, known as the Aberglasney chapel, containing the Bishop Rudd memorial built in 1614, desecrated by Cromwell's men in 1650. Usually a Bishop's hands are clasped right over left, showing the episcopal ring, but this effigy depicts Bishop Rudd's hands clasped left over right, he was probably responsible for the Aberglasney Chapel and the extension to the south aisle. The roof was entirely restored in the 1813 restoration, the nave being barrel-vaulted but the chancel trussed.

The medieval dedication is to St Michael and all Angels, but the original dedication was to St Cathen, who was eighth in line from Aircol Lawhir; the Normans however in medieval times replaced the Celtic with Biblical saints.

Llangathen parish church was in 1290 in the maenor called Kilsaen (Cilsane), adjoining which was the maenor of Alltygaer, the borough and castle of Dryslwyn forming an enclave within it, independently administered. There was a chapel in the castle itself, as already stated, and it has been suggested that Aberglasney could have been an ecclesiastical institution within the

maenor of Alltygaer, but as yet there is absolutely no evidence to support this. On Professor W.Rees's map of the area in the 14th century, both the parish church is shown and also a church or chapel attached to a monastic house, but they are both adjacent and isolated on the map, giving not a clue as to the exact spot. Close to the church were the ruins of Capel Penarw, although the Chester records ignore this completely. There was a healing spring near it, beneficial to eye ailments and rheumatism.

The altar table in Llangathen is an interesting one; it measures 5ft x 3ft x 2ft high and is a fine example of Tudor carving. It was brought to the church in 1867 by Mr Henry Butler, who bought all the oak fittings from St Benet's Church in Grace Street, London, giving the Tudor communion table and altar rails to Llangathen Church in memory of his marriage in that church. Under the table top of the altar is a caryatid figure of an Elizabethan girl with secular dress of the late 1530s and bare feet. She holds in her hands what appears to be a chalice or ciborium the cover of which is also carved. Above her, and along the underside of the table top, is a symbolic carving representing the soul. Three Tudor roses with crowns above (perhaps too small to be bishop's mitres) and candlesticks are carved on the other five table legs. altar rails in 1971, because they had dry rot, replacing them with the altar rails from Llanfihangel Cilfargen church, which had closed down.

LLANEGWAD PARISH is adjacent to Llangathen and closely related to it, part of Llanegwad being in Catheiniog, while Glandulas Fach, a farm close by Glandulas Fawr was once Llanegwad's vicarage. Again, Dryslwyn castle may have been known as the castle of Llanegwad, before it was called 'Dryslwyn' (the first record of the name Dryslwyn was in 1216). In Llanegwad there is an ancient fort known as Pen-y-cnap, (Knoll's end) an ancient mound about 300 yards west of the parish church, defending a ford over the river Towy, near to the road from Carmarthen to Llandeilo, which shows an early trackway to the ford.

The top of the tump has been thick with trees since the end of the 19th century. The height of the tump is about 25 feet, slightly elliptical and very steep on the river side It is surrounded by deep wide embankments which have been filled in to some degree. The summit diameter is 50 feet with a slight depression in the centre. Llanegwad can claim a religious house in a hollow between Twyn and Cefn Hernin as one of the earliest dedications in Wales, if not the earliest, known as Llan Hernin, named after Isernius who

was made bishop by St Patrick. Indeed St Patrick and Isernius were ordained deacon together at Auxerre by Bishop Amator early in the 5th century.

There are many ancient places in Llanegwad, for instance Allt y Ferin camp, on the river Cothi which forms the boundary of Catheiniog. It is marked by Prof W.Rees in his map of the 14th century, together with the church of Llanhernin already mentioned in Llanegwad.

LLANFYNYDD CHURCH, meaning 'the church in the mountain', was more associated with Llanegwad church than Llangathen in early times. There is another 'war bank' here called Banc y rhyfel.

LLANFIHANGEL CILVARGEN CHURCH has now been closed down; it was an ecclesiastical parish, a Cistercian foundation under Whitland Abbey; the original 13th century parish church building has 14th and 15th century features. 'Llanfihangel' means the church of St Michael.

COURT HENRY CHURCH as previously mentioned was built by the family at Court Henry, specifically to solve the problem of worship there, which had previously taken place within the house of Court Henry in the early 19th century.

MONASTIC FOUNDATIONS RELATING TO THE AREA. WHITLAND ABBEY was on the site of the earlier 'White House' (Ty Gwyn ar Daf). Here, it is said, Hywel the Good summoned his clergy and laymen to approve the laws he had drawn up for the people of Wales in 930. Here also the Lord of Dryslwyn, Meredith ap Rhys Grug, was buried in 1271, near the High Altar. Today the Abbey is a total ruin and very little of it is to be seen. Whitland was a Cistercian foundation and, like Strata Florida (Valley of Flowers), a centre of Welsh culture. The ideals of the monks were simplicity, poverty and chastity.

STRATA FLORIDA - The Lord Rhys began the building of Strata Florida in 1184, on a foundation he took over from the Normans, and the building was probably finished around 1243-45. Lord Rhys's charter was confirmed by Henry II and although it was patronised by the northern princes, it was mainly connected with Deheubarth. The Annals of the Princes (Brut y Tywysogion) were written here.

TALLEY ABBEY was Premonstratensian, the only one of the order in Wales. Unlike the Cistercians they were canons who had parochial responsibilities, but they wore the white habit like the Cistercian monks.

They were a reformed branch of the Augustinian order, as the Cisterians were to the Benedictine order. After the first Welsh War of Edward I in 1277, Talley was taken into Royal hands and became impoverished. The mother foundation in Premontre north east of Paris, is now a ruin, and the Chateau, built in its stead, a psychiatric home.

The reformed house at Premontre in the diocese of Laon in Picardy was founded by St Norbert in 1120 in the forest. The canons always favoured building their houses in quiet out-of-the-way places. The order was introduced into England in 1143. In a booklet about Coucy le Chateau, the enormous chateau close by, there is an early legend about the forest where St Norbert had his Abbey. "One day a great hunt was carried out in search of a wild animal which was terrorising the countryside (popular imagination transformed it into a lion). 'Tu me l'a pres montre' wrote the Lord of Coucy le Chateau to the country folk - a play on words of dubious taste. In the summer the monster was killed in the grounds of the Abbey". In remembrance of that deliverance, each year at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, the Abbot or his representative went to render homage, which has today developed into a bizarre ceremony of rissoles!

There appears to have been an order of female recluses with an Abbess at Talley. Very little is known of the internal organisation of such Premonstratensian houses in England, but it seems that both men and women were in the community at Talley for a time. The Abbey Seal is in Norwich Castle Museum. The family from Edwinsford were connected with the Abbey from the 12th to the 19th century and their family vault is in the nave.

CARMARTHEN PRIORY. SN 4198 2044 The Augustinian priory of St John and the early Christian bishop-house of Teulyddog, were also connected with St Teilo (vide report in the 1979 No.19 publication of 'Archaeology in Wales', T.A.James, Dyfed Archaeological Trust).

#### THE MONASTIC CITY OF LLANDEILO.

The ancient city of Llandeilo needs a book to itself, indeed I have written several booklets, but here just a passing reference will have to suffice. The present road winds up through the centre of the old grave yard, which caused a furore at the time (18th century). In ancient days the Gospel Book of Saint Teilo lay open on the altar of Llandeilo Fawr, with names in the margin put there by those who wished to be remembered when the special canon was read from the Book of Life. This Book, has written in the margins, in the

earliest written Welsh to survive (8th century) referring to the 6th and 7th century, now resides at Lichfield Cathedral and is known today as the 'Lichfield Gospels'. (And I have written a detective story on that saga also).

INSCRIBED STANDING STONES AND CROSSES which are numerous throughout Dyfed. In Llandeilo church itself there are two crossheads dating from the ninth and tenth century, I believe a third, dating from the 6th century was also found in the graveyard, although I have not seen it. I pick a few at random:-

1. In Llanarthney church there is a wheel cross, 3 feet in diameter the shaft measures 3ft x 2ft, below which used to be a portion 1'7" long by 2 feet wide, making the whole length 7 feet 3 inches long.
2. The EIDON CROSS, now in the National Museum of Wales, stood in a field at Glansannan farm near Court Henry. It is one of the most important inscribed stones in Wales, the field called 'Cae maen issa' being where it was found. It is about 6'9" high by 1'4" wide at the top, 2'3½" wide in the middle and 8" at the bottom.
3. The VORTIPOR STONE, although out of the immediate area of Dryslwyn, must be mentioned, since Vortipor was the son of King Aircol Lawhir, important in the 6th century, being also a ruler of Dyfed when his father died. It was found near Whitland, in the churchyard of Castell Dwyran, which may have been a chapel attached to a manor of the rulers of Dyfed. It has both Ogham and Latin inscriptions on it, including "Memoria Voteporigis Protictoris" - i.e. a monument to Voteporix the Protector (an honorary title in the late days of the Roman Empire), the Irish form in Ogham is "Votecoriga".

Gildas calls him 'One of the five Tyrants - worthless son of a good father' (Aircol Lawhir), "although now greyhaired and approaching the end of his life, he is a very leopard, stained and spotted with sin, and utterly regardless of the account he is shortly to give."

4. The PAULINUS STONE is also very interesting with one of those rare inscriptions in Latin. It was one of two Dolaucothi stones found at Maes Llanwrthwl (Urthwl being Paulinus's brother, who kept the monastery at Llanwrthwl), where now just a farm is, on the spot at Crug y bar. "There are no ecclesiastical buildings in stone at this period, because of the abundance of wood in this area." (J.E.Lloyd. 'History of Carmarthenshire' Volume I p120).

The Paulinus stone inscription reads: “A keeper of the Faith, a lover of his country, a most fervant champion of Justice”. This saint appears in the lives of St David and St Teilo.

I end my outline of about eleven centuries in the district of Dryslwyn on this note. I continue it in my next book with a deeper look into the 'Age of the Saints'.

Thus the story of Dryslwyn is a fascinating episode in the history of South Wales; it can be said to have begun with the Ice Age; it can since be said to epitomise the ups and downs, the hopes and fears, the successes and failures of a people determined to maintain their own faith, culture and identity. It has shared the fate of so many minorities in the history of mankind, but we can be proud of its Celtic nature, of the Art, Literature and Music that still emanate from its people.

From my earliest childhood, it has stood for me as home, never having a clue that Wales had its own history, separate from England, until I started this book. it has now become for me a 'Cause'! When I finished this it was as though I'd opened 'Pandora's box'! The vague dreams of my youth have more than borne fruit, for the kaleidoscope of colour, changing the view of Dryslwyn's fields, means to me the kaleidoscope of life - of the wider history of my country, and of her aspirations.

The researches which I have carried out into the 'Age of the Saints', have also given me a vision in depth of the special lead our country has always had, and is still giving to the world; I am now talking of Celtic Spirituality in my journey and which I wish to delve further into in my next book, for I believe our country of Wales has an even greater contribution to make to the life of our global world today, still yet to be properly explored. Wales is, coming of age.

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