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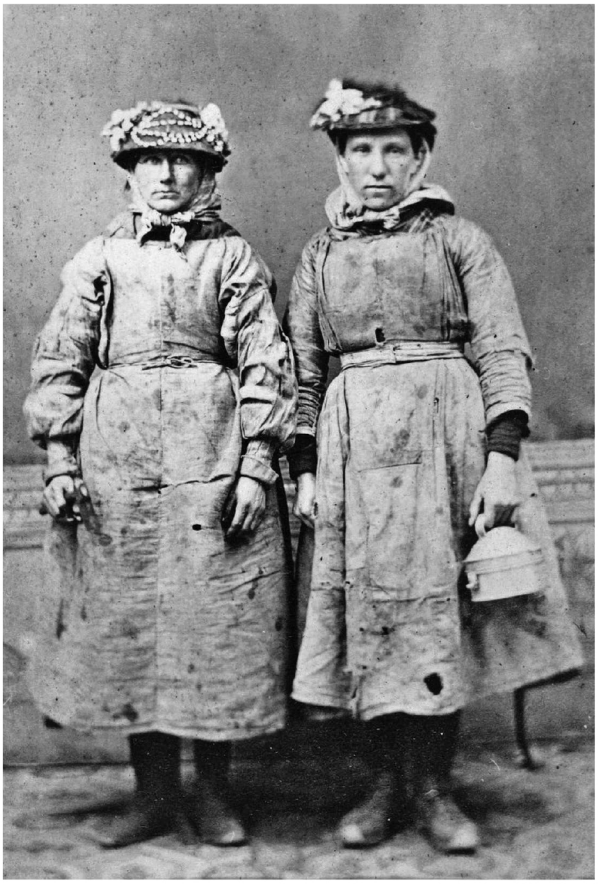

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**Email:** monants@yahoo.com

**Website:** http://www.monmouthshireantiquarianassociation.org

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**Front cover**: Two 'tip' or 'patch' girls who worked for Tredegar Ironworks. The photograph was taken by William Clayton, a Tredegar photographer, *circa* 1865 and taken from an album of photographs originally belonging to C.B. Crisp. It shows the high skirting boards used by the photographer for reducing the subject's size, their working clothes and the decorated hats worn by some of the working girls as a statement of individuality. Image courtesy of The Gallery of Costume, Manchester Art Gallery and produced under the Creative Commons Licence BY-SA 4.0. See this volume, 'Through the Lens: Female Labour in Mid-Victorian Tredegar', by Christabel Hutchings.

THE MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARY

VOL. XXXVI 2021

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# GRACE DIEU ABBEY REVISITED

**By David H. Williams**

***Introduction***

Under the editorship of the late Mr Cefni Barnett, my very first article regarding Cistercian history was in this journal in 1964,[1] and reviewed the small abbey of Grace Dieu four miles west of Monmouth. Since then other articles have been written concerning the monastery, and both an exploratory excavation[2] and a geophysical survey of the site[3] have taken place. It is now possible to include more illustrations than in former years, and so I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to update our knowledge of a religious house which has always meant a very great deal to me.

***Foundation and Site***

No visible trace remains of the first monastery which lay west of the Troddi brook, its name commemorated in the extra-parochial division of Parc Grace Dieu, noted as being a hamlet 'with a separate assessment for the poor, but without either church or graveyard',[4] and which because of early monastic ownership had tithe-free status. Known as Parc Grace Dieu, or Parker's Dew, because of the deer park which later owners had here, the medieval name of the locality was Treurgan, an alternative use as late as 1577, meaning 'the farm or settlement of Gwrgan.'[5] The tithes arising from the territory were the perquisite of the chapter of Llandaff cathedral, in recompense of which the monastery paid the chapter yearly £2-13-4, but was owing 3s 4d. in 1443 which it eventually paid.[6] In 1571, the entire home demesne of the abbey, west and east of the Troddi stream, was referred to as 'the lordship of Treurgan'.[7]

In 1217 the founder, John, English lord of Monmouth, petitioned the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order to be allowed to found a monastery for its monks. The Chapter enjoined the abbot of Morimond, mother-house of not far distant Abbey Dore, to send 'discreet men to diligently enquire' as to the possessions which John would give the new community. John of Monmouth may have hesitated, and five years were to elapse before, in 1222, authority was given to the abbots of Bruern (Oxfordshire) and Bordesley (Worcestershire) to send monks from the community of Dore to colonise the new house, but only when all necessary preparations had been made.[8]

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1 *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* **I,** Part 4, 1964, pp. 85–111.

2 David H. Williams, 'Grace Dieu Abbey: An Exploratory Excavation', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* [hereafter *Monm. Antiq.]* **III**, Part 1, 1970–1971, pp. 55–58.

3 Neil Phillips and Mike Hamilton, 'Geophysical Survey at Grace Dieu Abbey'. *Monm. Antiq*. XVI, 2000, pp. 51–54.

4 Joseph Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire* **2**, Part 1 (London, 1914), pp. 75, 122: Ordnance Survey, *Book of Reference to Plan of Grace Dieu* (1882).

5 I am indebted to Linda Davies of the National Library of Wales and to Mrs Morfydd Owen for this translation, taken from Richard Morgan, *Place Names of* Gwent, pp. 208–09.

6 The National Archives (hereafter TNA), E315/44, f. 132.

7 National Library of Wales, Milborne Family Papers 1387.

8 J. Canivez (ed.), *Statuta Capitulorum Ordinis Generalium Cisterciensis ab anno 1114 ad annum 1786* (Louvain, 1933–1941, *Statuta* hereafter) 1**,** 481 (1217/67); 2. p. 19 (1222//32). John of Monmouth also founded Holy Trinity Hospital in Monmouth, in perhaps 1240 (*Monmouthshire Merlin*, 26 February 1859); and Abbot Walter of Grace Dieu was the first signatory to his deed (*Monmouthshire Beacon*, 26 and 30 December 1876).

The General Chapter of 1225 noted that John of Monmouth had not yet founded the abbey, the abbots of Margam, Buildwas and Bordesley were bidden to hold him to his intention.[9] Preparations were in hand, as the annals of Dore reveal the actual date of permanent foundation as being 24 April, 1226, the vigil of the feast of St Mark.[10] The official name of the new monastery, De Gratia Dei ('of the Grace of God') found its parallel in two French abbeys of the Order.

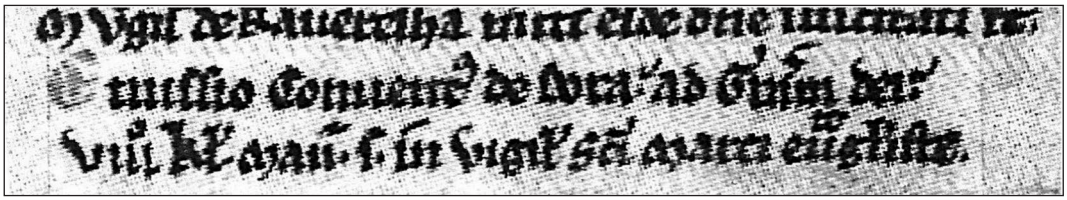

Fig. 1: 'The going of a convent from Dore to Gratiam Dei, 8th of the kalends of May made on the vigil of St Mark he Evangelist' (i.e: 24 April, 1226). [From the *Annals of Dore*: British Library, Egerton MS 3088].

Seven years later, Grace Dieu was burnt in the autumn of 1233 during the uprising of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and Earl Richard Marshal of Pembroke, against Henry III of England; the Welsh claiming that the abbey had been built upon land rightfully theirs, and wrested from them by John of Monmouth.[11]

The destruction, probably of still largely timber buildings, was complete. The *Annals of Waverley*, quoting Ovid (Heriod I. 53), record that: 'The abbey of Gratia Dei was completely overthrown in such a way as can be described, 'Now there is corn, where once stood Troy.'[12]

It may have been about this time that the abbot was abducted and carried off into the hills far west at Faenor by 'the sons of Arthen',[13] and the Welsh stole the monastery's corn.[14] Julian Harrison, in his fine research, based upon an interpolation in the *Annals of Margam* under the year 1232,[15] tells how the abbot of Grace Dieu, together with a single monk and the deacon of Usk, together with youthful attendants, crossed the river Usk on a peace-keeping mission, to negotiate with 'the sons of Arthen', the cause is debatable.

The deacon was allowed to depart, but the abbot, monk (who had been wounded), and boys, were taken hostage to Faenor, where they were held for fifteen days. A young monk, William of Striguil (Chepstow), came from Grace Dieu as a hostage, but his inspiration enabled their escape: 'At the end of the morning we shall fill our cowls with grass and hay, and cautiously leave them pretending that we were praying'. The plan worked!

Following the burning of the monastery, the General Chapter in 1234 appointed the abbots of Bruern and of Kingswood to visit Grace Dieu, and to 'advise and induce the founder either to make peace with his enemies, or to give his monks a more suitable place where they can live without damage'. The order was repeated the next year.[16] Meanwhile, King Henry III gave twenty trees

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9 *Statuta* **2**, p. 39 (1225/39).
10 British Library, Egerton MS 3088.
11 *Annales Monastici*, II: *Annals of Waverley*, p. 312.
12 Harrison, J., 'The Troubled Foundation of Grace Dieu Abbey', *Monm. Antiq.* Vol. XIV (1998), pp. 25–29.
13 *Calendar of the Close Rolls* (hereafter: Close R.), 1234, p. 445.
14 *Statuta* **2**, 1234, p. 49, 1235, p. 35.
15 Trinity College, Dublin, MS 0.2.4 [1108].
16 *Statuta* **2**, p. 137 (1234/49); 147 (1235/36); *Annales Monastici* II, p. 317.

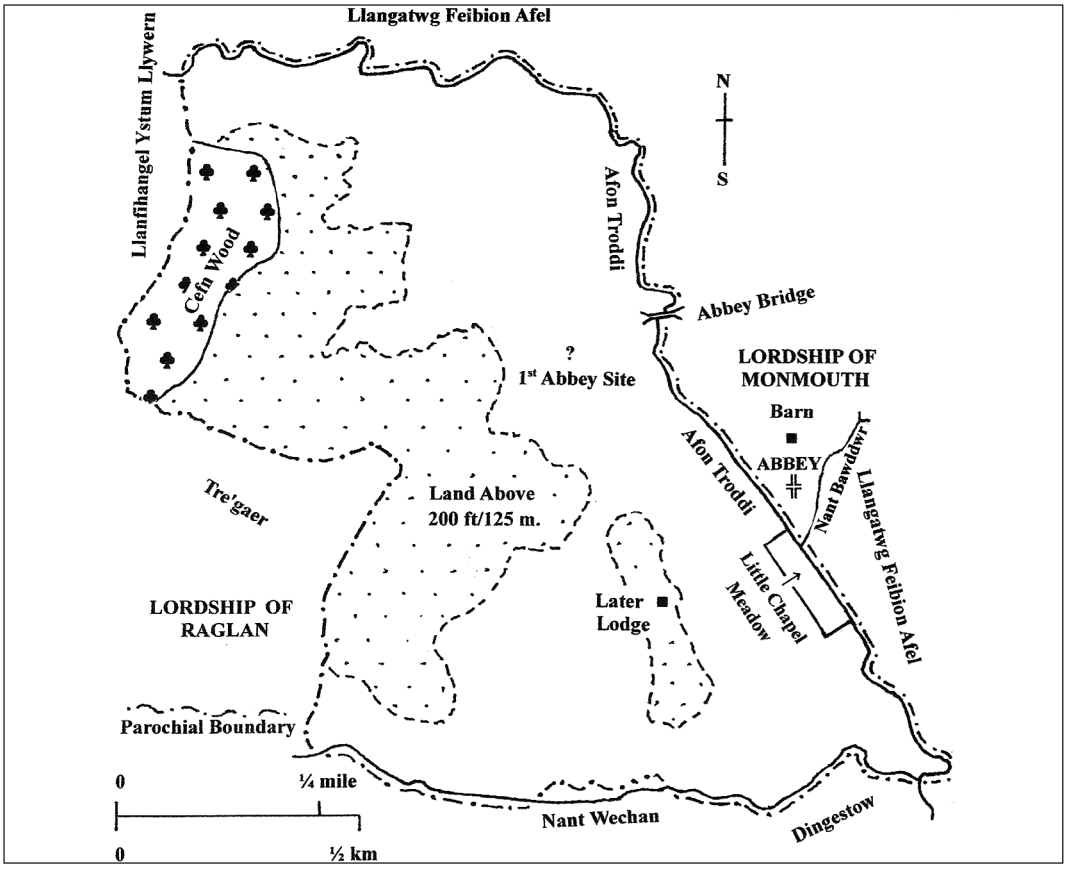


Fig. 2: The Extra-Parochial Division of Parc Grace Dieu: Area: 387.47 acres.
(On the southern boundary, the river has deviated from its original course).

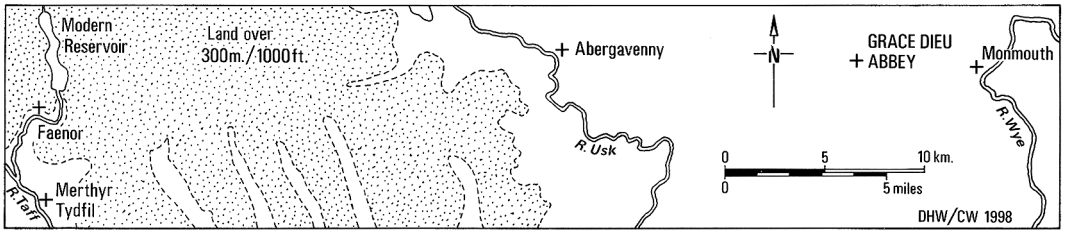


Fig. 3: The location of Faenor in relation to the abbey. (Grateful thanks are due to the late Mr Colin Williams, of the Department of Archaeology and Numismatics at the National Museum of Wales, who drew this and other maps, for me).

from the royal Forest of Dean to assist in rebuilding the monastery. (Further grants of timber were made: in 1240, four oaks from Grosmont Forest, and in 1253, two oaks from Seinfrenny Wood near Skenfrith).[17] In 1236, John of Monmouth having found a more suitable site, the General Chapter instructed the father-abbot of Dore to transfer the monks there without delay.[18]

Despite the troubles of his own house, Abbot John was in 1236 named by the king as one of the arbitrators who were to meet in Low Week at Montgomery to receive compensation for his incursions.[19] In 1248 Grace Dieu was involved in a dispute with Tintern abbey, but the three abbots (of Margam, Buildwas and Bruern) directed to investigate the matter failed to do so for four years.[20] For some unknown reason, the abbot of Grace Dieu was in 1264/5 'keeper of the privileges' of its mother-house at Dore.[21]

In the late 1270s renewed Border violence saw Grace Dieu again badly affected, and another site change was mooted. The abbots of Neath (Glamorgan) and Thame (Oxon.) were in 1276 commissioned to 'inspect the place' where Edmund Crouchback, count of Champagne and now also lord of Monmouth, intended to transfer the abbey.[22] Whether this happened is uncertain.

By 1280 problems remained, and the abbots of Tintern and Thame were delegated to 'go personally to Grace Dieu and enquire carefully as to the causes of the ruin of the house.'[23] The monks may have been dispersed for a time as, in 1281, Abbot Warin acted for Thame in a dispute with Oseney abbey regarding the foundation of a new monastery at Rewley. He was then described in the cartulary of Thame as 'the lord Warinus, abbot of Grace Dieu, our procurator'.[24] A reference in 1233 to the 'castle of the White Monastery' suggests that the monks may have been dispersed in that year too, following the burning of the abbey.[25] The second wave of troubles, then, may have necessitated another temporary dispersal. Warin, abbot of Grace Dieu, was again acting in 1281 for Thame abbey this time in a dispute with Rewley abbey (Oxon.), and was again described as 'the lord Warin, abbot of Grace Dieu, our procurator.'[26] In April that year, Abbot Warin and the abbot of Thame, were both present at the election of a new abbot of Beaulieu.[27] It seems the abbot of Thame had offered him temporary shelter.

What is certain is that the initial site of the monastery lay west of the river Troddi, yielding to that locality its extra-parochial status. The later site of 1233 or 1276 must have lain where foundations have been discovered: east of the river Troddi. Its new site was not extra-parochial, but in the parish of Llangatwg Feibion Afel. As for Edmund Crouchback, in 1291 he granted Grace Dieu the advowson of the church of Skenfrith,[28]

The identification of the abbey sites has long been a matter of conjecture. A deed of 1535 refers to the 'old abbey field' as being adjacent to 'lands of the lordship of Raglan', referring to the

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17 *Close R.* 1235, p. 44; 1240, p. 185, 1253, p. 11.
18 *Statuta* **2**, p. 155 (1236/13).
19 *Close R*, 1236, p. 343.
20 Canivez, *Statuta* **2**, p. 382 (1252/31).
21 TNA, E40/A.14282.
22 III, p. 161 (1276/62).,
23 *Statuta* **3**, pp. 200–01 (1280/29).
24 H.E. Salter, *Thame Cartulary*: *Oxfordshire Record Society*, **26**, 1948, pp. 33–36.
25 *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (hereafter: *Patent R.*) 1234, p. 58.
26 H. Salter, *Cartulary of Oseney*, Oxford Historical Society 90, 1929, pp. 453–58; *Thame Cartulary*, Oxfordshire Record Society **26**, 1948, pp. 33–36.
27 *Annales Monastici* **4**, p. 479.
28 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls* 1291, p. 451.

first site.[29] In that extra-parochial area burials have been found close to Abbey Cottage.[30] Thomas Wakeman, an antiquarian of note, wrote in 1858: 'May it not [the abbey] have stood near the bridge, and the traditionary Old Chapel been in fact the monastery. Cummins' account of vaults there would, if a fact, rather lead to this conclusion, for vaults in small chapels were by no means common.'[31] (Thomas Cummins dying at Parc Grace Dieu in 1832, was described as a 'very respectable farmer.')[32]

Wakeman also told how: 'Not a vestige of this abbey remains; it stood just beyond the bridge over the Trothy, on the left hand of the road, where tombstones and foundations of buildings have been found quite recently, but are now turfed over. The last remains of the monastic buildings, a large barn, was taken down within these last few years'.[33] This relates to the first abbey site. In 1834 a meadow on the west bank was known as Little Chapel Meadow. [34]

Fig. 4: A possible first site of the abbey, though this is debatable.[35]

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29 E. Owen, 'Documents Relating to Grace Dieu', in: *South Wales and Monmouthshire Record Society: Miscellanea* **2**, p. 196.

30 D. H. Williams, *White Monks in Gwent and the Border*, Pontypool, 1976, p. 67.

31 Society of Antiquaries of London, Wakeman MSS.

32 *Monmouhshire Merlin*, 22 December 1832. His widow died on 8 August the following year.

33 Thomas Wakeman, *Antiquarian Excursions in the Neighbourhood of Monmouth*, Monmouth, 1860, pp.53–54.

34 Gwent Archives, Rolls Family Papers: D361/E/2/M20.

35 A.G. Mein, 'Abbey Cottage', *Archaeology in Wales* 40 (2000), p. 153

John Leland *(c.* 1538), the antiquary, referred to the abbey as lying on the right hand bank of the Troddi, but would place the site on the west of the stream. He also told of: 'Grace of Dew, an Abbay of White Monks standing in a wood and having a Rille running by it. Veri good pastures be about this place.'[36] Archdeacon Coxe (in 1801) told definitively where the abbey stood, and at the location proved by excavation: 'From the farm [Parc Grace Dieu] the remains of a fine avenue of ancient elms leads to the left bank of the Trothy on the other side of which at a little distance, stand the ruins of the abbey, which are insignificant, part of a barn and a few detached fragments of walls.'[37] and, a few years later (1813), Nicholson appears to have drawn on Coxe's work.[38]

Another memorial of the monastery remains in the name of the nearby Abbey Bridge, known in 1664 as Pont-y-fynachlog. There is evidence that other bridges existed over the Troddi close by, but Abbey Bridge may be the 'new bridge by Grace Dieu Park', referred to by Lady Lucy Herbert in her will of 1603, which in its turn may have replaced the Longbridge named in 1537.[39] Immediately south of the boundary of Parc Grace Dieu, a field on the west bank of the Troddi is known as Fishpool Meadow, having a large embankment and detached large mound.[40] Further afield, Parlour Farm is located: it has been suggested that this, away from the precincts, may be where the monks received their guests.[41]

Yet another and revealing description of the site was given in 1679: 'A messuage called the abbey of Grace Dieu, and parcels called the moat, the abbey mead, the little plecks, and the old orchards'.[42] Might the 'moat' indicate a former defensive or drainage facility?

***An Exploratory Excavation: 1970–1971***

This was achieved in two seasons by young people from H.M. Borstal, Prescoed, together with members of the Monmouth Archaeological Society, led by Mr Stephen Clarke, and of the Manchester Grammar School Archaeological Society. Mr Jeremy Knight, F.S.A., visited the site on several occasions, tendering expert advice, Mr Cefni Barnett, F.S.A., identified the coins found, and Mr George Boon, F.S.A. reported upon them. Mr Stephen Locke, of Newport Museum, commented upon the lithology of the building stones uncovered. Permission to excavate was afforded by the Hendre Estate (Capt. E.G. Prior, estate agent); and interest and helpfulness were shown by Mr and Mrs Johns of Abbey Cottage, Mr Cowles and family of Hendre Farm, and Father Byron of Monmouth.

The final site lay in Abbey Meadow, east of the Troddi brook (which appears to have been straightened in monastic times); in the north of the meadow a sunken old road enters, and there are cobbled surfaces at no great depth.

Two squares (10ft. x 10ft., one later extended, and a trench (40ft x 10 ft.) were cut. In the southern square a well-built wall, running in an easterly direction, was uncovered at a depth of four feet. The trench revealed the foundations of a red sandstone house occupied from around 1670 to 1730, and the remains of a fireplace and a latrine were apparent. Its structure made use of worked

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36 L. Toulmin Smith, ed., *The Itinerary of John Leland*, Centaur Press, 1964, **3**, p. 50.
37 William Coxe, *An Historical Tour of Monmouthshire*, London, 1801, p. 237.
38 G. Nicholson, *Cambrian Traveller's Guide*, 1813, p. 927.
39 J.A,. Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire* 2, Part 1, p. 122 et seq.
40 Local information. It was called Fishpool Dingle in 1906 (*County Observer*, 10 Janaury 1906).
41 This tradition was communicated to me by Mr M.P. Watkins, solicitor of Monmouth, a number of years ago.
42 National Library of Wales, Milborne Family Papers, No. 1399.

Fig. 5: 1970–1971: At Work.

stones of ecclesiastical origin which must have come from the abbey: fragments of door jambs, window structures, columns and capitals.

A thirteenth-century capital, clearly from the abbey, is kept now at nearby Hendre Farm (on the left in Fig. 7); its incised cross may be a mason's mark.[43] A sacred sculpture found in the grounds of the Pant, possibly emanated from the abbey, likewise the front door at Middle Hendre farm.

Coins found included an Edward III Canterbury penny, and farthings from the reigns of Charles II, William III and George I, dated between 1672 and 1719. Pottery, identified by Jeremy Knight, included sherds of Staffordshire capacity mugs with the revenue stamp of William III (1688–1702), wine bottle seals of 1723, and some sherds of Bristol delft and North Devon tempered ware. Clay pipes included the work of William Harper, senior, of Broseley, Stafforshire (1696–1736); the Herefordshire Rose and Crown of R.H. Norton (1650–1740), and the Oswald type of R.E. Bewt (1650–1683).

In 1962 a hoard of nine gold coins, several now on display at the National Museum of Wales, ranging in date from the reign of Edward IV (1461–1483) down to 1536/37, were found buried on a hill top at Tregaer, a mile west of Grace Dieu; they were possibly hidden there by the monks at the Dissolution.[44]

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43 A.G. Mein, 'Hendre Farm', *Archaeology in Wales*, **40** (2000), pp. 109–110.

44 J.M. Lewis and David H. Williams, *The White Monks in Wales*, Cardiff, 1976, p. 31.

Fig. 6: The Masonry Wall.

Fig. 7: Masonry Finds.

***The Geophysical Survey***

On 2 February 2000, a resistivity geophysical survey and contour survey was conducted at Grace Dieu by Dr Mike Hamilton and Mr Neil Phillips, of University College of Wales, Newport. Permission was granted by the now landowner, Mr Frank Sutton, following on consent granted for work on this scheduled site. The equipment used was the property of the SCARAB research centre of the University of Wales College, Newport; Professor Maddy Gray, Dr Ray Howell, and Newport Reference Library provided additional assistance, and Anne Leaver prepared the plan. Conditions were very difficult as the site, under grass, was extremely wet and muddy, but the survey did reveal clear evidence of archaeology.

The conclusions drawn from the survey were:

(a) The survey located the remains of stone buildings and/or paths. Some of these may be on different alignments, suggesting multi-phase occupation.

Fig. 8: Part of a causeway unearthed.

(b) The survey shows that the site clearly extends to the east, with the suggestion (the implication of **E** in Fig. 9 below) of major structures in that direction. There is visible evidence in the field to suggest this.

(c). The site is clearly large with the suggestion of structures running down the whole 60 metres of the eastern side of the surveyed area. Further visible earthworks extend from the south and SE of the surveyed area.

(d). Clearly the site needs a more comprehensive coverage (probably an area of 100m.x100m.), and only then would the plan of the abbey resolve itself. However, this will only be practical in drier conditions. Such a survey should also take in the area to the north of the modern fence.

More examination is needed at this site, but the archaeology is masked by deep layers of alluvium, the result of flooding by the Troddi over many years, and undoubtedly the removal of most of the building stone for the construction of Grace Dieu Lodge. The *Cardiff Times* reported on 13 July, 1872, that 'the recent heavy storms have caused the rivers Wye, Monnow and Trothy, to become much swollen, partly destroying the hay mown and mowing grass, especially at Parc Grace Dieu.'

***Aerial Photography***

In 1976 I reported that these considerations meant that the evidence of aerial photography, so far consulted, four of vertical views, was meagre, though a large enclosure at the site was apparent.[45]

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[45] David H. Williams, *White Monks in Gwent and the Border*, Pontypool. 1976, p. 68.

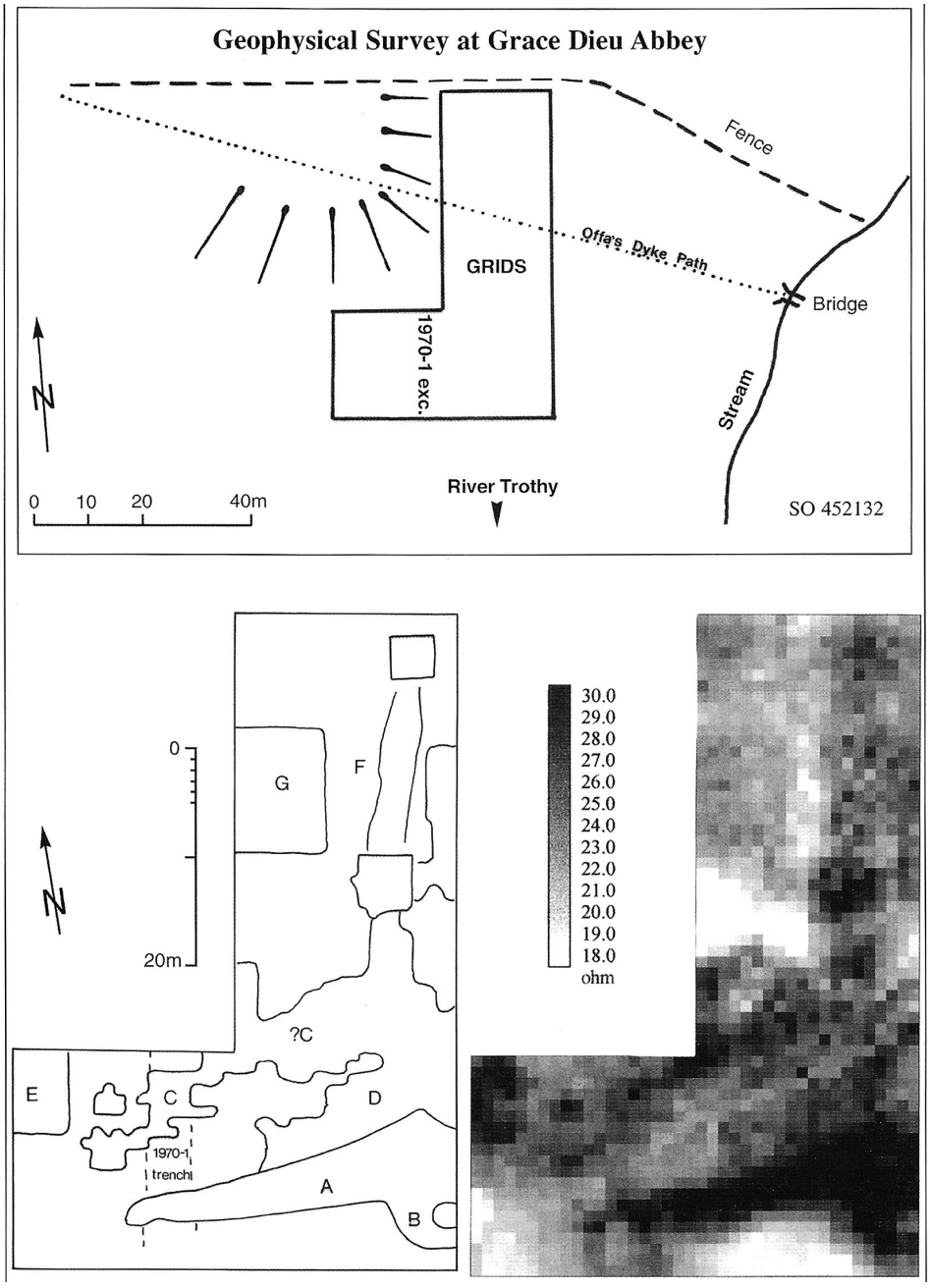


Fig. 9: **A:** A 30 metre feature from west to east, the possible medieval wall uncovered in excavation; **B:** a possible rounded structure; **C:** an unclear anomaly; **D:** An area of high resistance, probably an area of rubble, cut by a drainage channel running ENE-WSW; **E:** a right angle feature, perhaps of a rubble or stone floor; **F:** a boundary on a NNE axis, with to the east the edge of a substantial building or buildings; **G:** A probable rectangular structure, possibly with dividing walls.

Fig. 10: The 2018 aerial photography: Dr Toby Driver. (Courtesy of the Royal Commission, Wales).

Fortunately the dry summer of 2018 allowed Dr Toby Driver F.S.A., Senior Investigator of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments in Wales, to produce much more revealing aerial photographs of the site of the abbey. No claustral plan is evident, but the various lines depicting possible enclosures, footpaths and wall foundations, will be of the greatest assistance in any further archaeological excavation, which I hope might happen.

***The Fourteenth Century: Stowe Grange***

Little is known of Grace Dieu in the fourteenth century, apart from two major concerns. At, or around, the time of the initial foundation of the abbey, the monarch, Edward I, had granted its monks 'the hermitage of St Briavel's (in the Forest of Dean), with land called Pater Noster, and other lands appurtenant, the abbot and monks having agreed that three priest monks of their Order, shall minister there for the souls of the king's father, his ancestors and heirs'.[46]

The incorporation of existing hermitages was common during the expansion of the Cistercian Order.[47] It was, however, a considerable undertaking for a small community. In a later petition the monastery requested, of perhaps Edward II, that as 'the profits of the chapel were not sufficient to

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[46] *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1227, p. 4; *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, **2**, p. 132 (The abbey was to find 'reasonable estover' for the two previous chaplains. In all two carucates of land and pasture were received); W.T. Allen, 'Notes on the History of St Briavel's', *Trans.the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Association*, **IX**, 1884–1885, pp. 87–91. Wakeman distinguished between two hermitages in proximity, that of Briavel and that of Merkel: Wakeman, *Excursions*, op. cit., pp. 26–27.

[47] The abbey, as noted below, also received the hermitage of Penyard. In 1469, a monk, his house not stated, William Witton, was 'curate of the chapel of St Briavel's': Gloucester Public Library, *Hockaday Abstracts*. No. 328.

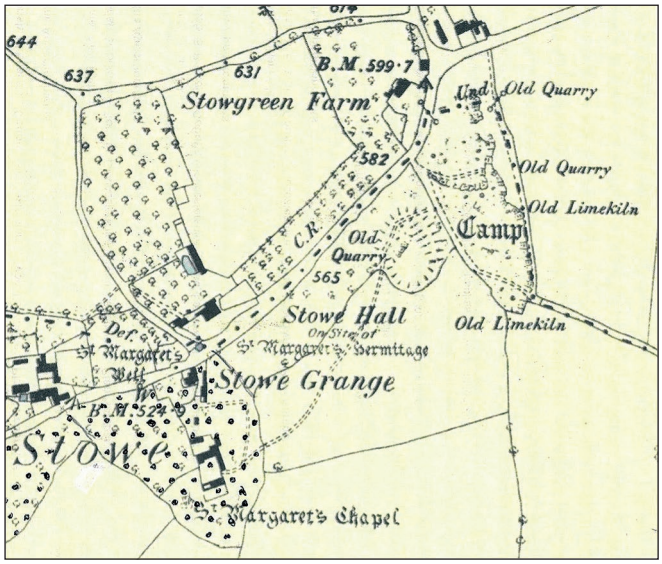


Fig. 11: Stowe Grange (Ordnance Survey, Six Inch Map, 1884).

maintain the two monks on duty at the king's free chapel of St Briavel's', that they might have the right of housebote and haybote in the Forest.[48]

The problem resurfaced in 1361, a year of a resurgence of the plague in the Welsh borderland. The community had occasion to appeal to Edward III, as the common land in the Forest (where the abbey had rights of pasture) had been largely assarted, and the demesne lands of the grange (later known as Stowe Grange) had been 'trodden down and consumed by the king's deer'.

In consideration of these facts, and the 'present depressed state of the abbey', Edward III permitted the transfer of the daily chantry obligation to 'the altar of St Mary' in the abbey, but each new abbot, on taking up office, was to go to 'the custodian or constable of our castle at St Briavel's and in his presence affirm by a corporal oath that the abbot and the community do maintain by two of its monks the chantry obligation'.[49] In 1398 an inquisition found that for at least ten years these conditions had not been fulfilled and, for a time only, the chapel and grange passed out of the abbey's possession.[50] In 1291, the *Taxatio* estimated the abbey's holdings at Stowe as being worth £2-18-4. A valuation of 1419 told of Grace Dieu having temporalities in the Forest of Dean worth £8-2-4, and 'movables' (e.g. cattle) worth 4s 6d.[51] Surveyed by Edward Gostwyke in 1541, the manor of Stowe was then worth twenty shillings to the Crown (around £2,000 in today's values), the tenant of the grange farm being Matthew Catchemay.[52]

Stowe Grange was enlarged in 1338 when Edward III leased to the abbey thirty-six acres of wasteland at Wyegate and Langeford 'contiguous to the manse and convent of the abbot at Stowe,

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48 TNA, SC 8/50/2462.
49 W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* **5**, 1846, pp. 685–686.
50 *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous* **4**, p. 87.
51 *Registrum Edmundi Lacy*, op. cit. p.71.
52 TNA, E314/73, f. 38. In 1537, the grange was said to be worth annually £5-6-7: TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2499; for its later history, see W.T. Allen, op. cit. pp. 7–91.

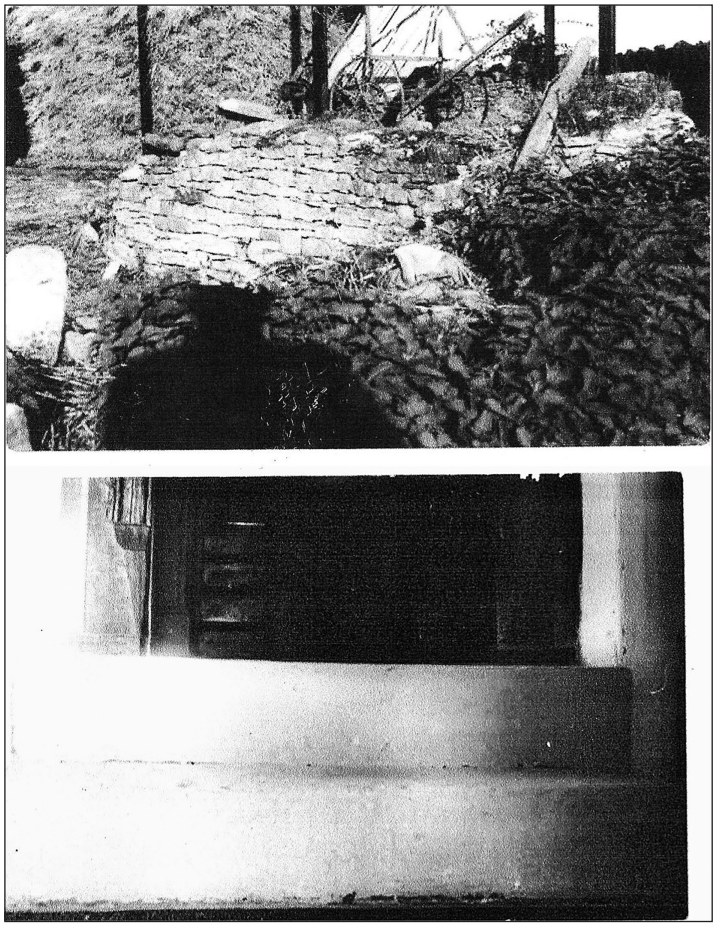

Fig. 12: Remains of Stowe Grange Chapel in *c*. 1951 (Courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives: D3921/III/28). Papers of the late Dr Cyril Hart, Chief Verderer of the Forest of Dean.
'The steps probably from the grange above'.

it having been found on inquiry that the land was three leagues from the cover of the Forest, and that no damage would result to the king'. The land cost the monks nine shillings each year (one penny per acre).The abbey was permitted to 'enclose with a small dyke and low hedge and bring back to cultivation the said waste';[53] a necessary precaution against animals roaming wild. Kelly suggests that this lease was made at a time 'when the king was greatly in need of money to finance the expedition he sent to Flanders'.[54]

The property at Stowe was by 1474 leased to Richard Payne who appears that year to have sub-let to Thomas Dulle of Clearwell.[55] Later, around 1534, a family dispute as to the 'land in Newland

53 TNA, C143/239, f. 21.
54 Kelly, op. cit. p. 24.
55 Gloucestershire Archives, D2244/183.

and St Briavels', led 'to the destruction of the seal on the lease, and the obtaining of a new lease from the abbot and convent'.[56] When the monastery was dissolved, its property at Stowe consisted of Stowe Grange, Stowe Meadow, two fields at Wyegate, meadows at Longfield and Castlefield, a house and lands at Wethersfield, and other lands unspecified.[57]

The abbey had another chantry chapel, the castle chapel in Monmouth, given to the monastery by Duke Henry of Lancaster in 1356, and still enjoyed in 1462, the monks providing their own bread, wine and candles.[58]

Of individual monks, Nicholas de Stanton, was detained in Rome in 1351 'by the difficulties and toil of the journey'.[59] He had been, with leave, on pilgrimage there for the jubilee year of 1350; whilst around 1397, Philip ap Thomas studied theology and canon law at unspecified universities.[60] Like others in the Order, Cistercian monks were now spreading their wings, and receiving advanced education.

The fourteenth century came to a close around 1398, with a band of men led by John and Thomas Scudamore violently ousting Abbot John Holand of Dore from his monastery. It seems he fled to Grace Dieu for safety, but the miscreants followed him, and the record tells how, at 'both Dore and Grace Dieu they took away horses and cattle, stole goods and chattels, and purloined charters and muniments', all valued in excess of one thousand marks![61]

***The Fifteenth Century***

This century opened with the abbot of Grace Dieu being present at, and ratifying, the election to the abbacy of Waverley on 31 January 1400, of John Bryde (Bird).[62] That same year, on July 14th, the abbey was included in a lengthy list of those monasteries expected to contribute to 'the support of impoverished Cistercian scholars at Oxford'.[63] The un-named abbot of those times was summoned to the Convocation held at St Paul's Cathedral, London, in 1408,[64] and a Council of the Province of Canterbury in 1417.[65]

At intervals throughout the fifteenth century the conventual life at Grace Dieu was not helped by the problems certain abbots faced or caused. Abbot John Everdon between 1400 and 1404 had to make, either by attorney or in his own person, eight petitions to the Court of Common Pleas, for the repayment of debts 'owing and unjustly detained' to the monastery. Amongst the debtors were Simon Malere and John Wilkin, both owing 40 shillings, and John Smyth owing £8 in 1403 and still unpaid in 1404.[66] The monastery was said in 1427 to be suffering from 'the ill governance of Richard Moyne of Morgan and his adherents'. It would seem that he was a monk of Margam who

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56 TNA, C1/774/15.
57 W.T. Allen, op. cit. pp. 87–91.
58 TNA, DL 29/595/9539; 29/596/9559.
59 *Calendar of Papal Registers, Letters,* **3**, p.385.
60 Ibid. **5**, p.151.
61 *Cal. Patent Rolls,* 1398, p. 362.
62 W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* **5**, London, 1846, p.240.
63 TNA, E135/1/6.
64 J.H. Parry, ed. *Registrum Roberti Mascall, Episcopi Herefordensis*, Canterbury and York, Soc., 1917, p. 65.
65 Ibid. *Registrum Edmundi Lacy, Episcopi Herefordensis*, Cantilupe Soc., Hereford, 1916, pp.7–8.
66 University of Houston, AALT project online, where full images of the pleas made; David M. Smith, *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales* , Supplement, Argonaut, Rumania, 2019, where full references are given.

had usurped the abbacy of Grace Dieu. The abbot of Dore was instructed to visit Grace Dieu, and the Steward of Monmouth Castle was commanded to 'go with *and aid* him'.[67]

In a deed dated 1351,[68] but from internal evidence very probably an error for 1451,[69] the abbot of Grace Dieu, Roger of Chepstow, in the presence of the abbots of Dore and of Llantarnam, offered his resignation 'but not without sorrow in his heart', on account of 'the several misfortunes of his monastery, the ill-will of the world, and the pressure put on him by his neighbours'. He was granted an annual pension of £20, his own chamber and servants, a place at the abbot's table, and the freedom to speak where and when he wished.

Later in the century, in 1484, it was the turn of Abbot John Mitulton, who had served from 1473, to express his frustration and resign the abbacy. He told how at Grace Dieu he was 'frequently harassed by his enemies, so that he was not able there to safely and peacefully serve God'. Abbot Philip Morgan of Dore accepted his resignation, noting that John was 'a good man, of honest conversation, and of wholesome belief, and he was permitted for the space of one year to choose another monastery where he could freely and peacefully 'render to God his vow'.[70] During Mitulton's abbacy Grace Dieu, seen as a poor monastery was, in 1478, exempted from payment of a clerical tenth due to the Crown, in company with the religious houses of Abergavenny, Chepstow, Malpas, St Kingsmark and Usk.[71]

Mitulton's successor was a monk of Dore, Richard Dorston, who became abbot of Dore itself in 1495, and thereby father-abbot and Visitor of Grace Dieu. It seems that he tried to supervise Grace Dieu in excess of his ordinary duties as Visitor, and he was inhibited from doing so by Abbot Marmaduke Huby of Fountain, now the Reformator of the Cistercian Order in Britain. Dating his letter at Fountains in November 1496, Huby told Dorston that, until the following year when a planned meeting of 'fathers of the Order' had taken place, he was not to 'visit, correct, punish or order the monastery of Grace Dieu, or persons of the same, whether in capital or in goods, under pain of excommunication and deposition'.[72] In 1490, the abbot of Dore had been confirmed in his position as Visitor of Grace Dieu.[73]

Of individual monks, mention might be made of Robert Ady (*alias* Newent) who, with papal dispensation, became vicar of Puriton, Somerset, in 1460, dying in 1475.[74] The evidence is scanty, but whilst two or three of the abbey's monks bear Welsh surnames, somewhat more bear witness to the English borderland as being a significant catchment area: Philip of Kingstone, Herefordshire (where Abbey Dore had a grange), Roger of Chepstow, Robert Newent and Nicholas of Stanton, bear witness to this; the last two named showing the influence of Oracle Dieu in the Forest of Dean.

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67 J. Hobson Matthews, *Monmouth Records* (Monmouth Local History Centre), **II**, paras. 81–82; the late Mr Keith Kissack drew my attention to this reference.

68 British Library, Royal MS 12 E XIV, f. 23r; information from the late Dr C.H. Talbot .

69 See David H. Williams, *White Monks in Gwent and the Border*, Griffin Press, Pontypool, 1976, p. 73, fn. 17; and p. 62 for fuller details of this corrody..

70 TNA, E315/236, f. 228; *Monm. Antiq.* **II,** Part IV, 1968–1969, p. 203.

71 TNA, E179/33/14.

72 TNA, E135/18, f. 6. (A reference kindly supplied by the late Dr F.G. Cowley, sub-librarian of Swansea University).

73 TNA, E135/18/6.

74 H.C. Maxwell-Lyte and M.C.B. Dawes, ed., *Register of Thomas Bekynton*, 1934, p. 49; *Calendar of Papal Registers, Letters*, **11**, p. 528.

***The Early Sixteenth Century***

Little is on record of these years, save that in 1518 one monk had abandoned his vocation, and despite being 'an apostate monk of Grasduw' said Mass as a chantry priest in St Briavel's church.[75] A rare legacy came to the monastery by the will made in 1523 of David ap Gwilym Morgan of Llanddewi Ysygyrd, Monm., and of Kingstone, Herefs., who left 20 shillings each to Dore and Grace Dieu, equivalent to around £500 apiece today.[76]

Several abbots of the period had short years in office, especially in the 1530s, when all the abbots may have been translated from other monasteries, showing not only the paucity of personnel at Grace Dieu, but seemingly a blatant attempt to ensure a pension. John Rothwell (1530–1533) was formerly a monk of Buildwas, a deacon there in 1494,[77] and rewarded with an annual pension of £8 on leaving office. William Ipsley (abbot for little more than a year) came from Flaxley, as did Thomas Perpin (1534) who gained a pension of £4 p.a., derived from the abbey's St Briavels lands. The last abbot, John Gruffydd (1534–1536) may have been a former abbot of Margam.[78]

***The Suppression***

The closure of the monastery came in 1536, the value of the house being less than £200 p.a. On 6 June the property was surveyed and made financially accountable to the Crown; the final suppression came on 3 September.[79] The community then consisted of only two monks and three servants, and their sustenance in the three months between survey and closure cost a little under £2. They bought various goods from John ap Bowen costing £4, but he was not reimbursed until about 1540.[80]

Abbot John Gruffydd received a payment of £15-10-0, but only a paltry annual pension (on 4 February 1537) of £4, out of the confiscated monastic revenues. His fellow monk received a one-off payment of 13s 4d, and the three servants 28s 4d. between them. It was very little for persons losing their livelihood and home. Rothwell and Perpin continued to receive their pensions granted earlier. That of Perpin was to be payable, on stated feasts, 'between 8am and 11am, at the baptismal font in the parish church of Monmouth'. There is no mention of Rothwell's pension after 1539, but Perpin continued to receive his £4 annually, approved by the Court of Augmentations, as late as 1553.[81]

At the time of dissolution no lead appears to have remained on the roof of the church and other buildings, and the work involved in cutting down and weighing the three or four bells cost only 10s 10½d. Valued at £5-10-0, and weighing 5½ cwts., they were still at the site in 1545, then taken to Monmouth, and held there for the Crown by William ap Gwillym. Later they were bought by John Coore, a London grocer (who had not received them by 1555), and conveyed to Bristol by David Fortune (at a cost of 5s. 1d.).[82] Twelve ounces of silver gilt plate were noticed at the survey, together with a chalice and paten, whilst for a time at least Charles Herbert of Troy, Monmouth, son of the abbey's former steward, held a cope valued at 13s. 4d., as well as other goods.[83]

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75 Gloucester Public Library, *Hockaday Abstracts*, p. 328.
76 TNA, PROB11/21/332.
77 TNA, E315/43, f. 150.
78 D.H. Williams, 'Fasti Cistercienses Cambrenses', in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* **163**, 2014, passim.
79 TNA, LR6/152/1.
80 TNA, LR6/152/4.
81 TNA, LR1/229–31; LR6/152/1, 3, 4; E315/92, f. 75; Browne Willis, *History of Abbies*,1718, **2**, p. 142.
82 E. Owen, 'The Bells of the Dissolved Welsh Monasteries', in, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 1896, p. 264; TNA, E117/13/70–71; E 318/40/233; LR6/152/1;
83 Lawrence Thomas, *The Reformation in the Old Diocese of Llandaff*, 1930, pp. 49, 55; E. Owen, 'Documents relating to Grace Dieu', In, *South Wales and Monmouth Record Society*, Miscellaneous **2**, 1950, passim.

The monastic Visitors in 1536 had an eye to their own interests, and Dr John Vaughan, concerned with the survey and suppression of several houses in Monmouthshire and Breconshire, wrote to Cromwell on 28 April that year saying 'Help me to have one of the abbies to farm, paying the king as much as any other man may give, so that I may be able to do you more service'.[84] He was granted the lease of Grace Dieu on 20 July, 1537,[85] but in 1541 this passed for an annual rent of twenty shillings to William Herbert and Charles Herbert, his son;[86] then in 1545 the site and some Monmouthshire properties were sold for £517 to Sir Thomas Herbert of Wonastow and William Breton. Penrhos Grange was granted in 1553 to Sir Francis Russell, and in the same year Stowe Grange to Thomas Carpenter. Herbert also received other of Grace Dieu's lands in Skenfrith, Monmouth, and Whitecastle.[87]

***The Corrodians***

These were residents in or close to monastic buildings granted dwelling rights and food entitlements, either in recognition of past services to a monastery, or by purchase. At Grace Dieu on 1 August 1534, in return 'for a certain sum of money beforehand paid', Hywel ap John ab Ieuan and Margaret his wife were granted for life the west end of the gate-house to dwell in, together with weekly half a trugg of wheat, and half a trugg of oaten malt; a quarter of beef at Christmas, and a pig 'lawful to make bacon of' at St Martintide (11 November). They might keep two cows with food for them, as well as a pig, and a horse, and the right to breed hen and pullets, together with a garden pertaining to the gate-house, and an apple tree there. After the closure of the abbey, the Court of Augmentations (26 January 1537) allowed them to live out their lives in the west end of the gate-house, with a pension of thirty shillings per year.[88]

A second corrody was made on 7 July, 1535, to John Owen, bailiff of Stowe Grange, and his wife, Joanna, who had held a corrody at Tintern since 1521.[89] They were granted at Grace Dieu, for an advance payment of £10, 'the whole house called the gate house to inhabit and dwell', in like terms to that granted to Hywel ap John, but with a whole trugg of wheat and of oaten malt each week.[90] John died in 1537and the validity of this corrody was called into question; but at an inquiry held on 13 October, 1538, John Kynyllyn of Monmouth,[91] asserted that he was at Grace Dieu when the deed was agreed by the community and sealed.[92] The problems may have arisen because one Geoffrey Bromfield complained to the Court of Augmentations that although he had bought two annuities of the late John Owen, charged on the abbeys of Grace Dieu and Tintern, their payment had been stopped by Edward Waters, the king's receiver in south Wales.[93] Joanna, the widow, had

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84 *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, **13**, Part 1, p. 576; Thomas, *Reformation*, p. 32; Owen, 'Documents', p. 196.

85 TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2499.

86 TNA, LR1/228, f. 37.

87 *Letters and Papers*, **20**, Part 1, p. 665; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, 1553, p. 76;1554, p. 162; 1555,p. 184.

88 TNA, LR6/152, f. 2; E315/91, ff. 33v-34v.

89 TNA, E315/92, ff. 97v-98r.

90 TNA, E315/100, ff. 16v-17r.

91 E.A. Lewis, ed. *An Inventory of Early Chancery Proceedings concerning Wales*, Cardiff, 1937, p. 28 (1020/49).

92 TNA, E315/23, f. 59.

93 TNA, E315/23, f. 59. See other references in Williams, *White Monks in Gwent and the Border*, 1976, pp. 73–75. See other references in 1976 vol.

her annuity of £2 confirmed to her by the Court of Augmentations, with arrears, but with no mention of any continued residence in the gate-house.[94]

As for the position of abbey Steward for its possessions in Treurgan and Penrhos, Abbot Green in 1515 appointed William Herbert and his son, Charles, to this position. The annual fee of twenty shillings was in 1540 made payable to a later William Herbert by the Court of Augmentations.[95] Charles Herbert was the Steward, still responsible for its affairs, when in 1543 he made a return to Henry VIII of 'able men and picked and chosen men', tenants on the former lands of the dissolved monasteries of Grace Dieu, Monmouth and Usk. Unfortunately, he did not give individual numbers for each house.[96]

***Economic History***

Grace Dieu, whilst it had properties ranging far afield, was never a great land-owning house. In this respect, Garry Kelly has commented that 'the wave of monastic reform which had swept over England and Wales in the twelfth century, leaving the Cistercian and other orders in a commanding position, had subsided by the time that Grace Dieu was founded. Men were no longer animated by the same fervent desire to give part of their worldly goods to the service of God. The nobles became parsimonious in their grants of lands to monasteries because they feared further gifts would lead to a loss of rights and revenue that should accrue to them from the land'.[97]

The home estate lay astride the Troddi (Trothy) brook, to its west the extra-parochial division of Treurgan and Parc Grace Dieu, and to the east lands which now form a large part of the Hendre estate. The Suppression accounts list Treurgan as a grange of the abbey and within the lordship of Raglan, and tell there of 'the close called the old abbey, the prior's wood, the old ditch and the new ditch'.[98] The Manor of Treurgan included lands 'up to four miles distant'; of these a major property was Penrhos Grange, from which a well-defined old track runs directly to Parc Grace Dieu. The tithe corn Grace Dieu received from Penrhos and other corn from its lands was stored in the abbot's barn at Treurgan. There is also note in 1531of the 'abbot's court' at Treurgan.[99] The gross value of the properties in 1536 was £6-2-8. Some of the land adjacent to Penrhos Quarry, which indeed may have formed part of the grange. When land there was demised in 1531, the tenant was allowed 'stone to build a house'.[100]

The Minister's Accounts after the Suppression also note at the site Bakehouse Meadow, Longbridge Meadow, Priory Wood, 'pygsland', 'quarel feld', and 'the great mallow land next the mill'; all indicative names.[101] Attached to the home property lay Crug-yr-onnen ('the ash tree

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94 E.A. Lewis and J. Conway Davies, eds., *Records of the Court of Augmentations relating to Wales and Monmouthshire*, Cardiff, 1954, p.130.

95 TNA, LR6152, f. 4.

96 Surrey History Centre, Woking, Loseley MSS, LM/1330/4. (I am very grateful to the Centre [GU2] for the swift response to my request for a copy of this return).

97 Garry J. Kelly, 'The Monastery of Grace Dieu and its relation to Welsh Nationalism', Fordham University Graduate School, M.A., thesis, 1940, p. 12.

98 TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2499.

99 Williams, 'Grace Dieu', 1976, pp. 70–71; at an unknown later date, 'in the matter of bargaining between Thomas Herbert, esquire, and James ap Richard', an enquiry sought answers from deponents as to whether the tithes of Penrhos Grange had belonged to the abbey, and whether the monastery had leased the tithes of Treurgan from the chapter of Llandaff, but their replies are unknown: TNA, E321/46, mm. 199m 200.

100 Owen, 'Documents', pp.192–193.

101 TNA, E315/201, f. 27 (of 1537); Edward Owen, 'Documents relating to the dissolved Monastery of Grace Dieu', *South Wales and Monmouth Record Society*, 2, 1950, pp. 180–196.

mound') Grange to the north, with the lands of Hendre to the east. There is insufficient evidence to tell how far east the monastic lands extended, and whether they were contiguous to the present Hendre estate. A grange of little value, Cold Grange, lay immediately west of Great Garrow Wood, at NGR: SO 472131, and both were noted extra-parochial units in 1877, though there is now no sign of it.[102] It was demised by abbot Richard Clifford in 1447 for an annual rent of 9s. 6d., and in 1571 the bounds of the grange, now in the hands of Thomas Huntley of Hadnock, and William Catchmay of Wonastow, were known by 'mears and markes of old time'.[103]

A substantial grange, arising from 100 acres granted by Prince Edmund the Crouchback to Grace Dieu in 1273, was that of Coed Ythan (Coythithan). It stretched from 'the head of Badeley to the head of Badeput';[104] the first of these names may possibly relate to Baileypit (NGR: SO 488129), but the place-name of Coythithan is no longer apparent. Another deed which gives an approximate location for the grange refers to land between 'Rockfield, Coythithan, Badeput and Monmouth'.[105] Another deed tells that the grange lay in proximity to the Hendre , and adjacent to the road between Monmouth and Grace Dieu, and between Nant Frwd and Coed Gwaelod, place-names not now traceable.[106]

The grant of Coythithan occasioned a dispute with Monmouth Priory over the tithe arising from the assart of Coythithan, Grace Dieu in 1273 ceding it to the priory, for an annual rent of ten shillings, payment of which was seemingly delayed.[107]

Other lands, whose boundaries are now difficult to determine, included Inysed Vaughan Grange in the parish of Llangatwg-feibion-Afel and Beaulieu Grange in the parish of Dixton, possibly that described in 1291 as being at Wyesham, or in 1536 as 'towards Newland'. Lands were also held at Whitecastle, and in Monmouth town, including there a half-burgage at the junction of Grenars Street with Weir Street, and demised in 1507 to one Philip Morgan.

Further north, the abbey owned land in the parish of Skenfrith, as at Norton, and Tyr-ffos-cae, and 'near the Severn bridge and Severenny hill', as well as the rectorial tithes of that parish, with a tithe barn at Skenfrith itself.[108] The Skenfrith tithes were demised in 1516 to Thomas Collins and Philip Johns for four marks yearly.[109] An indication of their content came in 1542–3 when about half were stolen from the lessee. The portion taken consisted of 1 horseload of wheat, 6 horse and 1 wagon loads of barley, 1 load of beans, and 3½ loads of oats.[110] The abbey possessed a valuable fulling-mill near Osbaston, west of Monmouth, which brought in an annual rent of £1 in 1274 when Monmouth Priory was allowed to receive the rent, but of £5-6-8 by the Dissolution.[111] The property had been leased in 1486 to William Gwyne for 80 years at a rental of £2-16-8 yearly.[112]

In Herefordshire, Henry III in 1227, on a delayed payment of £120, gave to Grace Dieu the wood 'which is called Penyard Regi', at the instance of John of Monmouth, and this, called at first

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102 TNA, OS29/175
103 National Library of Wales, Milborne Family Papers, 89, 1387.
104 TNA, E40/14282.
105 TNA, DL29/3961.
106 TNA, LR1/228, f. 127v.
107 TNA, E40/14283, 14394; LR1/228, f. 127v; 229, ff. 56–58.
108 TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2499; PROB11/32/68.
109 TNA, E315/44, f.132.
110 *Records of the Court of Augmentations*, pp. 141, 177.
111 TNA, E40/14282; SC6/HENVIII/2499.
112 Owen, 'Documents', op.cit. p.190.

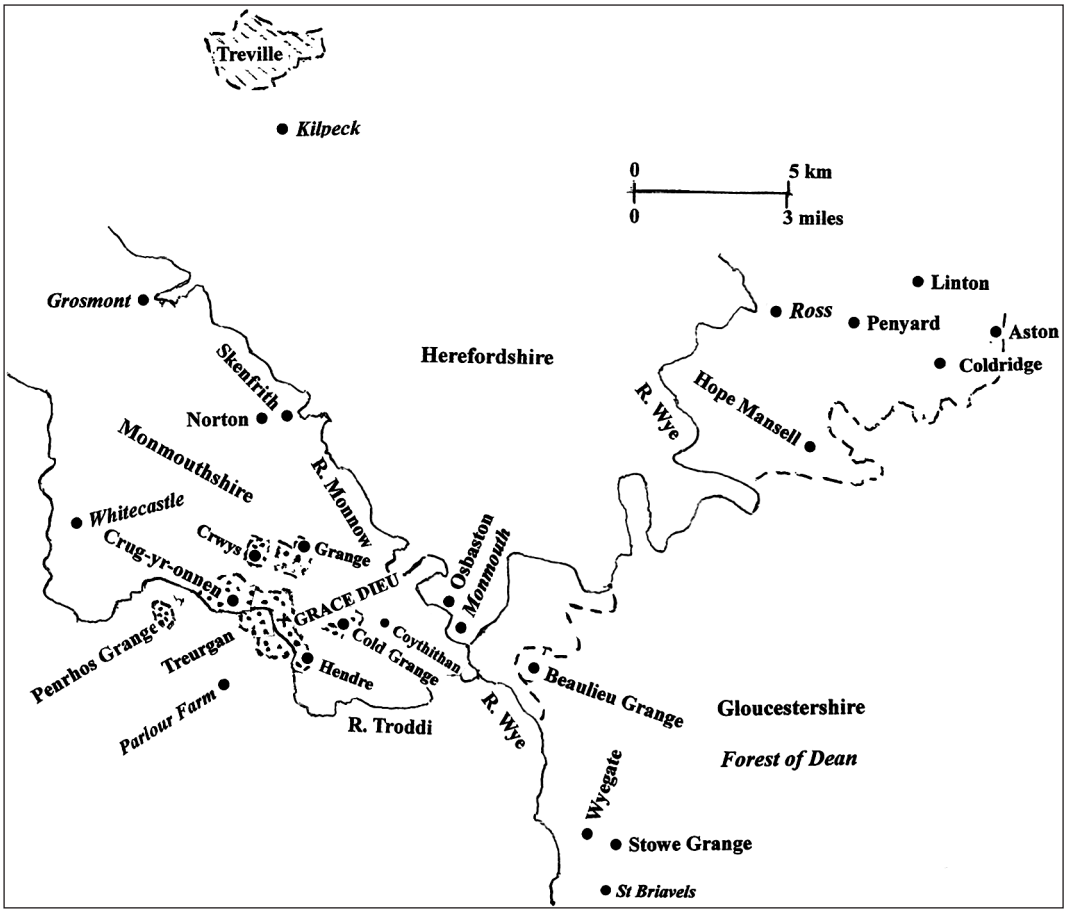


Fig. 13: Localities where the abbey had lands.

the Hermitage of Penyard, became its manor of Penyard.[113] The monarch allowed the abbey to mine here 'as much iron ore as necessary', for two itinerant forges it possessed at Penyard. Their land there was to be 'disafforested', and they might 'enclose it with a hedge, and dispose of it at their will'.[114] This activity of the monks was to be short-lived for the monarch, in 1285, confirmed a charter whereby Grace Dieu had given in 1267 the 'manor of Penyard Regis' to Joan de Knovile, for an annual acknowledgement of one pound of cummin, and 800 marks beforehand paid: a very substantial sum.[115]

It was, in effect, a sale, and in 1337, Grace Dieu forfeited by act of quitclaim all its rights in Penyard to Sir John Inge, previously its tenant. Inge, in 1336, reported that the 1267 deed had been 'accidentally lost', but it was re-confirmed in 1337.[116] Much earlier, in 1246, the monks had sold

113 *Rotuli Hundredorum*, **1**, p. 176b; *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, 2, p.170 (where 'in free alms').
114 *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, **2**, London, 1844, p. 185; *Calendar of the Charter Rolls*, **1**,pp. xiv, 3.
115 *Calendar of the Charter Rolls*, **2**, p. 304.
116 *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1336, p. 334; *Cal. Charter Rolls*, 1337, p. 390.

thirty-six acres in the parish of Hope Mansell to Gloucester Abbey for fifteen marks of silver.[117] Both sales may reflect the early difficulties of the abbey.

Further property in Herefordshire was alienated in mortmain to Grace Dieu by Richard Talbot: a messuage and land in Linton.[118] Then, in 1334, James de Baysham, chaplain, and John de Rosteley, granted the abbey in Aston (Ingham) and Coldridge (in Aston Ingham), 'two houses, four carucates of arable, twelve acres of meadow, twenty acres of pasture, and twelve of wood', providing that two monks were appointed 'to celebrate divine service daily in the abbey for the souls of the grantors, their ancestors, and heirs.' [119]

***Treville***

The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535 notes that Grace Dieu received yearly eight shillings in tithe payment from Treville, Herefordshire.[120] Seventy-five years later, on 24 August 1610, evidence was heard at 'the Market Hall of Grosmont' in a dispute between John Gwillim, clerk, and the defendant, Sir Charles Morgan. Three questions were put to the witnesses regarding 'the rectory or church of Trivel'? Did the font stones or altar stones which once stood there now stand in the church or chapel of Kilpeck (nearby). Did the tithes of the rectory belong to the monastery of Grase Dew? Did Thomas Herbert of Wonastow purchase the abbey and lease the tithes to Elizabeth Morgan, great-

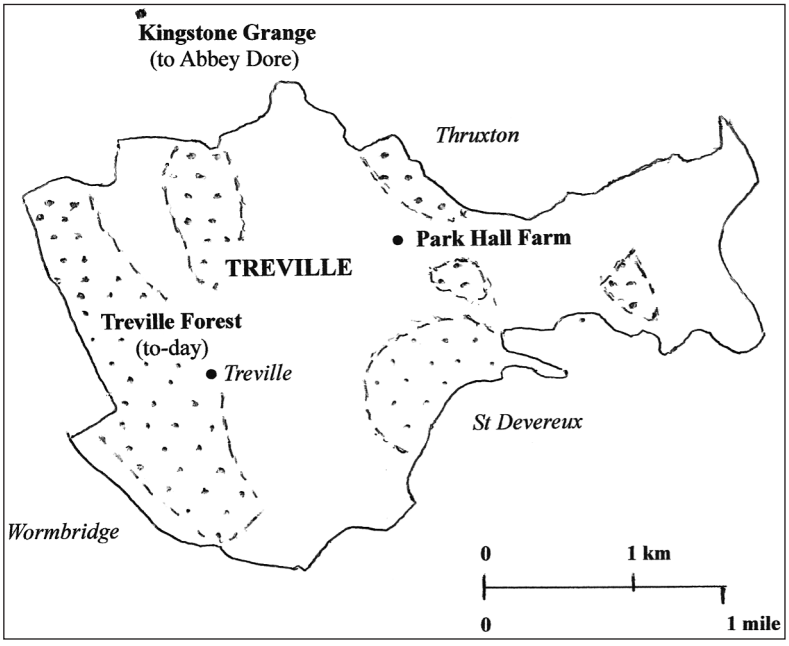


Fig. 14: The former extra-parochial division of Treville
(The chapel stood reputedly at Park Hall Farm; the dotted areas are close woodland).

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117 J. Duncumb, *History of the County of Hereford*, **2**, 1812 (addenda), p. 369.
118 *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1328, p. 307.
119 *Patent R*, 1334, p. 523; TNA, C143/225/10.
120 *Valor Ecclesiasticus* **4**, p. 361.

grandmother of the defendant?[121] The chapel, it seems, stood at the place now called Park Hall.

The older deponents could only give hearsay evidence; one, aged seventy, said he had heard 'forty years past; that once there was a church in Trivel; another had heard 'from divers aged men' dwelling thereabouts. The occupant of Park Hall reported that some previous dwellers there had 'by report gone to Grace Dieu to receive the sacrament'. Five days later the hearing resumed, and the new witnesses, mostly younger men, asserted that 'they had never heard of any such church or chapel'. One, however, quoting an ancient manuscript found in a book, said that it appeared by a conveyance of 1229 from John of Monmouth, that the monks of Grace Dieu received an annual payment of ten shillings in lieu of tithes.

This ties in with a note on an internet site that in 1230 Henry III granted the royal forest of to John, lord of Monmouth. He was founder of Grace Dieu, and seemingly granted the abbey those tithes – yet they are not noted in the *Taxatio Ecclesiatica* of 1291. There was a dispute in 1321 between the Prior of nearby Kilpeck and Alexander of Treville as to the ownership of a chantry chapel, presumably that of Treville, though it is not specified.[122] Abbey Dore held very large tracts of land at Treville,[123] including many valuable oak trees,[124] and it is either from that possession, or more probably from the grant of its tithes to Grace Dieu, that the former extra-parochial status of Treville derived.

***Woodland and Pastoralism***

Timber was an important building material in the medieval period, and Leland pictured the abbey as standing in a wood. It possessed in the relative vicinity, Mylnewood (20 acres), New Park (10 acres), Prior's Wood (near the old abbey close; 4 acres) and a wood at Penrhos Grange (12 acres), as well as woods named Peresgraunge and Monkswood, of uncertain locations (40 acres all told). In addition, the hedge-rows on the abbey's lands totalled up to three acres. The woods included 200 oaks of 80 and 100 years growth, 140 of them being reserved to Thomas Herbert for housebote and hedgebote ('for stakes').[125]

The *Taxatio* of 1291 recorded Grace Dieu as having only fourteen cows and twenty-two sheep, but these figures were very probably an underestimate, for about the same time Flemish and Italian wool-merchants' lists record the monastery as providing an annual yield for sale of five 26-stone sacks of wool.[126]

***Appendix 1:*** **Known Seals of Grace Dieu Abbey**

The seal portrayed dates from perhaps the thirteenth century, being then the seal of the abbot, who is shown tonsured and in eucharistic vestments, clasping his pastoral staff with his right hand, a book (probably for the Rule of St Benedict) held with his left hand. In the field, dexter: an estoile above a mullet. In the fourteen century the seal was converted into the common seal of the monastery by the addition of the words 'Et Convent' in the field, so that the completed legend reads: + SIGILLUM : ABBATIS : ET CONVENT' DE GRACIA · DEI.

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121 TNA, E134/8Jas1/Hil9.

122 *Registrum Ade de Orleton, Episcopi Herefordensis*, p. 183.

123 D.H. Williams, *White Monks in Gwent and the Border*, 1976, pp. 33–34.

124 TNA, SC8/213/10624.

125 G, D. Owen, *Documents*, op. cit, p.193; *Letters and Papers, Domestic, Henry VIII,* vol. **20**, Part 1. p. 665 [1335/36]; TNA, E315/201, f. 27; E318/13, m. 569.

126 119. F.B. Pegolotti, *La Pratica della Mercatura*, ed. A. Evans, 1936, where 'La Graziado, la buona marchi 16, e la moiana mkarchi 10, e i locchi marchi 7½ il sacco, ed annone da 5sacca per anno'.

Fig. 15: The seal of the abbot.

This was necessitated by the rulings of both the Statute of Carlisle (1307) and of the Constitution of Pope Benedict XII (1335), which decreed the use of common seals as in the Cistercian Order. Grace Dieu was a poor house, so simply amended its abbot's seal in this way.

The brass matrix, measuring 49 x 28 mm, and with a small handle on the reverse, was originally in the possession of the Lorymer family of Perthir, Monmouth, who presented it in 1830 to St Gregory's College, Downside, Somerset.[127] The monastery, in 1935, gave the matrix to the Society of Antiquaries of London, the latter body placing it on loan to the National Museum of

Fig. 16: Common Seal in the time of Abbot John Gruffydd, 1534–1536.
(Hereford Cathedral Archive 1775; courtesy of the Dean and Chapter).

127 *Downside Review* **VII**, pp. 115–116.

Wales. An etching of the seal appears in Coxe, *Historical Tour in Monmouthshire*,[128] a replica of the matrix in the National Library of Wales, where also is an original impression in red wax from 1473, now detached.[129]

The common seal employed during the abbacy of John Gruffydd (1534–1536), originally measured 50 x 37 mm, and depicted the abbot wearing a pleated robe belted at the waist. His head appears to be cowled, his right hand holds a long pastoral staff, in his left hand unfurls a scroll bearing indistinct lettering, but possibly referring to its being the common seal. The actual legend is almost entirely illegible.

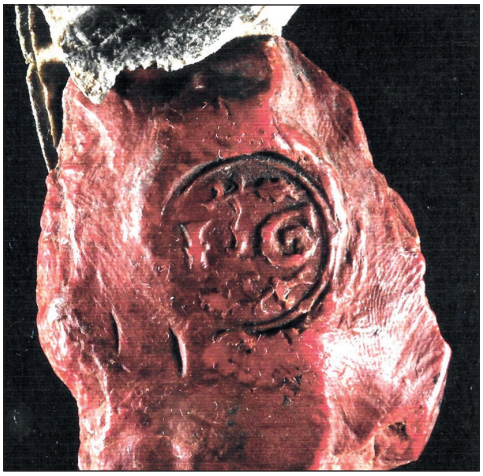

Fig. 17: The reverse shows the abbot's signet seal bearing his initials: **I.G.** [Ioannes Gruffydd], between foliage.

***Appendix 2*: The Minister's Accounts for the former Grace Dieu Abbey, 29 September 1535–28 September 1536** (TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2496, showing the annual rents payable now to the Crown)

The demesne land, leased to Dr John Vaughan, £12-1-4.
Property in Skenfrith, £3-1-2 (including the parish tithes, and land at Hendremest, Fosekey, and by Severenny hill).
Fixed rents in the Manor of Stowe, £5-6-7 (including the grange, valued at £2-6-8, and land at Wyegate in the Long Field [alt. Castle Field]).
The Town of Monmouth, rents valued at 8s 4d.
Rent of a fulling-mill near the town [it was at Osbaston], together with a dovecot and an orchard, £2-8,
Rent of Cold Grange, 9s 8d; Rent of a grange 'towards Newland', £1-6-8.
Lands in Whitecastle (valued in 1536 at 18s 4d); Lands at Penrhos, including the grange, £6-2-8.
***Total*** (as given)***: £32-8-7.*** [Equating in purchasing power to around £15,000 today].

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128 1801, pp. 289, 427 (illus.).
129 National Library of Wales, Milborne MS 4876.

***Appendix 3*: Known Abbots of Grace Dieu**

*sd*. = made subdeacon; *d*. = made deacon; *p*. = ordained priest.

(For full references, see: *Archaeologia Cambrensis* **163**, 2014, pp. 185–235).

1236: *John;* an arbitrator that year at the Ford of Montgomery, treating with Prince Llywelyn; 1236/1237: in Gascony on the king's business.

1236–1237, Walter, set his seal....

1246: *Roger.*

1267: *William*; prior in 1248.

*c*.1270/1285: *Richard*, possibly abbot.

1281: *Warin*, then acting as procurator for Rewley abbey, and possibly later abbot there.

1286: *Robert of Wormbridge*.

*ante*-1304//1306: A.

1336–1337: *Walter*.

1350: *Robert*.

*c*.1362: *John Wysbeche/Westbych:* monk of Dore, possibly a short-lived abbot of Grace Dieu, before becoming abbot of Dore and later of Tintern.

1373: *William*.

1400–1404: *John Everdon* (possibly Enerdon, *Heads of Religious Houses*, Supplement M. Smith , 201 (p.106)

1427: *Richard Moyne:* perhaps formerly a monk of Margam, and a divisive character at Grace Dieu.

1429: *John* (Smith, 106).

1447: *Richard Clifford;* perhaps formerly a monk of Dore.

–1451: *Roger of Chepstow;* when resigns, granted pension and corrody. (This deed should perhaps have been dated 1351).

1473–1484: *John Mitulton (? Middleton):* resigns in 1484 'being harassed by his enemies'.

1486–1495: *Richard de Dorston*, formerly monk of Dore, and later abbot there.

1508: *Thomas Philpott*.

1515–1517: *Stephen Green*, later last abbot of Buildwas.

1530–1532/33: *John Rothwell*, formerly monk of Buildwas; 1533, pension of £8.

1533: *William Ipsley/Islip*: resigned in 1533; formerly and later monk of Flaxley; by 1544 vicar of Littledean, Gloucs..

1534: *Thomas Perpin (Propin/Pierpoint):* monk of Flaxley; had pension of £4 as late as 1555, post-1535, chantry priest at Holy Trinity, Bristol, and then vicar of Cirencester.

1534–1536: *John Gruffydd:* either a former abbot of Margam, 1517–1528, when forced to resign, or a monk of Hailes at its suppression in 1539 [Williams, *Tudor Cistercians*, p. 463].

***Appendix 4*: Known Monks of Grace Dieu**

*Ady/Acly, alias Newent, Robert:* Vicar of Puriton, Somerset, 1460–1475.

*Clerc, William*: *d*. (Hereford) 1408; uncertain case.

*David, William ap Jevan: d*. (Hereford) 1408.

*Kent, John of: sd., d*. (Hereford) 1366; *p*. 1367.

*Kingstone, Philip of*: *sd*., *d*. (Hereford) 1366, *p*. 1366.

*Morris/Morys, Thomas*: *sd*. (Hereford), 1509; *d*. and *p*. 1510.

*Rotter, Richard:* apostate monk, chantry priest, St Briavel's, 1518.

*Sayer, Thomas: sd*. (Wells) 1481.

*Stanton, Nicholas de:* made a Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome (1350/1351), but overstayed his leave.
*Striguil (Chepstow), William of: c*.1232, held captive for a time, with his abbot, by the 'descendants of Arthen'.
*Thomas, Philip ap:* 1397, when studying at an unspecified Italian university.
*Varin, Nicholas:* 1350. ((A monk of Cherbourg held this name in 1333).
*Winborn, William: d*. (Hereford) 1396.
(No named *conversi* of Grace Dieu are on record).

***Postscript***

Lord Raglan, writing on 'Quasi-Historical Figures', in the *Illustrated London News* (18 April 1936, p. 670), mentioned the unlikely story that the nobleman, John of Kent, was for a time a monk of Grace Dieu, but he died in 1352, and the abbey's John of Kent, was not ordained until1366.

The post-Suppression population of Parc Grace Dieu was always small. When in 1543 HenryVIII required of Charles Herbert that he make a return of 'picked and chosen able men for the wars', he found twenty-four such amongst the king's tenants 'of the suppressed houses of Monmouth and Grace Dieu'.[130]

The 1841 census records but eleven inhabitants in Parc Grace Dieu; there were sixteen in 1881.

Lastly, but not least, the abbey site is worthy of a full-scale excavation.

[130] Surrey History Centre, Losely MS: LM/1330/4.

# THE FAMILIES OF FITZTICE, MARCK AND BAPAUME: THREE FLEMISH FAMILIES IN TWELFTH CENTURY GWENT

**By Bruce Coplestone-Crow**

***Summary***

*King Henry I's successful settlement of Flemings in Pembrokeshire was copied by Gilbert of Clare in Ceredigion after 1110 and by his brother Walter in Lower Gwent after 1114. Gilbert's settlement saw the Flemish families of Marck and, probably, fitzTice gaining lands in his lordship, while both families, together with a Fleming from Bapaume are found in Gwent in Walter's day. The fitzTices acquired lands at Whitson (a place-name that takes its first element from the Christian name – Wido or Guy – from the earliest of them to come to Gwent) in the lordship of Caerleon while a probable member of the family of Marck is found at Trostrey in Walter of Clare's lordship of Striguil (now Chepstow). The Fleming from Bapaume is not heard of in Gwent after the reign King Henry I (1100–35), although members of the fitzTice and Marck families remained there until at least the time of his grandson King Henry II (1154–89).*

The evidence for Flemish settlement in south Wales in the early twelfth century has long been a point of interest for historians of the era. The Welsh chronicles known as *Brut y Tywysogyon* ('The Deeds of the Princes') and *Annales Cambriae* ('The Annals of Wales') both say that King Henry I of England was the first to bring Flemings to Wales in 1107 or 1108. They were sent to what is now Pembrokeshire to defend his interests at Pembroke Castle and to repopulate areas devastated by warfare between the Welsh and the Norman intruders.[1] These Flemings included families of first or second generation immigrants whose families had settled in England (mostly in East Anglia and Lincolnshire) under William the Conqueror: the Conqueror's wife, it will be remembered, was the daughter of the count of Flanders. Others came directly from Flanders, where overpopulation was forcing many to flee their homeland. Under the leadership of men known as *locatores* ('allocators'), whose task it was to share out the lands available, they settled mainly in the cantrefs (Welsh local administrative divisions) of Rhos, Daugleddau and elsewhere in Dyfed (see map Fig.1) although

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Abbreviations

*ByT = Brut y Tywysogyon or The Chronicle of the Princes, Peniarth MS 20 Version*, ed. Jones, T.,University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1952.

*DB = Domesday Book*, 2 vols., Record Commission, 1783.

*PR = Pipe Rolls* as published by the Pipe Roll Society of London by regnal year.

*RBE = The Red Book of the Exchequer*, ed. Hall, H.,3 vols., Rolls Series, 1896.

*RRAN = Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, ed. Davis, H.W.C. et al., 3 vols., Oxford University Press, 1913–68.

*VCH = The Victoria County History of England*: by county.

[1] *ByT*, 27–8; *Annales Cambriae* (ed. Williams ab Ithel, J., Rolls Series, 1860), 34. The most detailed study of this phenomenon is in Toorians, L. 'Wizo Flandrensis and the Flemish Settlement in Pembrokeshire', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, **20** (1990), 99–108 and this is the authority followed here. Rowlands, I.W. 'The Making of the March: aspects of the Norman settlement in Dyfed', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, **3** (1980), 142–157 deals with it more tangentially but no less authoritatively.

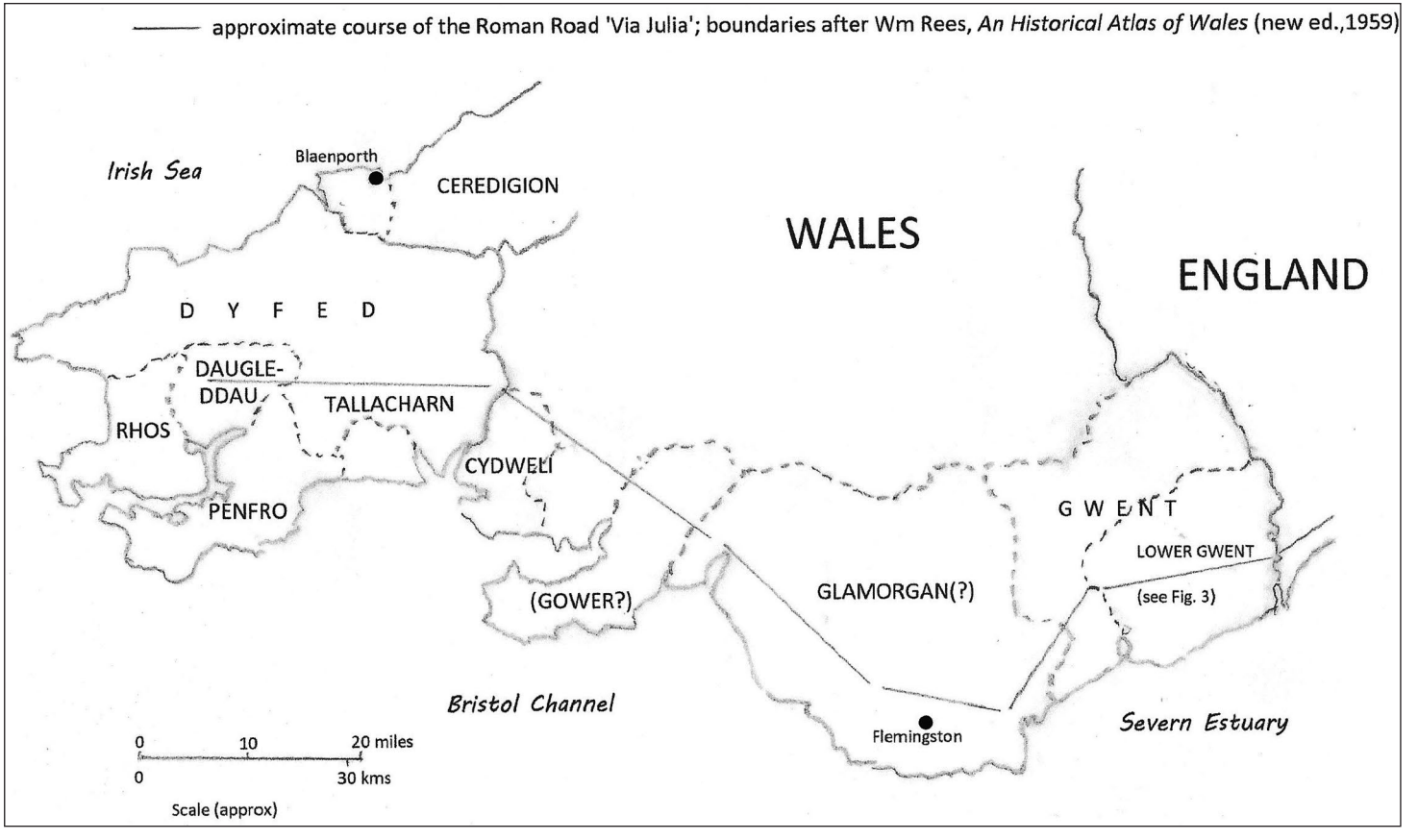


Fig. 1: Territories in Wales where Flemings are known or suspected to have settled AD 1100–35.

there were settlements elsewhere in Pembrokeshire.[2] The new arrivals' attitude to the Welsh was not exactly cordial. Orderic Vitalis, a contemporary chronicler, says of the Flemings that they 'butchered [the Welsh] like dogs, without any regard for humanity', hunting them down 'in the woods and caves in which they lurked'.[3]

To get to these lands in the west of Wales, Flemings who came from elsewhere in England or directly from Flanders by land (others may have come by sea) will most likely have crossed south Wales by the Roman road (known colloquially as the 'Via Julia') from Gloucester (Glevum) to Carmarthen (Moridunum) and then west as far as the recently discovered Roman fort at Wiston in Daugleddau[4] (see map Fig.1). In this case it seems hardly credible that some of them would not have stopped and settled in suitable places along the way, either by invitation or commendation.

In fact, this is what we find when we trace their journey in reverse from Rhos and Daugleddau through south Wales to Glamorgan and beyond. Immediately east of the royal lordship of Pembroke in Penfro lay the cantref of Laugharne (Tallacharn), which lay in the English king's 'honour' or lordship of Carmarthen. Gerald of Wales tells us that the men of this cantref were in part Flemish, and there were certainly Flemings in that locality in 1130, when 'Godbert the Fleming of Rhos' appears as 'Godbert *Leblac*' in the pipe roll for Carmarthen that year.[5] He is thought to have established himself and his family at Roche Castle near Laugharne.[6] This was in addition to his confusingly named lordship at Roch Castle in Rhos, Pembrokeshire.

East of this again, at Cydweli (Kidwelly), there were Flemings among the burgesses in the new town established there by Bishop Roger of Salisbury in 1106. When the bishop dedicated a cemetery at the church of St Mary in Cydweli, which he had given to the Benedictine abbey at Sherbourne as a daughter-house in 1114, to mark the occasion 'all the burgesses, French, English and Flemish, gave their tithes of Pembrey and Penallt'.[7]

Whether or not there were Flemings in Gower seems uncertain,[8] but there were certainly Flemings further east in Glamorgan. The place-name Flemingston, which is (*ecclesia*) *de Villa Frandr*(*ensis*) in 1254,[9] stands witness to this but whether they were a recent phenomenon or one already a hundred years or more in age there is now insufficient evidence.

When we come still further east, to Gwent, and to Lower Gwent in particular (see map, Fig 3), virtually nothing has been known hitherto of any Flemish settlement there. Interestingly

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2 The settlement of at least one Fleming – Letard 'little king' who was killed by the Welsh in 1137 (*Annales Cambriae*, 40) – was at Letterston in the cathedral of St David's cantref of Pebidiog or Dewisland, to the north of Rhos: Charles, B.G. ed., *The Place-Names of Pembrokeshire* (2 vols, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1992), i, 217.

3 Orderic Vitalis: *The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy* (trans. Forester, T., 4 vols., Henry G. Bohn, London, 1853–6), iv, 143.

4 James, H., 'Roman Pembrokeshire AD75-410' in *Pembrokeshire County History, Vol I: Prehistoric, Roman and Early Medieval Pembrokeshire* (Pembrokeshire County History Trust, Haverfordwest, 2016), 293–337, Figs. 4.2 & 4.3.

5 Gerald of Wales: *The Autobiography* (ed. & trans. Butler, H.E., Jonathan Cape Ltd., London, 1937 ), 44; Green, J.A. (ed.), *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Thirty-First year of the Reign of King Henry I, Michaelmas 1130* (Pipe Roll Society, London, 2012), 71.

6 Butler, L.A.S., 'Roche Castle, Laugharne', *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, **4** (1962), 9–15.

7 Kealy, E.J., *Roger of Salisbury, Viceroy of England* (University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1972), Appendix 2, Charter 4 (pp231-3).

8 E.g. Nicholas, T., *Annals and Antiquities of the Counties and County Families of Wales* (2 vols., Longmans, Green, Reader & Co., London, 1872), ii, 505–6.

9 Morgan R., *Place-Names of Glamorgan* (Welsh Academic Press, Cardiff, 2018), 81.

enough, however, as Professor Stephen Rippon noted, Charles Hassall, writing in 1815, quoted the local tradition that the Gwent Levels had been drained by Dutchmen (among whom we may count Flemings), although he regarded this as a supposition.[10] Professor Rippon then goes on to highlight that the layout of the village of Whitson in Lower Gwent is similar to Flemish settlements in Pembrokeshire, which in turn reflect the Dutch 'cope' system.[11] The development of Whitson as a settlement within this system is shown in Fig. 2. Here, the initial planned settlement was east of a funnel-shaped common with further extensions to the rear as the population grew.

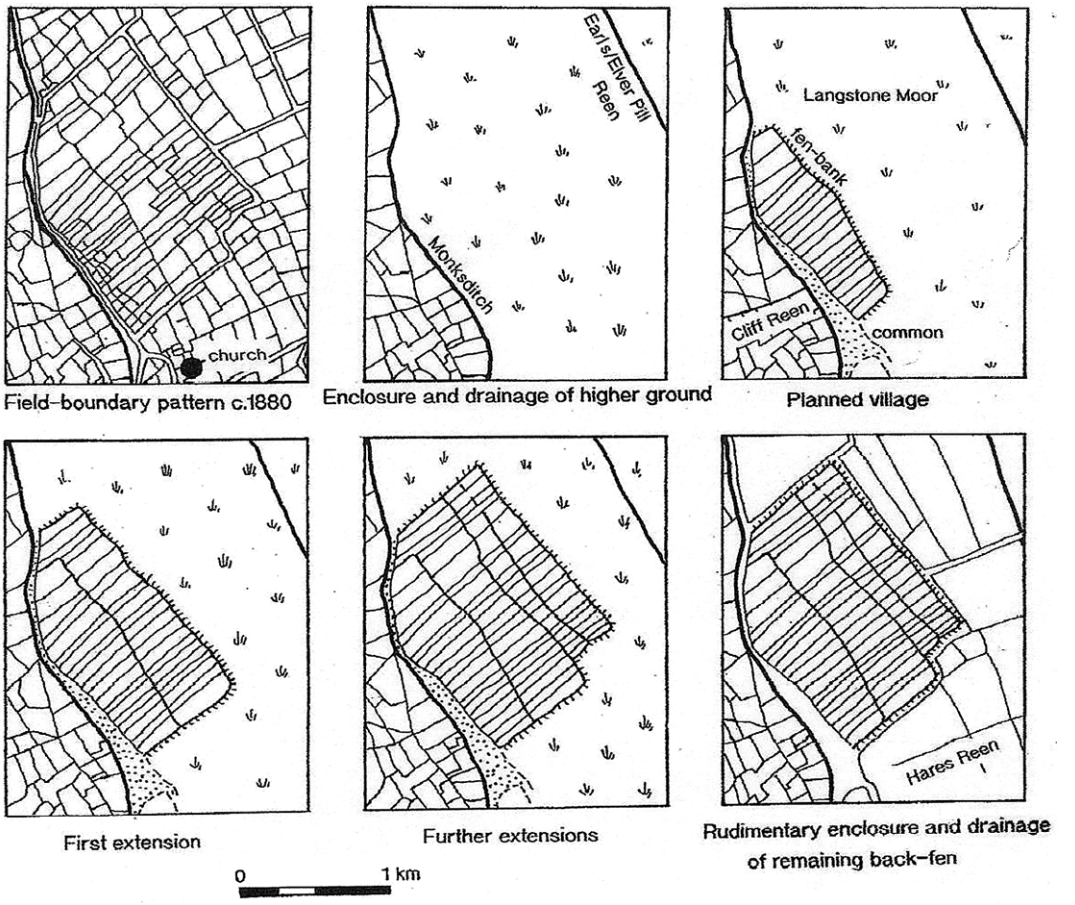


Fig. 2: The development of Whitson (reproduced by permission from S. Rippon, *Gwent Levels, the Evolution of a Wetland Landscape*, CBA Research Report, **105** (1996), 84, fig. 33).

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[10] *A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Monmouth: with observations on the means of its improvement* (Board of Agriculture, London, 1815), 282.

[11] *Gwent Levels: The Evolution of a Wetland Landscape*, CBA Research Report **105** (1996), 45, 84–6 & figs. 14 & 16; also 'Wetland Reclamation on the Gwent Levels: Dissecting a Historic Landscape' in Edwards, N. (ed.), *Landscape and Settlement in Medieval Wales* (Oxford, 1997), 28; and *Beyond the Medieval Village* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008), 220–4.

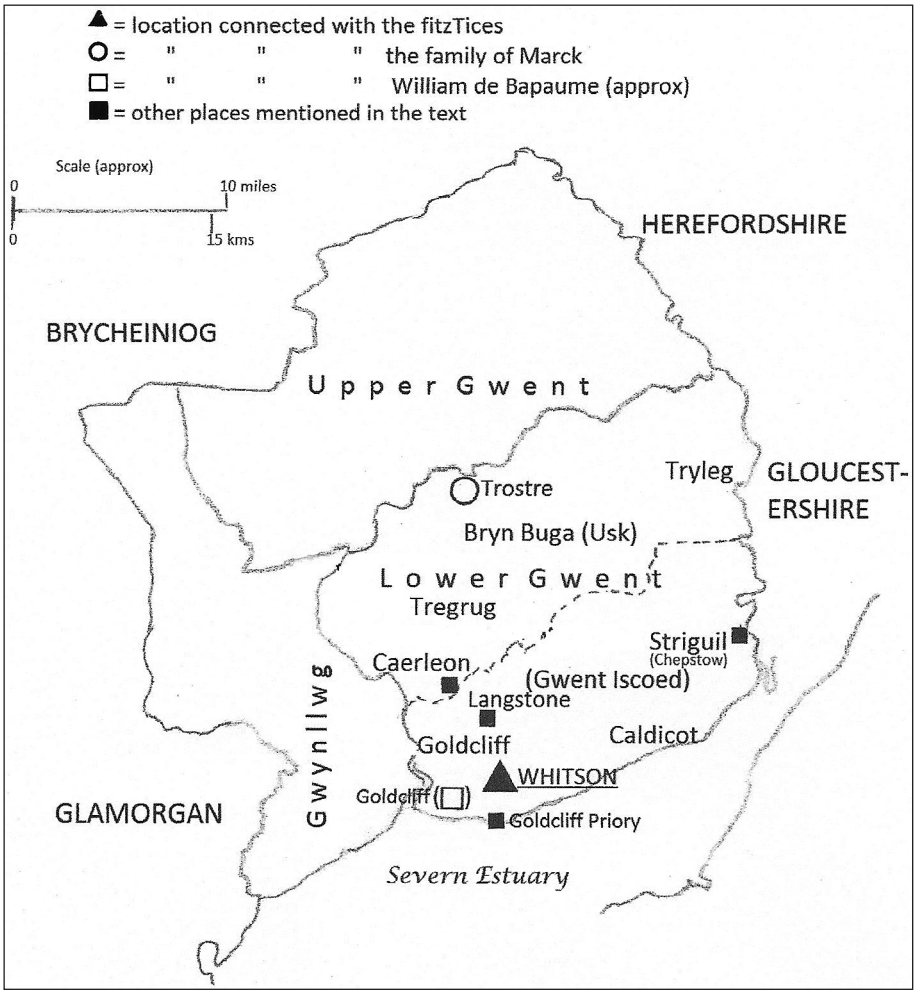


Fig. 3: Anglo-Norman Lordships in Lower Gwent *c*. 1150.

A possible early settlement of Flemings in Lower Gwent is suggested by twelfth century records of the area in which three families of certain or probable Flemish origins appear. These are the fitzTices, who, in the form of their common Christian name 'Guy', gave their name to the first element of the place-name Whitson (see below). Their precise continental origins are unknown, but they as subtenants in Essex of the count of Boulogne from earliest post-Conquest times were almost certainly Flemings. Then we have a family taking their name from Marck, a location that is now little more than an eastern suburb of Calais, but which was formerly a separate town and military fief in Flanders and, finally, William de Bapaume from the village of that name just to the south of Arras in the old county of Flanders.

The earliest member of the fitzTices recorded on this side of the Channel is the knight named 'Guy' who held lands at Little Chishill and Finchingfield in Essex from Count Eustace II

of Boulogne in 1086[12] (see map, Fig.4). Count Eustace had provided a large contingent of men for the Conqueror's invasion force of 1066 and he and his followers had benefitted accordingly in the division of English lands that followed the invasion. Guy, whom we can probably designate as Guy I fitzTice (the latter part of his name being a patronymic that was retained by his successors)[13] as opposed to his grandson Guy II, who died 1162/3, was probably among the count's men. A Baldwin *filio Widonis*, who may be Guy I's son, continued the family's links with the counts of Boulogne into the next generation, becoming an attestor to the charter of Count Eustace III of Boulogne issued to the abbey of St John at Colchester in 1119 (see Fig. 5).[14]

The family's links to the great baronial family of Clare of Clare Castle and town in Suffolk, however, were even stronger than those to the counts of Boulogne and resulted in them and other Flemish families from eastern England becoming domiciled in Wales. The lords of Clare were descendants of Gilbert, count of Brionne (died 1040), his son Richard being the first of his family to establish himself at Clare. At the time of Domesday Book he was one of the barons who shared the multiple estate at Finchingfield with Guy.[15] Richard's successor was his son Gilbert, and a charter he issued in 1090 giving a college of secular priests situated in Clare Castle to the abbey of Bec-Helluoin in Normandy was witnessed by William *filius Tezonis*, who may have been Guy's brother.[16] This connection between his family and the lords of Clare is important for his family's story in Gwent, since it was probably with Gilbert's brother Walter that they came to Lower Gwent. Another subtenant of the count of Boulogne in Essex in 1086 was Adelolf de Marck. It was a relative of his (possibly a nephew) named Eustace de Marck who attested Count Eustace's charter to Colchester Abbey in 1119 along with Baldwin fitzGuy. This family also seems to have come to Wales, both to Lower Gwent with Walter and to Ceredigion (see map, Fig.4) with his older brother Gilbert. What we seem to have in these two Essex families at the end of the eleventh century, therefore, are families of note who were perhaps related and who were able through common links with the Clare family to try their hand in Wales early in the twelfth century.

Gilbert of Clare's lordship in Ceredigion was given to him by King Henry I of England in 1110. Bishop Roger of Salisbury and Henry de Newburgh, earl of Warwick, men whom he must have regarded as his peers, had received parcels of Welsh land at Cydweli and Gower respectively from Henry four years before this.[17] Gilbert subsequently lobbied the king for lands in Wales to match these and having been given the Welsh kingdom by an exasperated king he was told to 'go and take possession of it'.[18] The 'host' he raised for the purpose must have contained Flemings,

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12 *DB*, ii, 29, 33b.The descent of these manors shows that he is not 'Guy of Anjou' as suggested in Keats-Rohan, K.S.B., *Domesday People, a Prosopography of Persons Occurring in English Documents, I Domesday Book* (The Boydell press, Woodbridge, 1999), 463.

13 It appears in the records in various forms – *Tezonis*, *Tetsoni, Te(o)cii, Tecae, Tetho* – all of which are 'pet' forms of an Old German name in *Theud*, such as Tedbald: Reaney, P.H. & Wilson, R.M., *A Dictionary of English Surnames* (rev. ed. Oxford University Press, 1997), 446; Tengvik, G., *Old English Bynames* (Uppsala, 1938), 199–200. Its modern version would be Teece or Tice, the latter form being borne by an industrialist today (Richard Tice) and so is adopted here.

14 Moore, S.A. (ed.), *Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Johannis Baptiste de Colecestria* (2 vols., the Roxburghe Club, London, 1897), i, 47–8.

15 *DB*, ii, 39, 101b.

16 Harper-Bill, C. & Mortimer, R. (eds.), *Stoke-by-Clare Cartulary* (3 vols., Suffolk Records Society, 1982–4), no.137 parts i and ii (a confirmation charter by Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury 1138–61).

17 Lloyd, Sir J.E., A *History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest* (2 vols., Longmans, London 1911, 1967 ed.), 429–30.

18 *ByT*, 34.

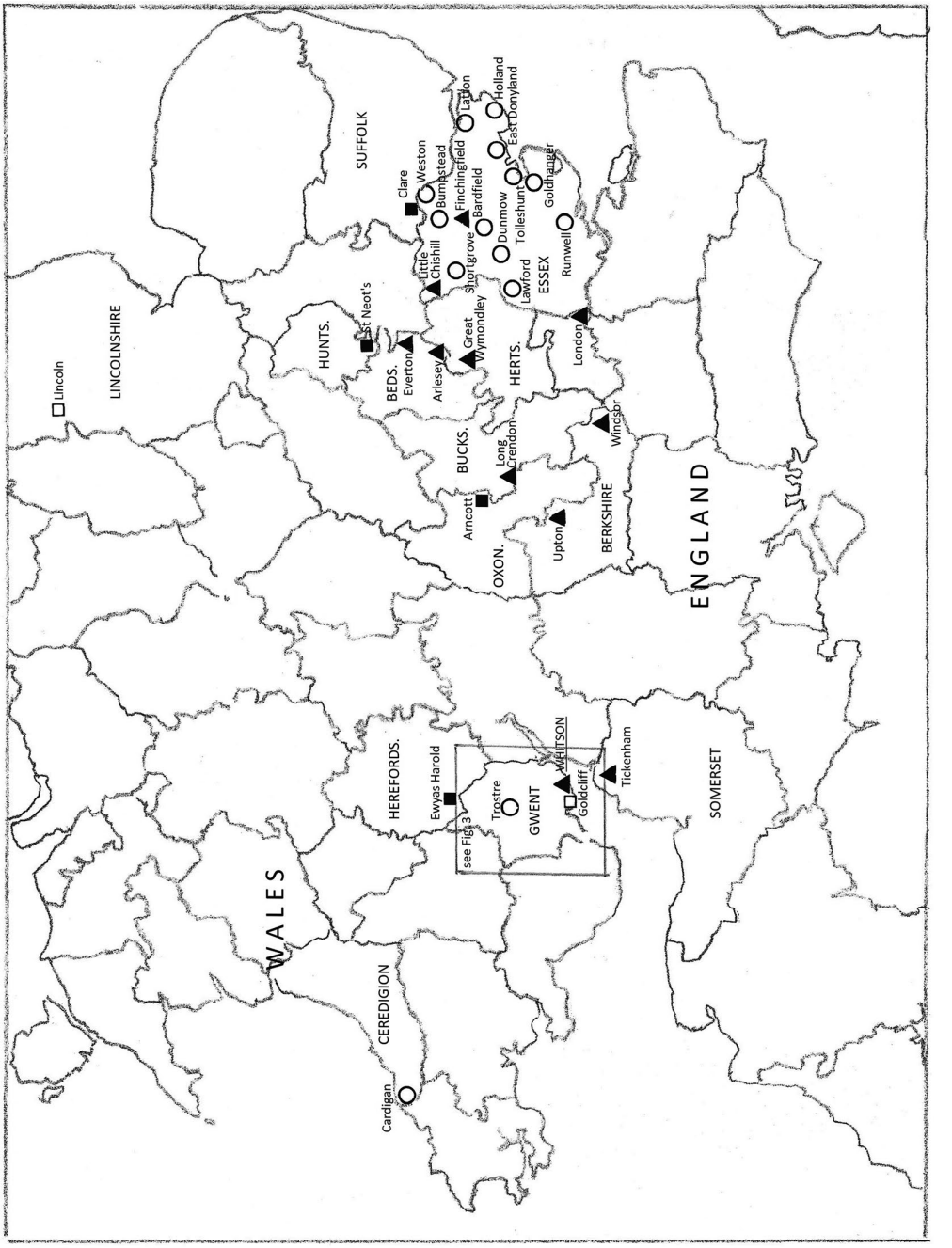


Fig. 4: Location of lands and places in England and Wales associated with the families of fitzTice (▲), Marck (O), Bapaume (□) and other places mentioned in the text (■).

since within a few years there were sufficient numbers of them to have their own castle and town at Blaenporth[19] which lay in the forefront of the lands around Gilbert's caput or headquarters at Cardigan (see map, Fig.4).

The English king's policy of bringing Flemings to Wales to repopulate lands devastated by war between the Welsh and the Norman invaders and to provide a bulwark against the Welsh seems to have been a success from the start, and it must have been this that prompted Gilbert to bring men of the same origins to assist in seizing and retaining Ceredigion. One of these Flemings was a member of the family of Marck of Essex. We find a Henry de Marck attesting a deed of Gilbert's grandson Roger of Clare, earl of Hertford, giving lands in Ceredigion to the Commandery of the Hospitallers at Slebech in Daugleddau in 1156–64.[20] He is possibly the Henry de Marck of East Donyland in Essex, who is named in two charters in the Colchester cartulary dating from the latter part of the reign of King Stephen.[21] This is a generation or two after the first influx of Flemings in Ceredigion, but it may be surmised that the earlier Adelolf de Marck was his predecessor and was in Gilbert of Clare's 'host' of Ceredigion.

The affinity Guy I fitzTice had with the Clares from earliest times, which saw him go to Lower Gwent with Walter of Clare, younger brother of Gilbert, is most clearly demonstrated through his family's patronage of St Neot's Priory in Huntingdonshire. Richard of Clare, father of Gilbert and Walter, had re-founded an old English house at St Neot's as a cell of the Benedictine abbey of Bec-Hellouin c1080.[22] Soon after 1086 Guy became a subtenant of Richard at the manor of Everton in Bedfordshire (See map, Fig.4).[23] When Tice (*Tezonis*), son of Guy I, died sometime after 1130, he and his wife showed proof of their close relationship with the Clares by choosing to be buried at St Neot's. Subsequently, Guy II, son of Tice, who continued the association, gave this deed to the priory. Its text is given here, as it is the only known deed of the family to survive into the modern era (though not in its fullest form) –

> *Sciant præsentes et futuri quod ego Wido filius Tezonis concessi Deo et ecclesiæ de S. Neoti et monachis in eo servientibus pro animabus patris at matris meæ, quorum corpora ibi requiescunt, et pro salute meâ et uxoris maæ et hæredum meorum et omnium amicorum meorum in perpetuam elemosinam, ecclesiam de Evertonâ cum ominibus terris quæ eidem ecclesiae adjacebant die quo Rogerus filius Ricardi vitam finivit. Præterea concessi eis illam virgatam terræ quam Gaufridus de Wanford eidem ecclesiæ dedit; et aliam virgatam quam Rogerus frater meus dedit illis in escambio pro quadam virgatâ quam habebant apud Ailrichesheie. Concessi etiam eis virgatam illam quam idem Rogerus dederat eis pro animâ Walteri filii Ricardi. Testibus, etc.*[24]
>
> Know all present and future that I Guy fitzTice give to God and to the church of St Neot's and the monks there serving, for my soul and those of my mother and father, whose bodies lie there, and for the souls of myself, my wife, my heirs and all my friends, in pure and perpetual alms, the church of Everton with all the lands belonging to it on the day that Roger fitzRichard was living and dead. Besides this I confirm to them a virgate of land that Geoffrey of Wansford gave them; and another virgate of land that Roger my brother exchanged with them for a virgate of land they had at Arlesey.

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19 *Ibid* 34, 42; Williams ab Ithel, *Annales Cambriæ*, 35.

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

21 *RRAN*, iii, nos. 224–5.

22 Gorham, G.C., *The History and Antiquities of Eynsbury and St Neot's…* (Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor and Jones, London, 1820), 61–2 & 270–1.

23 *DB*, i, f.207. This part of Everton contained the church and was in the county of Huntingdon in 1086.

24 Dugdale, Sir William, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (6 vols. in 8, London, 1817–30), iii, 473 Charter XIII.

> I also confirm to them the virgate that the said Roger gave them for the soul of Walter fitzRichard. These are the witnesses, (missing)

Roger 'fitzRichard' was a third son of Richard of Clare who died in 1131 and it is clear from the wording of the deed that it was issued after this event. The grant of Everton church was confirmed by Gilbert fitzGilbert of Clare, son of Gilbert son of Richard, earl of Pembroke and lord of Striguil, in 1140[25] and this may serve to date Guy's charter to approximately that year.

The coming of the Clares to Lower Gwent occurred only a few years after their advent in Ceredigion. Anxious, perhaps, not to be outdone in the Welsh stakes, we find Walter, Gilbert's younger brother, receiving the lordship of Striguil (Chepstow) in Lower Gwent by grant of King Henry. This lordship had been established by William fitzOsbern, earl in Herefordshire from 1067 until his death four years later. After the forfeiture of Earl Roger, his son, in 1075 it passed through several hands until by the time of Henry's accession in 1100 it was in royal hands. The gift to Walter had been made by 1119, when he is named in a papal Bull as one of several Norman and Anglo-Norman lords accused of despoiling the property of the church of Llandaff in Glamorgan and Gwent.[26] It had probably taken place in 1114 when Henry launched what he regarded as a 'conquest' of Wales. His return journey through south Wales can be traced in some detail until he reached Cydweli on 29 July. From there he passed through Glamorgan and Lower Gwent to Gloucester, which he reached on 2 August.[27] His passage through Lower Gwent at this time would have given him the opportunity to give the lordship of Striguil to Walter, who was perhaps one of the leaders of the royal army.

Where the king and his older brother had led in the engagement of Flemings, we may conjecture that Walter followed. It is probably at this time, therefore, that we find the fitzTices (and perhaps other unrecorded Flemings) being brought from his and his neighbours' estates in eastern England to settle in Lower Gwent. The place-name Whitson provides a clue to where they settled. It is derived from the Latin form of the personal name 'Guy' that first occurs in the locative surname of Bartholomew *de Villa Widonis* who attested a charter to Goldcliff Priory of the bishop of Llandaff in 1230–40.[28] Here, *Widonis* is the normal Latin form of the Old French name *Wido, Guido* or Guy. Its English form occurs almost concurrently in the name of the 'Nicholas of *Wideston*' who attested a charter to Goldcliff Priory made by Walter Marshal, earl of Pembroke and lord of Striguil and Caerleon, in 1241–5.[29] Both the Latin and the English forms mean 'the vill of Guy (*Wido, Guido*)', the 'Guy' concerned being almost certainly Guy I fitzTice of Domesday Book. Whitson lies on Goldcliff Moor (see map Fig. 3) and in a charter of Earl Richard 'Strongbow' of Clare, lord of Striguil 1148–76 (known now only from an 'inspection' and confirmation made by Walter Marshal, earl of Pembroke and lord of Striguil and Caerleon, in 1241–5), Guy II fitzTice (*Widonis filii Tetonis*), grandson of Guy I, gave to Goldcliff Priory 'all the tithes of his land in the moor of Goldcliff'[30] which 'land' was probably at Whitson.

Though it is unlikely that the fitzTices' presence on the Gwent Levels was other than through their close relationship with the Clares in the east of England, it was at Whitson in Winebald de

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25 *VCH Bedfordshire*, Vol.2 (1908), 228.
26 Evans, J.G. & Rhŷs, J. (eds.), *The Book of Llan Dâv, Liber Landavensis* (Oxford, 1893), 93–4.
27 *RRAN,* ii, nos. 1041–2 refer. Also, *ByT*, 37–8 and Williams ab Ithel, *Annales Cambriae*, 35.
28 Crouch, D. 'Three Goldcliff Charters', *National Library of Wales Journal*, **24** (1985–6),158 no.1.
29 Crouch, D. (ed.), *The Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family, Marshals of England and Earls of Pembroke, 1145–1248* (Camden Fifth Series, Vol.47, Royal Historical Society, London, 2015), no. 249.
30 *Ibid.,* no.248.

Ballon's lordship of Caerleon (rather than in Walter of Clare's lordship of Striguil), that he acquired lands. Winebald had been given Caerleon by William Rufus after the forfeiture for rebellion in 1088 of Thurston fitzRolf, the *Domesday* holder.[31] In 1113 he attested Robert de Chandos's foundation charter for Goldcliff Priory.[32]

Whitson's position in Winebald's lordship is made clear from the later feodaries, where its tenurial situation is given as being held from the manor of Langstone in the lordship of Caerleon for the service of one knight's fee.[33] The lord of Langstone at the time of *Domesday* was Walter the Gunner who had two carucates of land there. He also had 'one waste land' for which he rendered a sester of honey and a pig annually (see map, Fig. 3) and both this and Langstone passed to the Bluet family soon after 1086.[34] It is tempting, but unprovable, to suggest that the waste land was the site of Whitson. If it was, then this could be a case where the Bluets engaged Guy I of *Domesday Book*, a knight of Walter of Clare, to settle at a place which became known as Whitson. If this was so, then Guy will have occupied in Gwent a position comparable to one of the 'locators' who established the Flemish settlement in Pembrokeshire. Once established there it was expected that these 'locators' would call on their families and others in the Low Countries with expertise in building new settlements and draining marshy land in order to support themselves and fulfil any duties imposed on them in return for the lands. The result of this is that lands at Whitson still, today, show the typically Flemish or Dutch 'cope' layout of village and fields as shown in Fig.2.

Flemish families or individuals who are likely also to have come to Lower Gwent in Walter of Clare's time were from Marck (already met with in Ceredigion) and Bapaume. William de Bapaume (*Batpaumes*) attested Robert de Chandos's foundation charter for Goldcliff Priory in 1113. William may have been related to a Ralph de Bapaume who had a house in the city of Lincoln in 1086.[35] As we have noted before, Lincolnshire was second only to Essex in the number of Flemish tenants-in-chief settled there.[36] In 1133–6 William gave his land in Goldcliff Moor to the new priory with the consent of Walter, son and heir of Robert de Chandos.[37] Nothing more is heard of him or his family after this.

Much more is known of the family of Marck in Gwent. Eustace de Marck, who witnessed the charter Count Eustace III gave to Colchester Abbey in 1119, has already been mentioned and we have surmised that he may have been a nephew of the Adelolf de Marck who held eleven manors in Essex from the count of Boulogne in 1086 (see map, Fig.4).[38] Lambert of Ardres tells us a great deal about this family in his *History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* which he wrote

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31 For Winebald and his son Roger at Caerleon, see Coplestone-Crow, B., 'Abergavenny Priory: a contribution towards its early history', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, **30** (2014), 3–14.

32 Its text is contained within the *inspeximus* and confirmation charter of Walter Marshal, earl of Pembroke and lord of Striguil and Caerleon in 1241–5: Crouch, *Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family*, no.249.

33 *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem,* ii, no.498.

34 *DB*, i, f.162. For the early history of the Bluets in Lower Gwent, see Coplestone-Crow, B., 'Strongbow's Grant of Raglan to Walter Bluet', *Gwent Local History*, **89** (2000), 3–27.

35 *DB*, i, f.336.

36 George, R.H. 'The Contribution of Flanders to the Conquest of England (1065–1086)', *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, **5** (i) (1926), 81–99 (table on p98). Oksanen, E., *Flanders and the Anglo-Norman World* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 189–91 has an equally valuable map and table.

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

38 Moore, *Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Johannis Baptiste de Colecestria*, i, 47–8; *DB*, ii, ff.27-27b, 28, 28b, 29, 31b, 32, 33, 34.

in the 1190s.[39] According to him, at the time of *Domesday Book* in England, the head of the house in Flanders was Elembert I, viscount of Marck under the count of Boulogne. Elembert married Matilda, an English woman who, after her death, was buried in the church at Marck. She became worshipped at the church almost as a saint until her relatives took her bones to England. It seems reasonable to suppose from these circumstances that Elembert had acquired his English wife after coming to England with the count of Boulogne although there is now no record of him there. Matilda was the daughter of Laurette de Hames. By her Elembert de Coulogne had Eustace (dsp), Payn (or Elembert II dsp) and Adelaide. He married, secondly, Adelaide sister of Eustace the Old of Licques and had Arnold (who succeeded Elembert), Simon, Natalie, Windemode and Clarice.

However, it may be possible to see Elembert's former English tenement in the *Domesday* fief of Adelolf de Marck. The eldest son and heir of Elembert and Margaret was Elembert II de Marck and when he died without issue his heir in Flanders was his half-brother Arnold. It is possible that his heir for his English fief, however, was Adelolf, who is thought to represent a cadet line of the viscounts.[40] In 1211–12 Adelolf's lands were in the possession of Henry and Simon de Marck who had five knights' fees between them. Interestingly, Henry also had the small manor in Finchingfield that had been Guy fitzTice's at *Domesday*.[41] This must have come to him through marriage into the fitzTice family or by sale or exchange. In any of these cases, Henry's possession of this manor establishes a reasonably close relationship between the two families, one that may have been fostered in both England and Wales.

The significance of the Marck family for present purposes is that the Christian name Elembert is mainly linked to them in Flanders at this time. When, therefore, we find a man of that name in Lower Gwent c1160 we would be forgiven for thinking him to be a member of this family. This Elembert is found in a confirmation charter Earl Richard 'Strongbow' of Clare, lord of Usk, issued to the nuns of the priory his father had founded (or re-founded) at Usk many years before.[42] In this charter we find him living as a hermit at the nuns' manor of Trostrey, a location that lies on the banks of the river Usk north of the town and castle of Usk (NGR SO360044) in Lower Gwent (see map, Fig.3). The charter, which exists only in an *inspeximus* issued by Elizabeth de Burgh, lady of Usk, in 1330, was issued a few years after King Henry II had acceded to the throne in 1154. In the charter Earl Richard confirmed to the nuns, among other things –

> *…viginti septem acras in Trostrai juxta hermitorium pro Decima centum acrarum quas dedi fratri Elemberto in monte de Languarde; et triginta acras terre inter Uscam et Eb'thyn et hermitorium de Trostrai cum duabus acris terre adjacentibus…*

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[39] Lambert of Ardres: *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* (ed. & trans. Shopkow, L., University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2007), 167. de La Gorgue-Rosny, L-E., *Recherche généalogique sur les comtés de Ponthieu, de Boulogne, et Guines et de pays circonvoisins* (3 vols., Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1875–7), ii, 947–8 adds some interesting details.

[40] Round, J.H. 'The Counts of Boulogne as English Lords', in *Studies in Peerage and Family History* (New York and Westminster, 1901), 157.

[41] *RBE*, 578; *Book of Fees, Liber Feodum* (ed. Maxwell Lyte, H.C., 3 vols., His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1921–31), i, 237.

[42] See Coplestone-Crow, B.,' "St Eiliwedd the virgin lies in the church at Usk": the Founding of Usk Priory and Its Early Endowment, with a note on the origin of the cult of St Radegund of Poitiers in Britain', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, **34** (2018), 45–73.

> …twenty-seven acres of land in Trostrey near the hermitage [in exchange] for the tithe of one hundred acres which I gave to Brother Elembert on Languarde Hill; and thirty acres between Usk [River] and Berthin [Brook] and the hermitage of Trostrey, with two acres of adjacent land…[43]

Brother Elembert's hermitage (for it is likely that the hermitage is his) is likely to have been close to, or even attached to, Trostrey's church of St David. The church was formerly in a well-wooded area such as might attract a hermit looking for a site for his solitary cell. William Coxe says on his visit to there in 1801 that –

> [The situation of the church of Trostrey…] is extremely wild and romantic; it stands on a gentle rise in the midst of a wood remote from any habitation, and seems rather the solitary chapel of a hermit than the church of a cultivated district.[44]

Most of the woods had gone even by the time the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map was issued (1832) and today there are just a few trees by the churchyard wall. There is, however, the suggestion of a Deserted Medieval Village to the south-east of the church consisting of a few house-platforms.[45] The location of the hill called Languarde on which lay the hundred acres whose tithe Strongbow gave before exchanging it for the land at Trostrey, etc., may be an earlier or alternative name for Trostrey Hill at NGR SO369051. The late Geoffrey Mein, the historian of Usk, thought it might relate to Llangua in Grosmont, where there was a small Benedictine priory.[46] However, early spellings of Llangua – *Lonkewen, Langivray, Langkywan*[47] – do not support this.

If there is now no evidence that the fitzTices settled on land in Walter of Clare's lordship in Lower Gwent (as they did in the Ballon lordship of Caerleon), he did employ them in the defence of his castle of Striguil. In fact, it is likely that the needs of the defence of Striguil was what brought the fitzTices to Lower Gwent in the first place. Only afterwards did they acquire Whitson in the lordship of Caerleon. The proof of their position at Striguil lies in the history of the Somerset manor of Tickenham. In the thirteenth century it was held for the service of one knight's fee, for 'keeping the gate of Chepstow [Striguil] Castle for forty days in time of war'.[48] Tickenham lies conveniently close to the coast opposite Whitson for its holder to reach Striguil fairly swiftly by boat and horse and this must have been part of Walter's calculations when reviewing the defence of his castle.

A sixteenth century genealogy of the Berkeley family of Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire (one of whose members married an heiress of the fitzTices) has Tice (*Teciis*), son of Guy I, as the first member of his family to hold Tickenham.[49] Bearing in mind that the military subtenant of Tickenham was tasked with holding the door of Striguil Castle, we might note that a Tice, called 'door-keeper' (*Tetsoni ostiario*)', appears on the pipe roll for 1130 among a list of people who were

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43 Bradney, Sir Joseph, *A History of Monmouthshire* (4 vols., Mitchell Hughes & Clarke, London, 1907–32), iii, 47. It is translated into English in Owen, E. *Catalogue of Manuscripts Relating to Wales in the British Museum* (4 vols., in 2, Cymmrodorion Record Series, London, 1900–22), no.1182 and in Mein, A. G., *Norman Usk, the birth of a Town* (1986), 119.

44 Coxe, W. *An Historical Tour Through Monmouthshire* (2 vols., Cadell J. T. & Davies, W., London, 1801), i, 162.

45 Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, HER 0203g.

46 Mein, *Norman Usk*, 107.

47 Morgan, R. *Place-names of Gwent* (Llanrwst, 2005), 133.

48 Collinson, J. *The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset* (3 vols., London, 1791), iii,165.

49 Fosbroke, T.D. *Berkeley MSS: Abstracts and Extracts of Smyth's Lives of the Berkeleys* (London, 1821), 74.

excused payment of danegeld (tax) on their lands in Berkshire. These people included earls, bishops and abbots as well as less exulted folk, such as those who were especially important in the running of the royal household at Windsor. Among the lesser folk were 'Turgar serjeant of the kitchen', 'Ralph the scribe' and, perhaps, 'Tice the door-keeper'.[50]

Whether or not he is the same Tice as the holder of Tickenham is open to question, but if he is it is unlikely that the king would have known him as 'door- or gate-keeper' purely on the strength of his role at Striguil: it is more likely that he knew him as 'door-keeper' at Windsor. Despite sounding a rather menial position, the Windsor role was an important one in that it involved the guarding of the principal door of the castle and with it, ultimately, the safety of the king's person and property. It also gave the holder the advantage of being able to speak to the monarch in person when seeking favours or advancement. If the Tice of Striguil and of Windsor in Berkshire are one and the same person, Walter of Clare's grant of Tickenham must have been made in the knowledge that he (and perhaps his family before him) was already experienced in the role. At Striguil the position had a military aspect and it is likely that the Windsor post did as well, Tice's lands in Berkshire probably lying near Windsor Castle. Several of William the Conqueror's officers and household servants held small amounts of land at Windsor in 1086 to support them while they performed their services,[51] and a predecessor of Tice's may have had one of these.

Records of the Cluniac priory that King William Rufus founded at Bermondsey in Surrey in about 1089 show that the relationship between the lord of Caerleon and the fitzTice family was not a one-way affair: they could gain advancement from him as well as serve him as a knight. Winebald de Ballon, his son Roger and grandson, also called Roger, were constant benefactors of this house in their English barony of North Cadbury. In or shortly after 1128, for instance, Winebald gave to the priory land at Upton in Blewbury (formerly in Berkshire, now Oxfordshire) together with the land of Tice (*Teocii*) at that place after his (Tice's) death. A deed that his son Roger issued jointly with his brother Miles expands on this a little and says that the land of Tice that their father gave lay in Upton and two other locations in that vill and that their mother, Hawise de Gournay, wife of Winebald, had also given her consent.[52] If this is Tice, son of Guy I and father of Guy II, it seems that he was able to acquire land at Upton from Winebald. This lies in the part of England where the fitzTices had their principal interests, so it would be a useful addition to their assets in the area. Whereas Winebald gained the feudal services of the fitzTices at Whitson, therefore they in turn were able to benefit from his largesse by acquiring lands that complemented their landed wealth in the south-east Midlands of England.

Looking further into the sixteenth century pedigree, we find Guy fitzTice (*Vido filius Tecae*) 'commonly called Fitztec' as the next owner of Tickenham. He also had the manor of Great Wymondley in Hertfordshire. This had been given by either Kings William I or II to Reginald d'Argentain before 1100 for the service of rendering a silver cup at the coronation feast.[53] In the reign of Stephen (1135–54) it was held by John d'Argentain. However, it seems probable that Guy was able to use his office as sheriff of Hertfordshire during Stephen's reign (see below) to impose himself

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[50] Green, J.A. (ed.), *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Thirty-First Year of the Reign of King Henry I: Michaelmas 1130* (The Pipe Roll Society, 2012), 99.

[51] *DB*, i, f.56b.

[52] Gurney, D., *The Record of the House of Gurney* (4 vols., London, 1848–52), ii, 600–604; Carpenter, D.X., *Charters of William II and Henry I Project*, Faculty of History, University of Oxford, 'Purported charter of foundation', pp. 18–20, notes 3, 3a and 3b. actswilliam2henry1wordpress.com, retrieved 28–1–19.

[53] *Victoria County History of Hertfordshire*, Vol. 3 (1912), 181–5; Round, J.H. *The King's Serjeants and Officers of State* (Nisbet, London, 1911), 264–7.

on this valuable manor. This had repercussions later in the century when Reginald d'Argentain, who was perhaps John's son, successfully claimed the manor against Guy's heirs.

Guy II had probably succeeded to his father Tice's English lands by 1136. This, however, was at a time when his ability to reach his lands in Wales became either difficult or plain impossible, mainly because Caerleon Castle was taken from Roger de Ballon by Morgan ab Owain, prince of Gwynllŵg in Gwent, in that year.[54] With Caerleon in his hands, he and his brother Iorwerth then went on to acquire the lordship of Goldcliff, which belonged to Walter de Chandos, son of the founder of Goldcliff Priory. This brought with it patronage of the priory, and in one of a number of charters Morgan and his family gave to Goldcliff, it says that Morgan himself gave 'the mill by Langstone', by which is meant the mill at Milton on Monks' Ditch,[55] the eastern boundary of the lordship of Goldcliff and the western limit of the manors of Langstone and Whitson.[56] The evident success of Morgan and his brother at this time makes it likely that Guy's tenure at Whitson was now less than secure, even that he was now unable to reach it at all

Exactly how possession of Caerleon Castle by a Welshman affected the Anglo-Norman knights of Lower Gwent, such as Guy, who held lands from that castle by feudal services, is uncertain. However, one cannot imagine them doing homage for their lands to a Welshman to whom feudal ties of homage and military service were alien. It is perhaps significant, therefore, that as far as can be judged today no Anglo-Norman knight from the part of the lordship of Caerleon east of Monk's Ditch attested any of his or his family's surviving deeds in favour of Goldcliff, as they had for his Norman predecessors.[57]

Morgan's assault on Caerleon was one of many Welsh attacks on lands in Wales held by Anglo-Norman lords prompted by the hiatus in 1135 between the death of King Henry and the accession of King Stephen (1135–54). The greater part of Stephen's reign was disfigured by a devastating civil war in England, one now known as simply 'The Anarchy'. The contest was between the Empress Matilda, King Henry's daughter and designated heir (he left no living legitimate son at his death) and formerly the wife of the German emperor (hence her preferred title), but now the wife of Count Geoffrey of Anjou, and Stephen of Blois, her cousin, who seized the throne on Henry's death.

Almost the first sign of military activity in the March of Wales came in the last few months of 1139 when, as William of Malmesbury, a contemporary chronicler, says '… the whole district around Gloucester as far as the depths of Wales, partly under compulsion and partly goodwill, gradually went over to the lady empress in the remaining months of the year'.[58] After this King Stephen and his allies were unable to affect events in the south Welsh border for the rest of the reign. Because of this, Guy II fitzTice had to decide where his loyalties lay. While the empress's forces controlled western and southwestern parts of the kingdom, Stephen's controlled London and East Anglia and (particularly important for Guy) the south-east Midlands. If, therefore, he chose to fight for the empress he would face the prospect of losing to Stephen all his English manors (see map, Fig. 4), but if he chose to fight for Stephen, he would lose his Welsh lands to the empress. Really, however, there

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54 Crouch, D. 'The Transformation of Medieval Gwent', *The Gwent County History, Vol. 2: The Age of the Marcher Lords c1070-1536* (The Gwent County History Association, Cardiff, 2008), 26.

55 For 'Monk's Ditch' see Rippon, *Gwent Levels: The Evolution of a Wetland Landscape,* fig.5, etc.

56 Pryce, H. (ed.), *The Acts of the Welsh Rulers 1120–1283* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2005), no.471.

57 Pryce, *The Acts of the Welsh Rulers 1120–1283*, nos.463, 464, 469–75. All these deeds are calendared in English in *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1257–1300*, 358–363.

58 William of Malmesbury: *Historia Novella, The Contemporary History* (ed. & trans. King, E. & Potter, K.R., 2nd rev. ed., Clarendon Press, Oxford 1998), 64–5.

can have been little choice for him, as his English lands must have far outweighed in value anything he had in Wales. It as an ally of King Stephen, therefore, that we find him in royal records of the remainder of this reign. As a member of the king's military household, Guy was occasionally on hand to witness Stephen's charters.[59] The king made him sheriff of Hertfordshire for a time after the death in 1144 of Geoffrey de Mandeville, earl of Essex, its previous holder, and was an occasional justice of the king in his city of London.[60] In 1148 he was with the king to attest a charter of Roger de Cauz to Missenden Abbey concerning three hides of land in Arncott, Oxfordshire.[61]

Hostilities in the civil war were ended by a 'treaty' drawn up at Winchester in November 1153. One of its many clauses said that after Stephen died (which he did in the autumn of 1154) and Henry the empress's son acceded to the throne, all lands, titles and offices that had been acquired during the 'usurper's' reign would revert to their holders before that reign. The result of this clause was that some of the barons and knights of England who had thriven in the anarchic condition of the country under Stephen saw no reason why they should not retain their acquisitions and continue with their private wars and vendettas just because there was a different king. Even the earl of Hereford, a foremost ally of the empress was intent on breaking out in revolt until failing health and the persuasive voices of his friends stopped him.[62] In this febrile atmosphere we find Guy attesting a charter of Robert of Ewyas, lord of Ewyas Harold, giving a manor in Wiltshire to Godfrey de Scudamore, which probably passed at Ewyas Harold.[63]

This same unrest affected Guy and others of similar standing, such as Walkelin Visdelou of Benham in Berkshire, who witnessed the Missenden deed with Guy and who may have been related to him. He forfeited Benham early in Henry's reign for slaying a knight.[64] As one who had profited from Stephen's reign, Guy should now have feared similar losses. Henry, however, was not one to overlook a man of proven administrative ability while the country was recovering from civil war.[65] We therefore find Guy fitzTice continuing as sheriff of Hertfordshire until Easter 1155,[66] when he was dismissed from his office for being implicated in the manslaughter of a certain Alan *Wallensis* 'Alan the Welshman'. His lands were lost as a result, although some of these were returned to him under the terms of a letter issued by King Henry at Durham in January 1158. This says that he had restored to Guy fitzTice all the lands of which he had been disseised because he took part in the manslaughter of Alan the Welshman of which he was accused, had pardoned him 'as much as the said transgression as pertains to him' and ordered that he should make peace with Alan's parents.[67] It

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59 *RRAN*, iii, nos.456, 590, 874, 938–941.

60 *The Great Rolls of the Pipe for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Years of King Henry II* (Record Commission, London, 1844), 5 & 115 where 20s of the 'pleas of *Widone filii Tecii*' are held over until Michaelmas 1158, when they were paid off; Eyton, R.W. *Court, Household and Itinerary of King Henry II* (Taylor & Co., London, 1878), 19.

61 *RRAN*, iii, no.590.

62 Walker, D., 'The 'Honours' of the Earls of Hereford in the Twelfth Century, *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, **79** (1960), 174–211.

63 J.L. Kirby (ed.), *The Hungerford Cartulary: A Calendar of the Earl of Radnor's Cartulary of the Hungerford Family* (Wiltshire Record Society, 1993), no.363.

64 Farrer, W., *Honors and Knight's Fees* (3 vols., Spottiswood, Ballantyne & Co., London & Manchester, 1923–5), i, 54–5.

65 Amt, E. *The Accession of Henry II in England: royal government restored 1149–59* (The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1993), 114.

66 *RBE*, 651.

67 Farrer, W. (ed.), *Early Yorkshire Charters* (4 vols., Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, Extra Series, 1914–1942), i, no.466.

was probably after some of his lands had been restored that Guy issued a charter to Goldcliff Priory giving the tithe of his land on Goldcliff Moor.[68]

Guy was now nearing the end of a long career. In 1162 he terminated a controversy with St Neot's church regarding the church of Everton and land in Long Crendon in Buckinghamshire.[69] A debt of five marks owed by him in Bedfordshire at Michaelmas 1163 was made quit by the king's writ.[70] After this nothing more is heard of him and it is likely that he died in the exchequer year 1162/3 at what must have been an advanced age.

One more detail of Guy's life that might be mentioned here is that he may have been the originator of the present church at Whitson. Some of its remaining architectural elements are Romanesque in style, such as the font, and may date from his later years as lord of the manor.[71] Although it is not until 1291 that it appears in the priory's hands, it is likely that Guy gave it to Goldcliff Priory. In that year, the priory had seven carucates of land in Goldcliff, Nash and Whitson, a vicarage at Whitson valued at £1 annually and fixed rents at Langstone.[72] In 1536 the cathedral church of Llandaff (in place of Goldcliff Priory, which had been suppressed as a dependency of a French or 'alien' house in 1467) had four shillings of rent in *Wyston*, perhaps representing income from the lands given by Guy c1160, and one shilling annually from its church.[73]

Guy's heirs were his daughters Alice and Helen. His lands in England and in Lower Gwent went to Nicholas son of Robert fitzHarding of Berkeley Castle in marriage with Alice.[74] Nicholas's father was English in descent and as a rich merchant of Bristol had provided the Empress Matilda (the new king's mother, it will be recalled) with some of the finances she needed to conduct the war against Stephen. In 1153 Henry, when still duke of Normandy, took Berkeley Castle and its barony from Roger of Berkeley, a partisan of King Stephen's, and gave it to Robert. Alice's marriage to a son of this 'coming' man was therefore quite a coup for Guy. Helen, the younger daughter, married Reginald d'Argentain.

Included in Alice's marriage portion were the manors of Langstone and Whitson in Lower Gwent, Little Chishill in Essex and Tickenham in Somerset. Not long after the death of Alice's father we find Nicholas giving the churches of Little Chishill and Langstone to the abbey of Augustinian canons that had been established at Bristol by his paternal grandfather with the consent of his wife.[75]

Her inheritance also included a claim on the manor of Great Wymondley in Hertfordshire. In 1190 Reginald d'Argentain, her husband's brother-in-law, rendered account of £100 in Essex and Hertfordshire to have justice concerning the lands that were Guy II fitzTice's that pertained to him in Great Wymondley, and to the land in the same place of which Alan de Vitré had dispossessed him.

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68 Crouch, *The Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family, Marshals of England and Earls of Pembroke 1145–1248*, no.248. Great Wymondley, remained in escheat until 1195: see further below.

69 *Bedfordshire Notes and Queries*, **3** (1898), 342.

70 *Pipe Roll 29 Henry II*, 20.

71 See the description in Newman, J., *Gwent/Monmouthshire* (The Buildings of Wales, London, 2000), 600 (the 'Pevsner' guide). It was declared redundant by the Church in Wales in 2002. There are plans to convert it into a private residence.

72 Denton, J. & Taylor,.B., 'The 1291 valuation of the ecclesiastical benefices of Llandaff diocese', *Archaeologia Cambrensis,* **147** (1998), 145 and note 14; Williams, D.H. 'Goldcliff Priory', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, **3** (1970–1), 51–2.

73 *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (6 vols., Record Commission, 1810–34), iv, 346, 377.

74 Walker, D. (ed.), *The Cartulary of St Augustine's Abbey, Bristol* (Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 1998), no.82.

75 *Ibid*., nos. 83, 94. In this excellent work, the late Dr Walker mistakenly identifies Langstone in Gwent with Langstone in Devon.

At Michaelmas in the next year Nicholas accounted for 200 marks to hold in peace the lands of Guy fitzTice that Reginald claimed against him until the lord king (Richard I) returned from Jerusalem.[76] The matter was closed when in March 1195, King Richard granted to Reginald by charter all the township of Great Wymondley, as decreed to him in his court at Westminster, against Alan de Vitré. On the following day he granted to Reginald for 200 silver marks (replacing the £100 that he had already fined) the whole township of Great Wymondley and also that he should have full justice concerning the land of Guy fitzTice, his grandfather, that it should not remain in escheat because of his manslaughter of Alan of Wales.

Ala, daughter of Nicholas and Alice married Ralph son of Walter Bluet of Raglan. Afterwards Ralph challenged St Augustine's for possession of Langstone church, but when Nicholas made it clear that he had previously given the church to the canons he confirmed Nicholas's charter 'which he has read'.[77]

In 1233 Ralph Bluet was lord of Langstone[78] and in 1246 this manor was held from the barony of Caerleon for the service of one knight's fee.[79] In 1314 John Bluet held Langstone and Whitson for the service of two knight's fees at Caerleon Castle. John died in 1322 when the widow of Gilbert V of Clare, earl of Hertford and lord of Caerleon, had in her dower the wardship of the three daughters and heirs of John Bluet: Eleanor, Margaret and Joan. Margaret married William de Coutances and in 1358 their son Peter was lord of Langstone. That same year John Seymour of Penhow and Elizabeth his wife held the manor of *Wyduston* from Peter de Coutances as of the manor of Langstone, which he held from the lord of Caerleon.[80]

A summary of the evidence presented here shows that both Walter of Clare and Gilbert his brother followed the lead of King Henry I in settling Flemings in their Welsh lordships of Lower Gwent and Ceredigion respectively followed, in the second decade of the twelfth century. Some of these Flemings were already established in England (such as the fitzTices) under the count of Boulogne and other Flemish tenants-in-chief; others came directly from their over-populated homeland. Doughty fighters, industrious townsmen and determined settlers that they were, in Gilbert's lordship of Ceredigion they were active in bringing lands around Cardigan under cultivation and at the same time defending his interests there through their castle at Blaenporth. In Lower Gwent, there is evidence that at least one family, the fitzTices, was active in defending Walter's lordship there while, at the same time, bringing into cultivation waste and marshy land at Whitson in the lordship of Caerleon and performing their feudal services at Caerleon castle. The families of fitzTice and Marck are found in Lower Gwent and the latter also in Ceredigion. However, there is evidence to suggest that the two families were very closely allied (perhaps even blood relatives) so that as we find the Flemish family of Marck in Ceredigion so we should expect the fitzTices to be present.

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76 *PRs 2 Richard I*, 110 & *3 Richard I*, 116.
77 Walker, *Cartulary of St Augustine's Abbey,* no.88.
78 *Calendar of Close Rolls 1231–4*, 259, 447–8.
79 *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1364–7*, 264 an exemplification of the division of the lands of the Marshal family, lords of Caerleon, etc., on the death of Anselm Marshal in 1245.
80 *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, 1352–61*, no. 414.

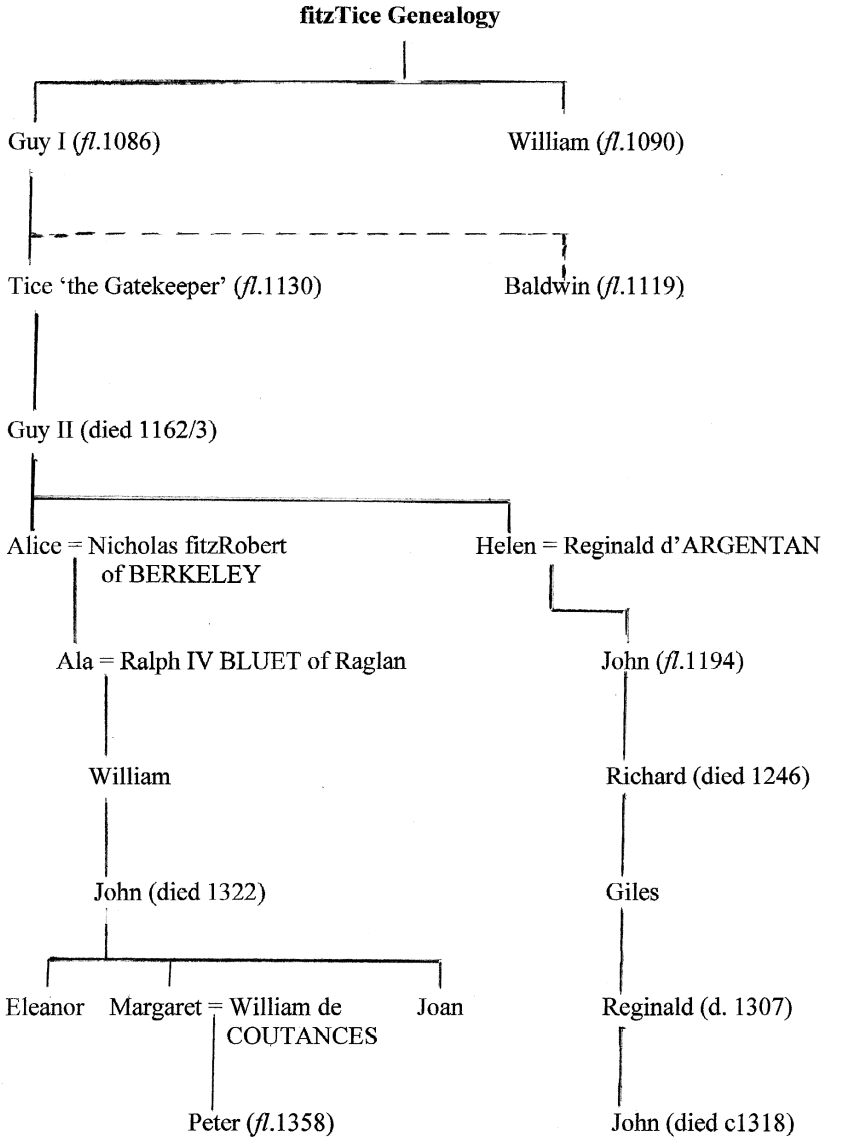


Fig. 5: The FitzTices and their associates, genealogical tree.

# THE MAKING OF AN INDUSTRY: MONMOUTHSHIRE IRON 1775–1840

**By Jeremy Knight**

'But Iron, cold Iron, is master of them all'
Rudyard Kipling, *Cold Iron*

The new industrial towns that developed in the Monmouthshire Valleys from the late eighteenth century onwards, dependent on iron and coal, have produced local historians with detailed local knowledge which outsiders can only envy. Most significant towns now have their historians[1] but these are largely concerned with the communities which these enterprises brought into being, rather than with the ironworks themselves. It was however the vagaries of this highly cyclical industry and its problems that created the social tensions that shaped these communities. What followed depended on why a particular ironworks, and the community that went with it, was established at a particular place at a particular moment in time, who were the men who made that decision and where the necessary financial resources came from.

In the course of the eighteenth century, a chain reaction of scientific, economic and technological changes transformed the iron industry from one of single charcoal-fuelled, water-blown blast furnaces, of limited capacity and output, to the multiple coke-fired, steam-blown furnaces of which the earliest surviving examples are at Blaenafon. Whether charcoal or coke fired, this 'indirect process' required two separate stages – the smelting of ore at the furnace to produce pig iron and its conversion at the forge into the more profitable wrought, 'bar' or 'merchant' iron needed for most purposes. For this reason, furnaces were often linked with associated forges.

In outline, this transformation of the industry is familiar and was summarized by William Coxe in 1801. He thought that an earlier stage of ironmaking, evidenced by beds of iron slag and the 'vestiges of ancient furnaces' had been brought to an end by deforestation. Then 'About forty years ago, the iron works suddenly revived, from the beneficial discovery of making pig iron with pit coal, instead of charcoal, which was soon afterwards followed by the improvement of manufacturing even bar iron by means of pit coal: hence a district which contained such extensive mines of ore and coal, prodigious quantities of limestone, and numerous streams of water, could not fail to become the seat of many flourishing establishments … aided by … the use of the steam engine and the great improvement of water machines…'[2]

### *The Tyranny of Wood and Water*

This was not a simple evolutionary process. Charcoal furnaces required access to large areas of woodland, preferably managed and coppiced, and to water power from streams without water mills or other impediments. One ironmaster spoke of 'the tyranny of wood and water'. In addition, whilst iron ore could be shipped in bulk cheaply, charcoal was too friable to travel. Thus furnaces had to be built not where the ore was found, but where supplies of timber were available. This had a profound effect on the geography of the industry. Iron ore was shipped from areas like Cumbria to the west Midlands or north Wales, to utilize local timber resources.

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1 e.g. Gray Jones (1970); Jones (1969); Powell (1884, 1902); Browning (1906). There are also a number of unpublished histories: see bibliography for full titles.

2 Coxe (1801), 229–230.

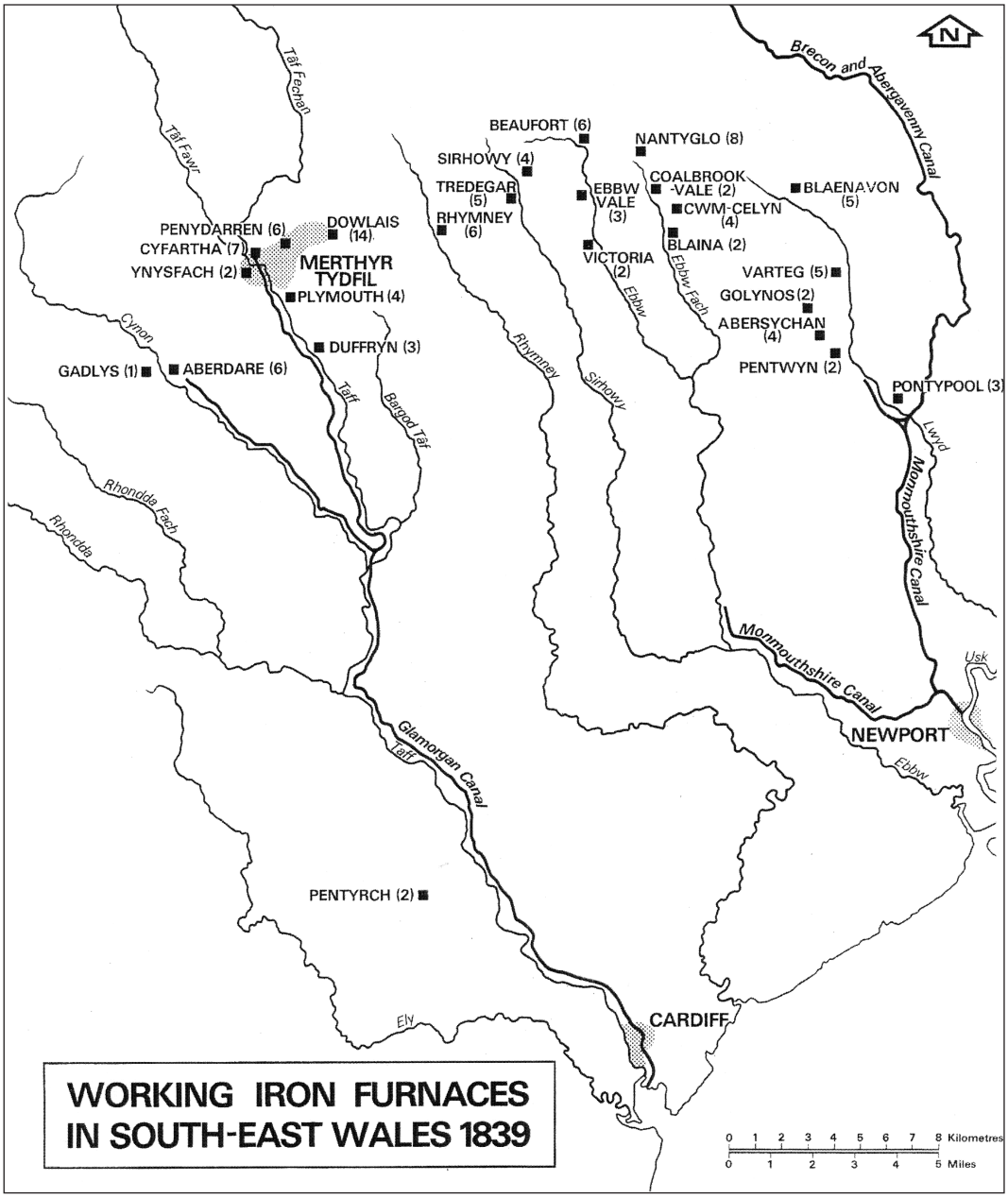


Fig. 1: Map of ironworks in Monmouthshire and Glamorgan (by courtesy of Cadw).

The twin poles of the industry, which made developments in south Wales possible, were Bristol, with its large merchant community and overseas shipping and the Stour Valley in Worcestershire, centred on Stourbridge. The two were linked by the Severn, navigable by small craft as far as Welshpool, and whose influence on the local economy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

was compared by Court with that of railways in the nineteenth.[3] The Stourbridge area was the home of numerous metallurgical craft industries, with histories going back to Elizabethan times, whose demand for iron far outstripped the capacity of their own blast furnaces. Edward Kendall (1684–1774) of Stourbridge was the founder of a dynasty of ironmasters. His three sons, Jonathan, Henry and Edward were involved in ironmaking in Cheshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire. They shipped haematite 'red ore from Cumbria' to their furnaces in the west Midlands, to mix with local ores. They also built charcoal furnaces at Conwy and at Dyfi in north Wales and at Vale Royal in Cheshire, sited for easy maritime access to supplies of haematite.[4]

In time a new problem arose. Timber supplies, even in areas like north Wales, were not unlimited. As early as 1763 a writer was complaining that 'not a third' of the original woodland remained and the search for new sources of timber was becoming 'desparate'. Complaints about the clear felling of woodland for iron making went back a long way. In 1565 a charcoal furnace had been built on former monastic land at Monkswood near Usk, the first in the county. Already the Bristol-Stourbridge links were apparent. Its partners were Thomas Chester of Bristol; a Shropshire man Charles Fox and Thomas Malpas of Stourbridge.[5] In 1571–5 another furnace was built by the Kentish ironmaster Edmund Roberts at Abercarn. In 1576 Roberts and Richard Hanbury obtained from the Earl of Pembroke oak and beech woodland at Y Graig Fawr in Llanfihangel Pontymoel, in Panteg and in Glyn Trosnant. Later, there were complaints that Richard Hanbury had felled 6,000 beech trees for charcoal in the forests of Glascoed, Gwentwood and Glyn Trosnant and the tenants of Usk lordship, led by a priest, had attacked Hanbury's charcoal makers at Glascoed. In the Restoration period, Beaufort's clear felling of areas of Wentwood for his Tintern furnace, to the detriment of forest edge communities with rights of common, was a major cause of the particular virulence of the so-called 'Popish Plot' locally.[6] Some of these claims may have been exaggerated. Widespread deforestation, particularly of oakwood, undoubtedly took place, but managed and coppiced cordwood was a sustainable resource, though its price may have been rising and charcoal burning was a laborious and labour-intensive process with limited output. Available unimpeded streams for waterpower were perhaps an equal problem.[7] The new coke-fired blast furnaces could be built where supplies of ore and of coal for coking were available and timber supply was no longer significant.

This did not mean the end of ore shipments, for 'native' ore, weaker in iron content than imported haematite, needed to be mixed with other types for best results. This also prevented the iron from being 'cold short' or brittle. In 1786–7 Harford, Partridge and Co. shipped 448 tons of Lancashire ore to Cardiff and thence to Caerphilly furnace, where it was mixed with local ore to produce pig iron for the Melingriffith tinplate works outside Cardiff. Similarly, in 1794, 577 tons of Lancashire ore were shipped up the Wye to Redbrook furnace as part of a triangular trade involving oak bark from the Wye shipped to Ireland for tanning and a return trip via Whitehaven.[8]

Charcoal furnaces were often part of a landed estate, controlled by families like the Morgans of Tredegar Park, the Hanburys of Pontypool, the Duke of Beaufort or the Catchmays of Bigswear. Of the surviving charcoal furnaces in Monmouthshire, that at Tintern was owned by the Duke of

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3 Court (1938), 6.
4 Awty (1957), 76–7, 87; Riden (1993), 68, 69–71, 84–5.
5 Evans (2009), 357.
6 Gwent Archives (hereafter GA) JCH/1560, 1576 (Hanbury papers); Owen (1962), 167; Evans, 355–356.
7 Awty, 115. For discussion of timber supplies see Flinn (1958–9), 148–150.
8 Harris, 7; Morris (2008), 24–36.

Beaufort, the Woolpitch Wood furnace near Trellech by the Proberts of Pant Glas and the Coed; Ithel furnace by the Catchmays. The charcoal furnaces and forges around Monmouth and Redbrook were operated by gentry families like the Scudamores of Blackbrook, Skenfrith or the Whites of Goodrich.

The 'Tredegar Ironworks' of the Morgans (which had no connection other than the name with the later industrial town) was an integrated industrial complex. From a blast furnace at Caerphilly, built in 1680 to the west of Caerphilly, on land previously belonging to the Lewises of the Van, the iron travelled via two forges at Upper Machen and Gelliwasted[9] and a third at Bassaleg in Tredegar Park to the warehouse on the quayside at Newport where the sloop *Tredegar* conveyed the finished iron to Bristol. The rods of Osmund iron from the Machen forge, particularly suitable for wire drawing, were sold to Thomas Foley, probably for his Tintern wireworks. Most of the bar iron went to Foley's Stourbridge forges in Worcestershire, or to Birmingham.[10]

This new industrial enterprise of the Morgans ran in tandem with the building of Tredegar House, described by John Newman as 'one of the outstanding houses of the Restoration period in the whole of Britain'. It was built by William Morgan, who had married Elizabeth Lewis, co-heiress of the Van between 1664 and 1680 and completed by his son Thomas Morgan between 1680 and his

Fig. 2: Woolpitch Wood, Trellech: A charcoal blast furnace, worked by the Proberts of Pant Glas. It probably dates from before the Civil War (photo: the author).

9 Bradney, *Hundred of Newport*, 119.

10 National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW) Tredegar Mss 3, 76/1–25, 76/256, 76/250; Williams (1960), 266–272; Rees (1968), 312–317; Riden, 15–17.

death in 1699. The Morgans, who disputed and shared Parliamentary representation in the county with the Herberts of Badminton (ex Raglan) needed a house of appropriate status to match their rivals. The furnace was operated by John Morgan of Machen and Tredegar (died 1720), with two minority partners. From 1650 to 1690 was a peak period for the involvement of the younger sons of gentry in trade.[11]

Machen 'mountain' was rich in minerals, as Coxe noted. There had been extensive lead mining in Roman times and a mine for lead and calamine was operating in the eighteenth century. In 1784 there was a 'smith's forge by the upper level' at the lead mine and in 1793 lead ore and calamine (zinc carbonate – used in the making of brass) was being sold. The iron forges themselves had an earlier history. The Rhyd-y-Groes forge at Machen existed by 1567 and in 1570 Gelliwasted (Y Gelli Wastoode) was leased by Edmund Roberts, the London merchant who a few years later built a blast furnace at Abercarn for the casting of cannon.[12] The forge site, shown on the tithe map, appears on the second edition of the Ordnance Survey map as Machen Tin Works (disused) with a mill race, which could have provided the necessary water power.[13]

Surviving account books show the furnace and forges in operation between 1690 and brother and heir Thomas Morgan leased the works to James Pratt, grandfather of Benjamin Pratt, one of the founding partners of Blaenavon and Hugh Jones of Gelliwasted. When Pratt's son Samuel died in 1747, the family returned to Chaddersley Corbet near Stourbridge, taking the infant Benjamin with them. The ironworks now traded as Hugh Jones and Co., selling pig iron direct to the Stourbridge forges. In 1764 Thomas Morgan of Tredegar leased the Caerphilly furnace to the Breconshire ironmaster John Maybery, owner of a furnace at Hirwaun later taken over by Samuel Glover of Abercarn. A renewed lease of 1775 makes provision for a new waterwheel for the furnace and mentions ironstone mines in Rudry and the forges at Machen and Bassaleg.[14] In 1789 the furnace was leased for 21 years to the Bristol partnership of James Harford, Philip Crocker and Truman Harford. It is believed to have closed down about 1819.

Charcoal furnaces were limited in size by, among other things, the weight ('burden') of ore and limestone flux that the charcoal could bear. Thus the cost of construction was relatively low and the associated waterwheels belonged to an established rural craft. In 1683, the estimated cost of a blast furnace, with two forges, hammer ponds and buildings, was £1,000.[15] Coke furnaces were much larger. They required a bigger labour force, the steam blowing engine had to be ordered from a specialist firm such as Boulton and Watt and the much larger output meant that the ironmaster had to contribute to the cost of the infrastructure of canals and tramways needed to transport the finished product. The larger financial outlay needed outside venture capital from Bristol, the west Midlands or the City of London. Birch has shown how, from about 1770 onwards, landowners were replaced as entrepreneurs in the iron industry by merchants and industrialists.[16]

Charcoal forges depended for their iron on associated blast furnaces. The Morgan-owned Tredegar ironworks was an integrated concern. So was that on the former land of Tintern Abbey in the Wye Valley. Just above the site of the Abbey, the Angidy Valley branches off, a busy and unimpeded stream, still marked by a series of hammer ponds from iron forges and the remains of

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11 Newman (2000), 562–571; Bradney, *Hundred of Newport*, 70–71; Grassby (1978), 355–381 (at p.357).
12 NLW Tredegar Mss 43/128, 50/28; Schubert (1957), 295, 367; Bradney , *Hundred of Newport*, 19.
13 NLW Tredegar Mss 76, 23, 26–32, 250; Riden, 15–17. I am very grateful to Will Davies for copies of the relevant maps.
14 NLW Tredegar Mss 76, 250.
15 Court, 80.
16 Birch (1967), 282–283.

a charcoal furnace and its associated structures. The Angidy Valley had first been utilized by the Mineral and Battery Company, which received its royal charter in 1565. It had problems finding streams not already in use for its waterwheels at Bristol and began building a furnace and wireworks on the former monastic land at the confluence of the Wye and Angidy the following year. The valley provided both timber supplies and water power. In 1646 the iron and wire works at Tintern, confiscated from the Worcesters of Raglan by the parliamentary regime, were leased to Thomas Foley I (1617–1677). After his death they were worked by Paul Foley, until in 1704 they were sold by the Beaufort Estate to George White of New Weir, Goodrich and Monmouth. After the death of his son Richard in 1752, they passed to a nephew, Edward Jordan of Ludlow, and in 1775 to David Tanner, of The Elms, Monmouth, who became bankrupt in 1798 and left for India, where he died. One late-eighteenth century traveller recorded 'a cylinder blown furnace, known as the 'Old Furnace', on a gurgling brook, above the village of Abbey Tintern.' Isaac Wilkinson and John Smeaton had both produced cylinder blowing engines, linked to waterwheels, to replace the earlier leather bellows. The furnace was operated, still as a charcoal furnace, by Robert Thompson (died 1822) and others until 1828. Its closure marked the end of the charcoal iron industry in Monmouthshire, though in 1840 300 tons of charcoal iron, presumably old stock from Pontypool or Abercarn, was auctioned off in Crumlin. The wireworks continued, despite temporary closure in 1828. Ten years later the iron


Fig. 3: The Elms, Monmouth, home of David Tanner, ironmaster at Tintern and elsewhere. (photo: Steve Clark)

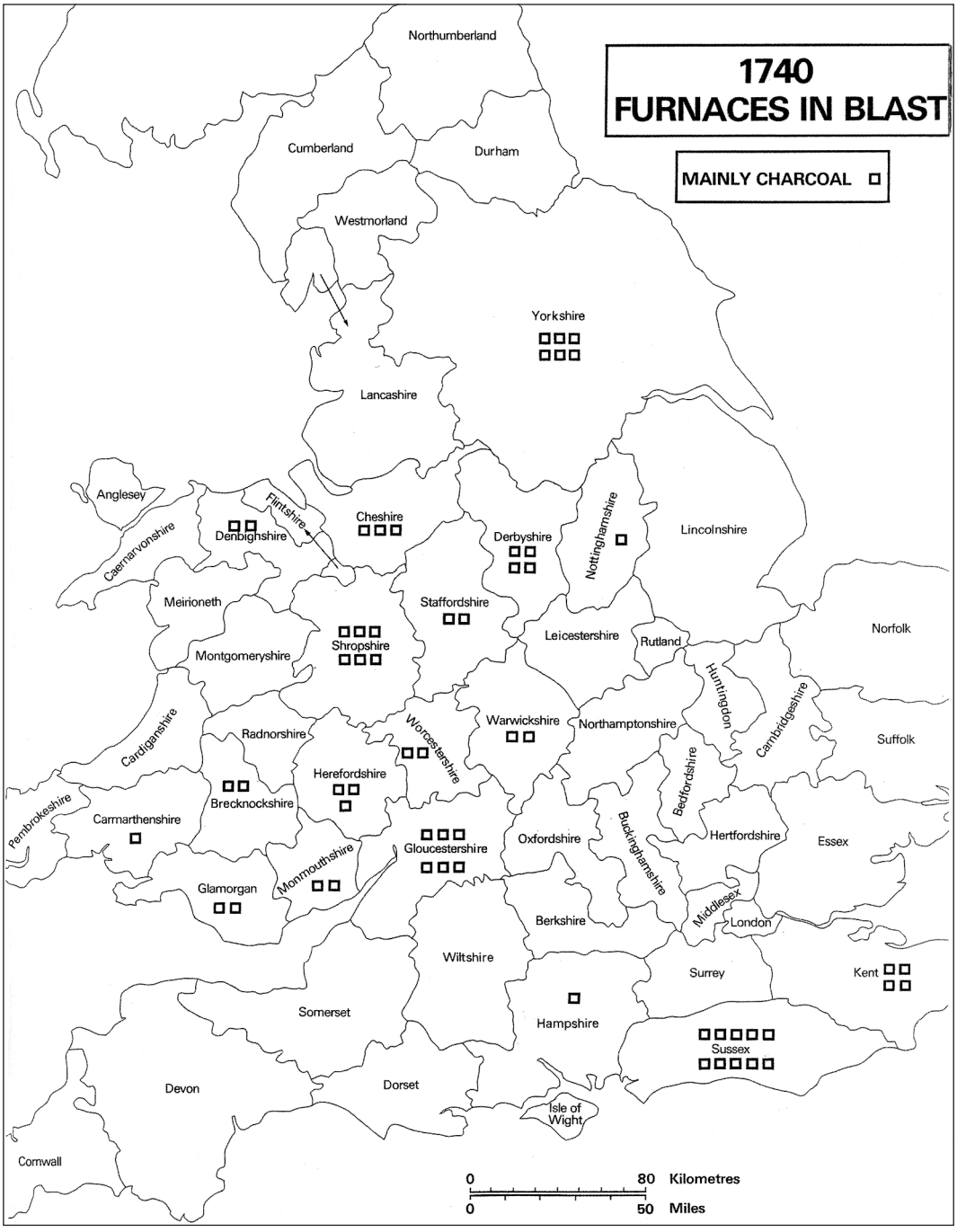


Fig. 4: Charcoal furnaces in blast 1740 (by courtesy of Cadw, based on Scrivenor, 57).

and wireworks were again up for sale, with two forges, a rolling mill and water-driven corn mill. They finally closed about 1900.[17]

Tintern was part of an iron industry along the Wye around Monmouth and Ross. A furnace at Redbrook, south of Monmouth, existed by 1613, associated with two forges at Lydbrook, operated by Benedict Hall of Highmeadow House in Newland. These, on the Gloucestershire bank of the river, were well placed to supply iron to Bristol and the Stour Valley. The Lydbrook forges originally had an associated blast furnace, crown property, leased to the Catholic royalist Sir John Winter, but reclaimed by Charles I in the early 1640s for the use of the king's gun founder. They were later sold by Charles II to Paul Foley of Stoke Edith in Herefordshire (1645–1699), one of the dynasty of ironmasters and MP for Herefordshire. In 1672 Foley leased a forge at Llancilio on the Herefordshire bank of the Monnow built by George Scudamore of Blackbrook, Skenfrith and Llangarron (Herefordshire) shortly before 1637. These were later held by George White (died 1720), whose son George White junior is described in his memorial of 1765 in Goodrich church as 'Proprietor of the Iron Works at New Weir, now owned by William Partridge'.[18]

In 1790 David Tanner bought the Lower Redbrook Copper Works for £2,700 and converted them to produce tinplate, using iron from the Redbrook furnace, where he had taken over the lease from Harford, Partridge and Co.; but in 1793 the lease of the furnace ended. Tanner also attempted to cast cannon at Tintern, without much success, before his bankruptcy in 1798.[19]

Monmouth, close to the Forest of Dean, has a long history of ironmaking, beginning in Roman times. Iron forges are documented there from the eleventh century onwards. By 1628 there was a forge at Osbaston outside Monmouth, owned by George Scudamore. In 1647 William Williams took possession of the 'new forge' as tenant after a closure due to forfeiture of the lease after the Civil War. By 1685 George White was 'clerk of the forge' for Scudamore and his son Henry (d. 1736). The Monmouth charcoal forges were held by the Foleys from 1703, with a storehouse for their iron on the Monnow quayside on the present site of Monmouth School. In 1762 Monmouth, along with Redbrook and Lydbrook, was leased by the Duke of Beaufort to a partnership including Richard Scudamore and Richard Reynolds (1735–1816), the Quaker ironmaster of Bristol and Coalbrookdale, along with James and Truman Harford of Bristol and John Partridge, senior and junior, with Partridge junior as resident partner. The forges were noted by Coxe as owned by Harford, Partridge and Co. Later, they passed through a number of hands before their closure in 1886. As late as July 1859, a billhead described them as 'Charcoal Bar and Sheet Iron Works'.[20]

***Founding Fathers***

From 1750, Coke smelting spread from its Shropshire origins, with pioneer furnaces at Hirwaun and Dowlais in Merthyr by 1760. Richard Crawshay, Yorkshire-born partner in a firm of London iron merchants, was at Cyfarthfa soon after, as was John Guest at Plymouth ironworks. During the decade the new technique spread to Neath and Clydach. Monmouthshire was thus a relative latecomer, but

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17 Evans, 353–357; Llewellin (1863); Parr and Tucker (1975); Pickin (1982); Riden, 46–47; Shaw (1789), 204; Bradney, *Hundred of Trellech*, 269–270; *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 2 July 1831, 3 March 1838, 29 Aug 1840.

18 Harris, 1–38.

19 Jenkins (1925–26), 42–65; Riden, 46–47; Morris; The National Archives PROB 11/815/218, will of David Tanner, 'Ironmaster of Monmouth'. For Tanner's career see Evans, 374–375.

20 NLW Badminton Mss 2, 284200. The partners included Richard Scudamore, James Harford, William Weaver, Philip Crocker and Truman Harford, all of Bristol, John Partridge and Thomas Pritchard of Ross, Richard Reynolds of Ketley and John Partridge of Monmouth forges; Billhead in Harris, 28.

various technical improvements to steam engine technology and to the smelting process finally came together in the 1770s, at a time when conditions were particularly favourable for industrial expansion. The American War of Independence began in 1775 and war with France soon followed. In the same year, after years of experiment, James Watt's steam engine moved from the experimental to the commercial stage. A year earlier, he had settled in Birmingham and gone into partnership with Matthew Boulton at the Soho works. Added to the wartime industrial boom was the partial blockade which inhibited the import of the Swedish iron on which British industry had previously depended. Between 1711 and 1774 iron imports had risen from 15,600 tons to 48,980 tons, despite a tariff. In addition, the Usury Act of 1714 limited the legal rate of interest to 5% and investors might have felt that they could obtain a better return on their capital by direct investment in industry.[21]

Along the northern edge of the Monmouthshire uplands (the 'Heads of the Valleys'), coal and ironstone outcropped at a shallow angle, making extraction easy. In 1778 Henry Kendall (1718–1787) and a group of investors from the City of London established a coke-fired furnace at the head of the Sirhowy valley, on land leased from Charles Henry Burgh of Mitchel Troy. Burgh was a Monmouth man, grandson of a steward of the Duke of Beaufort and had inherited the Abercarn estate, which included Sirhowy.[22] The investors in **Sirhowy** included three wholesale grocers and tea merchants from the City of London, John Sealey, Bolton Hudson and William Barrow and a former South Carolina merchant, Thomas Atkinson, resident at Skipton in Yorkshire. Atkinson was involved with Henry Kendall in an ironworks at Ulveston in north Lancashire.

The connection with the London grocery trade may have come about through Henry's sister, Elizabeth Kendall, who was married to a London wholesale grocer, Samuel Notton. Arthur Raistrick noted that the mixing of trade in groceries and iron was common among Quaker ironmasters. Richard Reynolds of Coalbrookdale was apprenticed in his youth to William Fry, a Bristol grocer. In 1794 the other partners of Sirhowy retired and Barrow became resident manager, along with Kendall's brother-in-law, Matthew Monkhouse, vicar of Selside in Westmoreland. Barrow and Monkhouse now described themselves as 'ironmasters'. In the same year, the partnership was joined by two house builders from Clapham, Richard Fothergill (1758–1821) and John Hanscomb, along with Richard Braithwaite, owner of an iron forge at Llangrwyney in Breconshire.[23] On Fothergill's death he was succeeded at Sirhowy by his son, Matthew Fothergill (1792–1866). Another son, John, married Monkhouse's daughter Mary. Marriage links were often important in the new industry. In 1801–2, Sirhowy opened a second furnace, joining the growing number of south Wales multi-furnace works.

A year after the establishment of Sirhowy, in December 1779, the Kendalls leased from the Duke of Beaufort land at the head of the Ebbw Valley, linked to the east via the valley of the Clydach with Abergavenny and the Usk, with consent to build one or more iron furnaces, at a minimum cost of £1,000. An earlier attempt to build a furnace here, in 1769, by Isaac Wilkinson, in partnership with a Rotherham ironmaster and Pennoyre Williams of Brecon had failed. This was due to a lack of knowledge of the local terrain (and language) and the remoteness of the site. The resulting settlement took its name from the Duke's title, though in Welsh it was Y Cendl, after its founders. When the supply of water for the waterwheel driving the blast proved inadequate, a Newcomen beam engine

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21 Scrivenor (1841), 58.

22 Burgh died in 1778 see Bradney, *Hundred of Trellech*, 168 and *Hundred of Newport*, 134.

23 NLW Mayberry Mss, 232; Lloyd (1906), 145–150. In 1774 Atkinson advertised as a merchant in a local newspaper in South Carolina. I am very grateful to Karen Stokes of the South Carolina Historical Society for this information. Raistrick (1950), 150; Raistrick (1953), 82 note 1.

was installed in 1782, not for the furnace, but to recycle water from the wheelpit back to the furnace pond above the wheel. In 1798 **Beaufort** acquired a second furnace, along with a forge. The head of the family, Jonathan Kendall, was still resident in Stourbridge, with his son Edward Kendall (1750–1807) managing affairs in south Wales from Llangattock Court in Breconshire, and Edward's son, Jonathan Kendall the younger (died 1810) running Beaufort. The forge was a separate enterprise, under Joseph Lathom, a Scot from Argyllshire. Lathom's daughter married Joseph Bailey, nephew of William Crawshay, who in 1811 re-opened Nantyglo with a legacy from his uncle. Her sister was married to William Hibbs Bevan, later manager of Beaufort. The world of the south Wales ironmasters was a small and closely knit community.[24]

In 1800 Richard Fothergill and Samuel Homfray (1762–1822) built a new coke-fired blast furnace on the opposite bank of the Sirhowy river. Homfray, son of the Stourbridge ironmaster Francis Homfray, with his brothers, Jeremiah and Thomas, had established Penydarren ironworks at Merthyr. Samuel was married to Jane, daughter of Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar House and in consequence was able to acquire 3,000 acres of land at a very favourable rate. Morgan however insisted that £40,000 was to be spent on the works before a stipulated date and that the iron was to be shipped via his wharf at Newport. Homfray and Fothergill named their new works **Tredegar**, in honour of Homfray's father-in-law. The Sirhowy and Tredegar furnaces were initially blown by waterwheels, but in 1801–1806 Fothergill was in correspondence with Boulton and Watt regarding the provision of steam blowing engines for both Sirhowy and Tredegar. Sirhowy acquired a 20 horsepower Boulton and Watt blowing engine in 1799, and Tredegar a Boulton and Watt engine with a 40-inch cylinder in 1801.[25]

The initial plan may have been simply to supply pig iron to forges, including those of Homfray's father-in-law, at a cheaper price. Sirhowy and Tredegar were single furnaces, with no facilities for converting their pig to wrought bar iron at the forge. Ebbw Vale seems to have established forges in 1803 and Tredegar around 1807, but Sirhowy's main business remained the supply of pig iron to Ebbw Vale.

In 1814 Fothergill retired from the management of Tredegar, but when the lease for Sirhowy came up for renewal in 1818 he hoped to obtain it. However, it was granted, without his knowledge, to the Harfords of Ebbw Vale, who sought to reduce costs by acquiring one of their main suppliers of pig iron. Fothergill severed all connections with Sirhowy and acquired Caerleon tinplate works. Tinplate production at Ponthir, north of Caerleon, had begun as an iron forge operated by John Roberts, a Bristol Quaker, and John Griffiths, a Pontypool Baptist and manager of the Hanburys of Pontypool, who also operated a blast furnace at Abercarn. Thomas Vaughan of Pentyrch had been manager here for John Hanbury until 1786. Coxe noted the 'large tin works of J Butler Esq.' After Fothergill's death they passed to his second son, Thomas Fothergill, but were sold to the political activist and newspaper owner John Hodder Moggeridge in 1833.[26]

In 1789 Jeremiah Homfray went into partnership with Walter Watkins of Dan y Graig, Breconshire and Watkins's son-in-law, Charles Cracroft, of Crickhowell, to found what became **Ebbw Vale** on land at Pen-y-Cae farm. Watkins had been buying pig iron from Beaufort for his forge and now decided to branch out into iron production on his own account. Homfray became resident

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[24] NLW Mayberry Mss, 256, 257; GA D397/1664–1671; Evans, 375; Bradney, *Hundred of Usk*, 205–208.
[25] Lloyd, 140–141: Jones (1969); G.N. Von Tunzelmann, *Steam Power and Industrialisation to 1860* (Oxford, 1978), 93–94.
[26] Coxe, 3, 110; Bradney, *Hundred of Usk*, 205–208; Evans, 369–370.

partner and by 1791 was sole owner. Two years later he joined with Harford, Partridge and Co., with James Harford, son of Truman Harford, as managing partner.[27]

The influence of Richard Crawshay's Cyfarthfa works at Merthyr was considerable at this time. Crawshay's nephew Joseph Bailey had left Yorkshire to work with his uncle there, bringing his younger brother Crawshay Bailey with him. His legacy under his uncle's will enabled him to purchase Nantyglo. His partner Matthew Wayne, had been a furnace manager at Cyfarthfa. Edward Frere and Thomas Cooke, who founded Clydach ironworks, had both worked at Cyfarthfa. Crawshay gave his son-in-law, Benjamin Hall, Samuel Glover's former works at Abercarn as a wedding present. When Wayne retired from Nantyglo in 1820, he was replaced by Crawshay Bailey (1789–1872).

In 1783 Samuel Glover and his brother Joshua established a forge at **Abercarn** on a different site from the blast furnace of 1576–1608, operated by the Kentish ironmaster Edmund Roberts for the casting of cannon.[28] Gunfounding was a royal monopoly, but one more easily evaded in the south Wales valleys than in the Kentish Weald and there was a lucrative market for ship's cannon in Bristol. Abercarn was strategically placed between Newport and the new industrial valleys, at a junction of the lower Ebbw with a side stream, the Nant Gwyddon, which could provide any necessary water power. It was also on the line of the projected Monmouthshire canal, of which Samuel was a promoter, the Canal Act of 1792 specifically mentioning 'certain iron mills and forges called Abercarn iron works'. Without a blast furnace of its own, it specialized in processing pig iron from blast furnaces elsewhere, including Glover's Hirwaun furnace. By 1800, Glover had the first coke-fired iron forge in the county and a charcoal wire works (charcoal iron was preferred for this). In 1806 he sold the works to Richard Crawshay, who gave them as a wedding present to his son-in-law, Benjamin Hall. His son, Sir Benjamin Hall, took the title of Lord Llanover of Llanover and Abercarn.

Four years later, a detailed account of ' the extensive ironworks of Abercarn, late the property of Samuel Glover', listed 'a foundry, a tilting and fuming mill; an Osmund forge (capable of producing 'Osmund iron' for wire making); a wire mill capable of drawing a hundred bundles of wire per week; a forge with shingling and finishing rollers, which will shingle 70 tons per week and a rolling mill that will convert sixty tons per week of half blooms (of pig iron) into bar iron.' The Monmouthshire Canal passed through the works.[29]

William Coxe's list of the 'principal manufactories' of the county in 1800 shows an iron industry in transition. There were surviving charcoal furnaces at Abercarn ('not used'), Pontypool and Tintern; single 'pit coal furnaces' at Sirhowy and Ebbw Vale (Tredegar was about to join them, plus the Rhymney Union furnace in 1801, whilst Beaufort was in Breconshire). There were pioneer multiple coke-fired furnaces at Blaenafon (3) and its offshoot Nantyglo (2). Apart from the charcoal forges of the 'Tredegar' ironworks in Machen, Gelliwasted and Tredegar Park, there were others along the Wye and Usk, at Tintern, Monmouth, Trostrey and Caerleon, with good maritime links to Bristol.[30] The bar iron from the forge of the Bristol firm Harvey, Wason and Co at Trostrey was transported to 'Tredunnoc Bridge' (Newbridge on Usk) by land and down the Usk to Newport, whence it was shipped to Bristol. Coxe saw an inscription above the door 'Flood, February 16th 1795. Harvey, Wason and Co.' The surviving charcoal furnaces were not simply relics of an out-of-date

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27 Gray Jones, 41; Lloyd, 151–152.

28 GA JCH/1560 (Hanbury papers); Jones ( 1939), 257; Riden, 11–12; for allegations of gunfounding: Schubert, 387; Evans, 358.

29 Evans and Britton (1810), 112.

30 Coxe, Vol. 1, p.3.

technology. For some specialist purposes, charcoal iron was preferred. The Tintern and Abercarn furnaces had associated wireworks and the Pontypool furnace was probably used for tinplate. Later, when many furnaces were producing hot blast iron, the more traditional cold blast iron was preferred for tinplate. In 1839 Pontypool had two hot blast furnaces producing pig iron for the foundry and a cold blast furnace for tinplate.[31] The Abercarn furnace had been built in 1750 by John Roberts and John Griffiths to supply pig iron to the Stour Valley. It seems to have ceased production around 1758, though the same partners operated an iron forge at Ponthir above Caerleon, later a tinplate works.[32]

At Blaenafon, its three founding partners were not wholesale grocers or retired from plantations in the southern States, but West Midlands industrialists from a tradition going back to the sixteenth century. Thomas Hill, of Dennis Hall, Amblecote (1736–1824) was a wealthy Stourbridge banker, partner in 'Stourbridge Old Bank' of Hill and Waldon, with substantial interests in the very profitable local fireclay and glass industries and described as ' banker and glass manufutureer'. His brother-in-law, Thomas Hopkins of Cannock Chase and Rugeley (died 1793), was an ironmaster, the owner of forges and slitting mills, who in 1771- 1776 had been in partnership with Jonathan and Henry Kendall in ironworks in Staffordshire, Shropshire, Cheshire and north Wales.[33] Benjamin Pratt, whose grandfather, James Pratt and father, Samuel Pratt had been lessees and partners in the Morgan-owned Tredegar ironworks was, apart from his valuable local knowledge, a kinsman of Isaac Pratt, active in the promotion and building of canals in the west Midlands. Benjamin Pratt's

Fig. 5: Dennis Hall, Amblecote, Stourbridge. Built about 1760, the home of Thomas Hill I banker, glass manufacturer and founding partner of Blaenavon. (photo: Harry Thornton)

31 Coxe, Vol. 1, 1–12; *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 20 July 1839.
32 Coxe, 161; Evans, 369–370, with a plan of the 1750 charcoal furnace, fig. 39.
33 NLW Mayberry Mss, 255: Thomas Hopkins of Cankwood (Cannock) forge, contribution of £1,500 to partnership with the Kendalls and John Hopkins, 1771; Castell Gorfydd Mss, 61.


Fig. 6: Coalbrookdale, Shropshire. Casting area of Abraham Darby's blast furnace, where iron was first smelted with coke in 1709. The upper lintels record its enlargement by Abraham Darby III, possibly to cast ironwork for the Iron Bridge. (photo: the author)

memorial in Newport cathedral describes him as 'a warm promoter of the Monmouthshire Canal'. This was essential if the Blaenafon iron was to be transported to the quays at Newport. The new three furnace ironworks was built at a cost of £40,000.[34]

The James Harford, John Partridge and Co. were a Quaker partnership from Bristol, with a considerable presence in the iron and tinplate industries, as lessees of the Morgan-owned Tredegar ironworks, charcoal forges at Monmouth and, by 1786, the Melingriffith works outside Cardiff.[34] They joined with Thomas Hill of Blaenafon to build a two-furnace ironworks at **Nantyglo**. This operated for a year as Hill, Harford and Co. before quarrels between the partners led to its closure in 1796. The works was derelict when Coxe visited in 1799, when he was shown around by 'Mr Harford, son of one of the proprietors, who was settled with his family in this sequestered spot.' They were eventually re-opened in 1811 by Joseph Bailey. Coxe's description – 'Two furnaces, several forges for manufacturing bar iron, ore', was repeated almost word for word by later topographical writers.[35]After the closure of Nantyglo, Harford, Partridge and Co. joined forces with Jeremiah

[34] Knight (2007 and 2016); for the Pratts: NLW Tredegar Mss 3, 76/31, 44/-45, 110.

[35] In 1795 the partners included the two sons of Charles Harford: James, a Bristol banker and John, managing partner in south Wales, with Samuel Harford, Richard Summers Harford of Ebbw Vale, William Green of Bristol, Philip Crocker of Westbury under Trim, John Partridge of Monmouth and three women, Elizabeth Weaver, Alicia Calder and Sarah Davis of Clifton. By 1808 there were three additional members: Thomas Pritchard, Richard Blakemore and Richard Jones Tomlinson. The ladies, possibly widows of former partners, retired on the death of Philip Crocker.

Homfray at Ebbw Vale. In 1805 they described themselves as 'iron and tinplate manufacturers, at Melingriffith, Caerphilly, Machen, Ebbw Vale, Bassaleg (Tredegar Park) and Monmouth.' They also exported blocks of tin and tinplate to Ireland. In 1808 the main partnership, which had become somewhat unwieldy, was dissolved, but their operations continued as Partridge and Co., who in 1818 took over Sirhowy. In 1842 they went bankrupt due to the failure of their bank from bad debts in Maryland in the United States. A group of Midlands industrialists, led by Abraham Darby of Coalbrookdale, took over Ebbw Vale and Sirhowy.[36]

The **Union Furnace**, whose remains still survive as the 'Old Furnace' was so named from its siting near the head of the Rhymney Valley at the junction of Glamorgan, Monmouthshire and Brecon. It was built in 1800–1801, with Thomas Williams and Richard Cunningham as managing partners. They, David Evans and John Ambrose, each had a quarter share, contributing £1,000 each, with a promise of £6,000 more if needed. In 1803 new partners were brought in, including William Crawshay and Benjamin Hall. Cunningham was later removed by Crawshay on grounds of alleged accounting irregularities and when Crawshay died in 1810, Benjamin Hall inherited his share and became sole owner.

***Post-War Problems: Waterloo to the Hungry Forties***

The end of the American and Napoleonic Wars in 1813–1815 was a watershed in the industry. After a brief post-war boom, the end of government contracts, climatic downturn, resultant poor harvests and a labour market flooded by returning soldiers saw a period of economic instability and social unrest that lasted until 1821. According to a Welsh language source of 1858, the Caerphilly furnace ceased production in 1819, though the Caerphilly furnace benefit society was still operating in December 1833.[37]As conditions improved, a number of often quite modest businessmen tried to move into the iron industry. The repeal in 1825 of the 'Bubble Act', introduced after the 'South Sea Bubble' speculation of the eighteenth century, encouraged new businesss, not all of which stayed the course.

The industry came to face a number of problems. There was the declining availability and quality of native iron ore and the problems of transporting its finished products to the docks along overcrowded railways and canals (the Monmouthshire Canal was notoriously expensive and inefficient in comparison with the Glamorgan Canal). Speculative company promoters, at times with little experience of the industry, created new ironworks, often barely viable, whose products created a glut and drove down the price of iron. Later, Henry Bessemer's converter created a new rival product, bulk steel, though initially this could only be used with non-phosphoric ore, mostly haematite. The rapidly expanding American economy, particularly American railways, offered a potentially lucrative outlet, but the experiences of ironmasters were often unfortunate. Such factors impacted not only on masters, but on the men and women of the ironfield communities, creating hardship and social unrest.

In the Ebbw Fach Valley south of Nantyglo, a cluster of three ironworks grew up around the later town of Blaina. From north to south these were Coalbrookvale, Cwm Celyn and Blaina itself.

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[36] Coxe, 250–251; Evans and Britton, 103; GA D7/12 (Abergavenny Estate papers): Lease (1811) of Nantyglo to Joseph Bailey and Matthew Wayne of Cyfarthfa for £2,050 per annum plus £750 per annum for any additional furnaces and 10% of the value of coal raised. For a plan of Nantyglo ironworks: GA Man/A/2/287 (Abergavenny manorial).

[37] Rhys (1858); Minchinton, 63–64. For sale catalogue, Ebbw Vale and Sirhowy 1844: GA D43/6336 (Newport Collection).

George Brewer, from a family of Newport surgeons, Hopkin Perkins, who acted as their agent from their offices on Stow Hill, Newport and Thomas Vennor of Abergavenny (1774-1847) built a new works at **Coalbrookvale** in 1819–1820. This began shipments on the Monmouthshire Canal in 1821. In December 1823 the Monmouthshire Canal Company built a tramway from Aberbeeg to the Coalbrookvale furnace, later extended to Nantyglo. The partnership was not always smooth. In June 1838 Vennor and Perkins publicly announced the dissolution of the partnership and denounced Brewer. The quarrel seems to have been patched up. That autumn they put up for sale the Royal Oak public house, then let to 'Sephonia' (Zepheniah) Williams, the Chartist leader.[38]

The Brewer and Vennor families were linked by marriage, Thomas Vennor's wife being Cecilia Brewer Vennor (1769–1857) perhaps the sister of John Brewer II. In February 1841, at the start of the 'hungry forties', Coalbrookvale, heavily in debt, was almost put up for sale, but survived. It remained a family concern, the second generation partners in 1852 being George Brewer's son, the Newport surgeon William Brewer (also Coroner for Newport), George Brewer's widow Margaret, then living at Llanfoist and son Thomas Llywelyn Brewer, and Henry Vennor of Abergavenny.[39] Thomas Llywelyn Brewer retired three years later. The managing partner was Frederick Levick, pioneer of waste (i.e. recycled) heat in the blast furnace. In 1858 Levick bought out the other partners and was sole owner of Coalbrookvale which eventually closed in 1867, when Levick became bankrupt.[40]

In 1824 a Wolverhampton-based partnership of Thomas Brown, George Jones and John Barker built a new two furnace works at **Blaina**. In 1839 this merged with the new four-furnace **Cwm Celyn** ironworks to form the Cwm Celyn and Blaina Iron Company. By 1843 Blaina had three furnaces in blast, driven by a Boulton and Watt engine, with coke ovens and ore roasting kilns, a foundry and brickyard. The following year Cwm Celyn and Blaina were sold for £87,000 and Frederick Levick became manager.[41] By 1858 Levick was sole owner of Cwm Celyn, Blaina and Coalbrookvale. After Levick's bankruptcy, Blaina was eventually absorbed by Nantyglo in the Nantyglo and Blaina ironworks.[42]

The same year, 1824, saw the construction of the Bute ironworks at **Rhymney** by William Forman (*c*.1767–1829) whose partner, Thomas Johnson, was the brother-in-law of William Crawshay. Forman was from a family connected with armaments. His father, Richard Forman, had been a clerk in the Board of Ordnance at the Tower of London. Associated with the Homfrays at Merthyr in the casting of cannon, he had advanced £10,000 towards the foundation of Penydarren, in which he became a partner. William Forman married Mary Seaton, daughter of a wealthy landowner

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38 Rhys (1858); *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 28 Dec 1833; Riden, 17.

39 See the Brewer family memorial in Newport cathedral; Bradney, *Hundred of Newport*, 60; *Monmouthshire Merlin* 23 June 1838, 3 Nov 1838; *Pigot 1822–1823*. For the later family history see Moore (2018).

40 *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 6 Feb 1841; GA D749/425 (partnership of 1852). Correspondence between Brewer at Newport and George Brewer at Coalbrookvale: D3337/8–13.

41 *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 29 June 1844; GA D1089/1–4, Cwm Celyn, Blaina and Coalbrookvale ironworks, 1867.

42 The world of the Monmouthshire ironmasters was claustrophobically small. Levick's partner was Robert Crutwell. In July 1856 ten men were killed by an explosion of firedamp in Cruttwell and Levick's Old Coal Pit at Coalbrookvale and the fireman Hopkin Lewis killed in a rescue attempt. The magistrates at Tredegar Petty Sessions refused to hear a prosecution for lack of ventilation, one of the magistrates being Levick. The following year, when William Needham of Beaufort was similarly prosecuted, three of the five magistrates were themselves under notice for safety violations. When the Coalbrookvale case went to appeal, the Lord Chief Justice remarked acidly that it was not the first time that the magistrates of Monmouthshire had acted in this way: *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 12 July 1856; Morris and Williams (1958), 198–200.

in Crawshay's native Yorkshire. The Bute ironworks, designed by the architect John Mac Culloch, were in Egyptian Revival style, with three tapered furnace stacks, colonnaded cast houses with decorative cornices, and a central pedimented porch, all based on the Temple of Hathor at Dendera in Egypt, whose plans had been exhibited in the Royal Academy shortly before.[43]

**Pentwyn** ironworks, near Abersychan, was built in 1825 by the Hurst brothers – Henry, Thomas, Samuel and James, of West Bromwich and Robert Chatfield, from Bromley in Kent, from a family with a history in the now largely defunct Kentish iron industry. This had three hot blast furnaces, built at a cost of £35,000, provided by investors from Somerset, Devon and Bath.[44] They faced an industry plagued by over-production and falling prices. The neighbouring **Golynos** works followed in 1837, the two being worked jointly from the following year. In July 1839 Joseph Johnson, a visiting Liverpool iron merchant, reported that the two had five furnaces in blast, with a sixth building and excellent new forges and a rolling mill, the former by Otway and Winnington of Staffordshire. In 1844 there were negotiations to sell the works to Sir Thomas Lethbridge of the Victoria works, who had been acquiring shares in the company, but these were terminated by Lethbridge's death. Pentwyn was virtually abandoned by 1850 and only worked sporadically thereafter, before, with Golynos, being swallowed up by Ebbw Vale.[45]

From 1830 onwards, railway construction, at home and abroad, was both a stimulus for expansion in the iron industry and a source of chronic instability. Already in 1829–1830 Ebbw Vale was supplying rails to the Stockton and Darlington Railway. By 1835 railway orders, both domestic and from America, Germany and Russia, began to dominate the letterbooks of ironmasters. In the following two years a spate of speculative legislation for the construction of new railways, many of which never materialized, led to a short-lived railway boom.[46] Company promoters could still persuade country gentlemen, ignorant of how much this highly competitive industry had changed, that there were fortunes to be made in the iron industry. With the best mineral areas already taken, newcomers were forced to take sites with poorer ore fields, often in geographically difficult locations.

A cautionary tale is provided by the **Victoria Ironworks** south of Ebbw Vale. A prospectus of October 1836, drawn up under the chairmanship of Sir Thomas Lethbridge, proposed to import Cornish or Devonshire ore and smelt it with local coal. 'Being about to erect a town of considerable magnitude in connection with the Lower Ebbw Vale iron works', the directors 'deemed it a proper complement to her present Majesty to call the town by her name'. This was the first joint stock company in the south Wales iron industry, followed the next year by Blaenavon and Rhymney and in 1842 by Ebbw Vale, following the bankruptcy of Harford and Co.[47]

Lethbridge, of Sandhill Park near Taunton, a banker and MP for Somerset, had a history of speculative investments in canals and tramroads, few of which were ever built, and was involved in iron mining in the Brendon Hills. His Bath-based Monmouthshire Iron and Coal Company included on its board several directors of railway companies and some Somerset gentlemen, but the *Monmouthshire Merlin* noted that all its directors save one, plus the architect, and mineral surveyor, were from the Bath area. Their lack of any local connections is shown by an advertisement, through a firm of Bath Civil Engineers, for tenders for the construction of an inn, company shop, agent's

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43 Littlewood (1999).
44 GA D13 13/8–10 (Frere Cholomely Mss).
45 GA D13/33; D43/6606; *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 20 July 1839 (from *Mining Journal),* 4 May 1839.
46 Birch, 219–224.
47 *Reports of the Directors of the Monmouthshire Iron and Coal Company 1836–1839*. Second report, quoted in Birch, 202.

house and a hundred workmen's houses. After spending £160,000 on the new furnaces, production started in 1837. On New Year's Day 1839 a large new blowing engine, built at the Neath Abbey Works, was installed, but the railway boom was followed by bust and in the following year the Victoria ironworks was bankrupt and ceased production. Two years later, the derelict ironworks were put up for auction. The Monmouthshire and Glamorgan Bank had advanced £12,500 to the company and had little alternative to taking over the business, but faced with these heavy debts, the bank itself failed. The site reverted to the ground landlord, Sir Benjamin Hall, and was sold to the Ebbw Vale Company, who continued to operate its three furnaces.[48]

The story of the **British Ironworks** at Abersychan is very similar. Companies now named their works not from noblemen and their seats such as 'Tredegar' and 'Beaufort' but gave them 'patriotic' names like Victoria or British, designed to appeal to small investors. The British Iron Company of 1824 was an ambitious combine led by John Taylor, a mining engineer, which sought to raise £2 million from shareholders for operations at Abersychan, Ruabon in north Wales and in Staffordshire, as well as minor abortive projects at Abercraf in Breconshire and Glynneath in Glamorgan. Like Pentwyn and Golynos, the location of the new works was probably influenced by the proximity of the head of the Monmouthshire Canal. The British ironworks, built in 1826–7 with six furnaces, was, nevertheless in a poor location and hampered by a heavy ground rent of £2,400 a year and a royalty on each ton of pig iron produced. Robert Cort, son of Henry Cort, pioneer of the iron puddling process, resigned as cashier and produced a pamphlet critical of the company's management. In 1839 only four of its six furnaces were in blast. The company collapsed in 1843 during a period of economic distress. Its successor, the New British Iron Company made efforts to modernize the works, specializing in railway rails, replacing the wasteful practice of coking in open heaps with coke ovens and, in 1848, introducing hot blast at its furnaces, but the company sold off its less profitable assets and in 1853 Abersychan was sold to Ebbw Vale for £98,000.[49]

These new speculative companies, often supported by the savings of small investors in south-west England, were a destabilizing factor in the industry. Not only did the increased production from the proliferating new blast furnaces drive down the price of iron (though ironmasters tended to blame the similar overproduction in Scotland – 'cheap Scotch pig') but in times of economic downturn, when more established works could to some extent weather the storm by stockpiling iron and laying off workers, smaller companies, desperate for income, were forced to sell their iron for whatever price they could get, so driving down the price still further. In an effort to shore up prices, the south Wales ironmasters held regular meetings in the King's Head at Newport to agree a minimum price for iron. In 1836, in a time of crisis, they agreed to blow out over twenty furnaces, one at each works, with the major Merthyr concerns taking a larger share.[50]

In the earlier days of the industry, family connections, particularly marriage alliances, were central to the recruitment of business partnerships, particularly for Quakers. Francis Homfray married the daughter of Jeremiah Caswell, a major figure in the Stour Valley iron industry. Richard Reynolds was married to Hannah Darby, daughter of Abraham Darby III. The Kendalls' finance

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[48] Robert Mushet, *Report on the Victoria Ironworks* (Bath 1841); Anon, *Plain Facts*: *History of the Victoria Iron Works from its Commencement*: *Being Number One of the Bubbles of South Wales* (London 1846); sale catalogue with inventory, Newport Public Library, Haines Collection Px M 240.672; *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 20 August, 17 December 1836, 5 January 1839.

[49] Richard Cort, *Letter to the Shareholders of the British Iron Company* (1826); Anon, *Case….Relative to the frauds practiced on the shareholders of the British Iron Company by some of their Agents* (1841); Colebrook (1983).

[50] Elsas (1960), 12–13; *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 10 December 1836.

from the City of London for Sirhowy may have owed much to their sister Elizabeth's marriage to a London wholesale grocer. Matthew Monkhouse of Sirhowy was Kendall's brother-in-law, whilst Samuel Homfray's favourable lease of what became Tredegar was due to his marriage to the daughter of Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar House. When the Crawshays took over Beaufort in 1833, they installed their nephew William Partridge as manager. Such arrangements were not confined to the iron industry. Richard Grassby noted how, in the seventeenth century, kinship groups and 'family cartels' had dominated certain areas of trade, with merchants preferring to deal with family members, whom they knew and could trust.[51] With the increasing complexity of the industry a new breed of professional managers appeared.

**Blaenavon** had remained a family concern, but Thomas Hill III, remembered by Dyne Steele as 'a typical country squire, complete with a pack of hounds', was a characteristic 'third generation businessman'. The first generation is the founder. The second, brought up in the business, is often the most capable. Thomas Hill II's ambitious plans might have borne fruit, save for his untimely death. By the third generation, the family is prosperous and the heir, often educated at public school and Oxford, is frequently more concerned with his social status than with his business. In 1836 Thomas Hill III, educated at Eton and Brasenose College Oxford, retired to a country house at Rudhall near Ross on Wye and a Joint Stock Company was set up, under a London financier, William Unwin Sims (1797–1839), who had interests in railways and the iron industry. A Director of the Bank of England and Chairman of the Bristol and London Railroad, Sims presumably chaired the historic meeting at which it changed its name to the Great Western Railway. He also took the Duke of Wellington (who disapproved of railways) around the newly opened Paddington Station. Capital of £400,000 was raised, in £50 shares, but Thomas Hill cannot have been pleased with the comments of the *Monmouthshire Merlin* that 'The Hill family, owners for forty years are making way for new blood and …. for more go ahead and expert leadership, though Thomas Hill is still on the Board of Directors.'[52]

As resident Managing Director, Sims appointed James Ashwell (1799–1881), son of a Nottinghamshire ironmaster and coal owner. Educated at Edinburgh University, Ashwell was a pupil of the engineer Bryan Donkin, first vice-president of the Institution of Civil Engineers, of which Ashwell was a founding member. Blaenavon had not been involved in the very profitable trade in railway rails.[53] Sims, with his railway connections, may have had plans to enter this market, but any such hopes were ended by his suicide in November 1839. A lengthy *Times* obituary, unusual for a Victorian businessman, may have been intended to reassure investors that his suicide was for personal, family, not financial reasons.[54] Ashwell had realized that much work was needed if Blaenavon was to retain its place in the industry and began an ambitious programme of modernization. The finance for this would have come from Sims and his links in the City of London, but Sims's suicide closed this door. The shareholders now viewed with alarm the cost of Ashwell's programme of work, whose cost they were expected to bear. A group of shareholders, probably led by Thomas Hill III, who may have resented press comments that Blaenavon had been falling behind and was in need of a fresh start, forced Ashwell's resignation in 1841.[55]

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51 Grassby, 367–8.
52 *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 28 May 1836.
53 Ince (1993), Appendix 1, pp 173–4.
54 *The Times*, 18 November 1839.
55 Obituary, James Ashwell, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers*, 66 (1880–1881).

Many of this new managerial class were from the industrial north – Ashwell from Nottingham, the Needhams of Beaufort and Varteg from a Derbyshire family, James Wightman, the coal agent at Nantyglo, from Newcastle. Charles Cracroft of Ebbw Vale was probably a member of the Cracroft family of Harrington Hall, Lincolnshire. Outside the industry, John Edward Lee of Caerleon and Corde's Dos Works in Newport, was from Hull. Two of them produced books which still form valuable sources for the technology of the nineteenth century iron industry. William Needham, manager of Varteg wrote *The Manufacture of Iron* (1831). Harry Scrivenor, Ashwell's successor at Blaenavon, *A Comprehensive History of the Iron Trade* (1841, 2nd ed. 1854). This has a series of statistics, including the amount of iron carried on the Monmouthshire Canal by each ironworks, and is still an invaluable source for economic historians. He later became Secretary of the Liverpool Stock Exchange and wrote, *The Railways of the United Kingdom: Statistically Considered* – a topic of considerable interest to ironmasters.[56]

The famine years of the 'hungry forties' saw the iron industry, particularly the speculative latecomers, in crisis. In February 1841, Coalbrookvale, heavily in debt, came close to closure. The Victoria works was put up for sale more than once, before being sold off to its neighbour, Ebbw Vale. In January 1843 Varteg ceased production and its engines, machinery and stocks of coal were up for sale. Later that year the British Iron Company of Abersychan collapsed. At Blaenavon, the new furnaces on the freehold land across the river were left unfinished in 1842. 'Bad as times were for the poor', the Blaenavon manager Henry Scrivenor told a dinner of Oddfellows in Blaenafon that year, 'They are equally so for the capitalist'. Around Bedwellty at that time, the poor from the sale coal collieries were cutting off the tops of potato plants in the fields, not daring to take the potatoes themselves.[57]

By mid-century, many smaller and less profitable ironworks had been swallowed up by their neighbours. Ebbw Vale had absorbed both its neighbour Victoria and the cluster of ironworks around the head of the Monmouthshire canal above Pontypool, at Abersychan, Golynos and Pentwyn. Nantyglo had acquired the ironworks to its south, around Coalbrookvale and Blaina. Though these acquisitions may have helped to reduce competition, the mineral assets, particularly coal and the infrastructure and manpower, however unprofitable, were in most cases too valuable to permit immediate closure. Some of the larger iron companies were able to make the expensive transition to Bessemer steel, but others took refuge as colliery companies rather than iron producers.

***An Atlantic Economy?***

One element in the financing of the industry was the reinvestment of profits made in the West Indies and in the slave-owning southern states of America. Thomas Atkinson of Sirhowy was a former South Carolina merchant. William Unwin Sims was a partner in Jacob, Sims and Williams, West India merchants, and in the London iron merchants Neville, Sims and Williams. There was a substantial export trade in the large iron boiling vats used in the West Indian sugar industry. On the abolition of slavery in the West Indies in 1833, he and his uncle Jacob Sims received, as mortgagees, over £7,300 compensation in respect of freed slaves on two estates, Stoney Hill and Golden Vale in Portland, Jamaica. This money probably went towards the re-financing of Blaenavon three years later.[58]

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56 Scrivenor (1967).

57 *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 21 May, 30 July 1842.

58 University College London, 'Legacies of British slave ownership', https/www/ucl.uk.>lbs>person-view accessed 14/2/2021.

Another transatlantic element in the iron trade was that ironmasters were anxious for lucrative contracts from the American railways which were now spreading across the United States and formed a major market.[59] These were profitable but perilous. In 1842 the long established Harford and Co. became bankrupt due to the failure of their Bristol bank from unrepaid American loans. Ironmasters sometimes had to accept part payment in railway bonds, often of dubious value, rather than cash. In 1849 Thompson and Forman of Rhymney had to accept half payment in bonds of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. This could result in serious financial losses. G.T. Clark had heard rumours, perhaps exaggerated, that Crawshay Bailey had lost £400,000 in American dealings, with losses of £150,000 in one American crash. A well-informed obituary spoke of severe losses in a financial crisis in 1866 'which severely affected him' (two years later he was to lose his parliamentary seat after the Second Reform Act) . If these rumours were true, they might account, in part, for Bailey's failure to modernize Nantyglo and Beaufort. By the time of his retirement they were notorious for obsolete machinery and out-of-date and dangerous work practices, though such conditions existed before any financial losses. Coal was still coked in open heaps rather than in coke ovens, the water balance headgears on his pits were already regarded as historical curiosities and under cross-examination at an inquest, James Wightman, his colliery manager at Nantyglo, had to admit that such conditions underground were unheard of in his native Northumberland. Beaufort closed within a month of his death in February 1872 and Nantyglo, heavily in debt, the following year.[60]

The experiments of Percy Carlyle Gilchrist and Sidney Gilchrist Thomas at Blaenafon, which made possible bulk steel production using phosphoric ore, were of limited utility to the British iron and steel industry, which was by this time importing haematite and other ores from Bilbao in northern Spain, and moving to coastal locations for easy access to its supply. However, it made the fortunes of Andrew Carnegie in Pittsburg and of Alfred Krupp of Essen in Germany, who were able to use their vast ore fields of phosphoric iron ore in steel making. In 1890 Britain was still the world's largest steelmaker. Within the decade it was in third place behind the United States and Germany.

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[59] *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 6 February 1841; 21 May; 20 August 1842; 7 January 1843.

[60] Birch, 219–224; *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 12 January 1872.

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# THOMAS THOMAS AND THE ORIGINS OF DISESTABLISHMENT IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

**By Arthur Edwards**

The disestablishment of the Church in Wales came into force on 1 April 1920, when the four Welsh dioceses of the former province of Canterbury, St. Davids, Llandaff, Bangor and St. Asaph became a separate disestablished province of the Church in Wales. The campaign for disestablishment had begun in the 1830s when Nonconformists began to campaign for the removal of their grievances, but the existence of an Established Church, with the sovereign as Supreme Governor of the Church of England and its bishops as members of the House of Lords would still be debated when all the Nonconformist disabilities had been removed.[1] The lingering sense of grievance is well illustrated by the fact that Dr William Edwards, President of South Wales Baptist College, published as late as 1912 a book on *Nonconformist Disablities, 1509–1912* in support of the final Welsh Disestablishment Bill.[2]

The principle of voluntary churchmanship and the contribution that it made through Nonconformity to religious development in Wales gained in strength and conviction as it encountered the religious inequality which deprived Nonconformists of civic status and made their chapels socially inferior to the parish churches. This was described by Kenneth O. Morgan in his essay as 'a feeling that at the pinnacle of social authority "nonconformists need not apply"'.[3]

This article takes as its starting point the proposition that the causes of Welsh disestablishment might be examined separately in the regions of Wales to see how far the circumstances described in the literature on the subject were common to the whole of Wales.[4] What follows is a study of the development of disestablishment in Monmouthshire in the mid-nineteenth century. It argues that, while some of the general causes apply, the primary impulses of the campaign in that county were endemic, most notably through the influence of the Baptists under the leadership of the Revd Thomas Thomas, principal of Pontypool Baptist College and minister of Crane Street Chapel.[5]

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1 P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales* (London, 1969), p. 280; William Edwards, *Nonconformist Disabilities, 1509–1912* (London, 1912), pp. 132,136,138. These disabilities included the payment of tithes and compulsory Church rate, the rights of Nonconformists to their own marriage and burial rites and admission to the ancient universities.

2 William Edwards, *Nonconformist Disabilities, 1509–1912* (London, 1912), pp. 132, 136, 138.

3 K.O. Morgan, *Freedom or Sacrilege?* (Penarth, 1966), p.5, reprinted as 'The campaign for Welsh Disestablishment' in *Modern Wales; Politics, Places and People* (Cardiff, 1955), pp. 142–176.

4 K.O. Morgan, *Freedom or Sacrilege?* (Penarth, 1966); P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales* (London, 1969); R. Tudur Jones,'The Origins of the Nonconformist Disestablishment Campaign', in *Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales (JHSCW)*, 20:25 (1970), pp.39–76; William B. George, 'Welsh Disestablishment and Welsh Nationalism', in *JHSCW*, 20:25 (1970), pp. 77–91; R.L. Brown, 'The Disestablishment of the Church in Wales' , in *Ecclesiastical Law Journal (ELJ)* (July 1999), pp.252–264; Paul O'Leary, 'Religion, Nationality and Politics: Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales, 1868–1914', in *Contrasts and Comparisons: Studies in Irish and Welsh Church History,* eds. J.R. Guy and W.G. Neely (Llandysul, 1999), pp. 88–113. *A New History of the Church in Wales,* ed. Norman Doe (Cambridge, 2020).

5 See, Arthur J. Edwards, 'Religion and Society in Monmouthshire, 1840–1880, with particular reference to Thomas Thomas, the Pontypool Baptists and the Campaign for Disestablishment' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Cardiff University, 2016).

***The historiography***

Before highlighting the issues that characterised disestablishment in Monmouthshire, it may be helpful to visit the bibliography to assess how many of the causes of disestablishment listed for Wales applied in Monmouthshire. P.M.H. Bell in *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales* in 1969, observed that 'the movement for disestablishment in Wales…had its origin in circumstances prevailing in the middle of the nineteenth century'.[6] Thirty years later, Paul O' Leary showed 'the contrasts and comparisons' between Irish and Welsh disestablishment, the former achieved relatively swiftly in the 1860s and the latter 'a long drawn out affair which embittered relationships between the Church and Nonconformity for generations'.[7] In 1970, the jubilee year of Welsh disestablishment, R. Tudur Jones said that it 'would be no exaggeration to assert that all the main arguments (for disestablishment) had been elaborated in the minds of its protagonists' in the twenty years after 1830.[8]

That was certainly true of disestablishment in Monmouthshire. On 15 January 1834 a meeting of Baptists and Independents was held in Pontypool when Charles Conway and his friends spoke in favour of disestablishment, proclaimed 'the principles of voluntary churchmanship', set up a committee and petitioned the Whig government to redress Dissenting grievances. The importance of this meeting was noted by R.Tudur Jones, who observed that at that time 'the emphasis was still on particular complaints' for the most part, with 'petitions to the authorities demanding their removal'. Jones also noted that 'pragmatic considerations were often more influential than philosophic convictions' for Dissenters.[9] In Monmouthshire at the beginning of the long campaign for disestablishment the usual Dissenting grievances against Church rate, tithes, the rights of marriages and burials for Dissenters according to their own rites and the non-admission of Nonconformists to the ancient universities, were raised. The payment of tithe in Monmouthshire seemed to have been resented less than the compulsory Church rate.

What was not mentioned in mid-nineteenth century Monmouthshire was the 'thought that the Church in Wales was an alien institution' at a time when Wales's self-awareness was defined by the use of the Welsh language.[10] The literature on disestablishment has made much of the 'English bishops' who often spoke no Welsh and failed to provide Welsh-speaking incumbents for Welsh parishes.[11] Lord and Lady Llanover were always alert to this in Monmouthshire and kept the bishop on his toes.[12] Bishop Ollivant learnt Welsh,[13] and the parish of Trevethin had a Welsh-speaking priest for most of the nineteenth century, as did the neighbouring parishes of Panteg and Blaenafon. There is evidence that Ollivant and his successor Richard Lewis took great care to institute Welsh-speaking clergy to parishes where this would assist pastoral work. At Trevethin Thomas Davies was a hardworking, energetic and imaginative parish priest.[14] The changes that brought Monmouthshire from a mainly Welsh-speaking county to an overwhelmingly English-speaking one by 1914 have been called 'complex': the English language gradually encroached westwards into Welsh-speaking

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6 P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales* (London, 1969), p. 241.
7 Paul O'Leary, 'Religion, Nationality and Politics' (Llandysul, 1999), p.112.
8 R.Tudur Jones, 'The Origins of the Nonconformist Disestablishment Campaign' *(JHSCW)*,25 (1970), p. 39.
9 *Ibid*. pp. 41, 45.
10 R.L. Brown, 'The Disestablishment of the Church in Wales', in *ELJ* (July 1999), p.257.
11 Kenneth O. Morgan, *Freedom or Sacrilege?* (Penarth, 1966), p. 12.
12 E.T. Davies, *Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales*, (Cardiff, 1965), p. 116.
13 John Morgan, 'Bishop Ollivant', in *Four Biographical Sketches* (London, 1892), p. 17.
14 *Pontypool Free Press (PFP),* 23 April, 19 November, 1859, 16 May 1863.

areas and Welsh retreated, via a bi-lingual zone, to the extreme north-western corner.[15] Thomas Thomas's Baptists worshipped in English and Thomas set up the Monmouthshire English Baptist Association in 1857[16] to encourage English services, but Welsh services were held in Trevethin parish church for decades after that.

***The Dissenters***

The astronomical increase in the population of Monmouthshire in the first half of the nineteenth century brought many more Dissenters to the county.[17] This provided the strongest pragmatic reason for disestablishment. Most of the Dissenters (Nonconformists) were Baptists. The strength of the Baptist denomination in Monmouthshire was confirmed by the Religious Census in 1851. In the industrial parishes of the county, as I.G. Jones observed, they were 'the leading denomination, with the Independents a good way behind, followed by the Wesleyan Methodists and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists.'[18] The Baptists, under the leadership of Thomas Thomas, proved to be the pioneers of Dissent against the Established Church and the Nonconformist disabilities.[19]

There was a strong Baptist presence in Monmouthshire before Thomas Thomas moved to Pontypool in 1836; this was associated with the Baptist College at Abergavenny under its radical tutor Revd Micah Thomas since 1807, the Conway family of tinplate manufacturers into which Micah Thomas had married, and the family of William Williams Phillips, the land agent of Pontypool Park estate. Thomas Thomas had studied at Abergavenny College for two years before he transferred to Stepney College, London, in 1824. He was ordained in 1828 and ministered successfully in Henrietta Street Baptist church, Covent Garden, where he preached in the open air, campaigned for the abolition of slavery and lived with the Dawson family, all radical Baptists. Whether Thomas Thomas, like the Chartist leader John Frost, was radicalised in London is open to question. He returned to Wales to succeed Micah Thomas as president of the Baptist College that moved from Abergavenny to Pontypool in 1836, and also to become minister of a new Baptist church in Pontypool.[20]

Through this joint appointment Thomas became the leader of the disestablishment campaign in Monmouthshire. For forty years after 1836 Thomas provided a sound base of great confidence at the Baptist College in the fight for social and religious freedom; he also provided ministerial leadership for communities throughout Wales. To a traditional syllabus in a Baptist training college, Thomas added a broader study of the place of the ministry in the development of religious and social freedom.[21] Students were also involved in the activities of his church at Crane Street.[22]

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15 S.R. Williams, 'The Welsh Language in Industrial Monmouthshire, c. 1800–1901', in *Language and Community in the Nineteenth Century',* ed. Geraint H. Jenkins (Cardiff, 1998), pp. 203–229, on pp. 204, 207, 227.

16 D.J.Thomas, *A Short History of the Monmouthshire English Baptist Association* (Newport, 1957).

17 E.T. Davies, *Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales* (Cardiff, 1965), pp.6–7.

18 *The Religious Census of 1851, A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Vol. 1, South Wales,* eds. I.G. Jones and David Williams (Cardiff, 1976); I.G. Jones, 'The Observers and the Observed', in *Mid-Victorian Wales* (Cardiff, 1992), p. 15. The Church of England was strong in rural Monmouthshire, but the Baptists had the highest attendances overall.

19 K.D.M. Snell and Paul S.Ell, *Rival Jerusalems, The Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge, 2000), pp.104–105.

20 For biographical details see, Arthur J. Edwards, *Thomas Thomas of Pontypool, Radical Puritan* (Caerleon, 2009), pp. 2–11.

21 D. Mervyn Himbury, *The South Wales Baptist College* (Llandysul, 1957), pp.44–45.

22 GA, 3598/1 Crane Street Chapel Minute Book, 29 January 1861; *PFP,* 16 November 1867.

The literature on the subject of disestablishment in Wales is silent about the significance of the Revd Thomas Thomas. In Welsh history generally, Thomas has either been totally neglected or not properly appreciated. In this article new evidence will be presented from newspaper reports, letters, sermons, Crane Street Chapel Minute Book and the records of Pontypool Baptist College to show the influence of the Baptists under Thomas's leadership upon the disestablishment campaign. The battles against compulsory Church rate in the Parish of Trevethin (Pontypool) will be analysed together with the objections to the Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education of 1846, to show the development of the campaign. Finally, the importance of the part played by the Liberation Society, and their Swansea Conference of 1862, will be examined to show how Thomas Thomas's determined position at that conference represented his vision for the outcome of disestablishment.

***The new society***

Increased industrialisation in Monmouthshire produced a new society with an influx of new traders and workmen who came to seek their fortunes. The Hanbury family had been settled in Pontypool since the seventeenth century providing the most profitable production of iron and tinplate.[23] The Hanburys gave their allegiance to the Church of England. Among the other industrialists who came to Monmouthshire with their workers were the families of Jenkins and Conway, tinplate manufacturers. George Conway (1756–1822) married Jennet (Jane) (1754–1820), the daughter of John Jenkins, in September 1775. Their eleven children and fourteen grandchildren were all Baptists; they constituted a tribe which created a network of close ties by marriage and friendship throughout Monmouthshire. By marriage the Conway family included Micah Thomas of Abergavenny as well as Revds David D. Evans of Pontrhydyrun and Stephen Price of Abersychan, both prominent in the campaign for disestablishment.[24]

When Capel Hanbury Leigh became Lord Lieutenant of Monmouthshire in 1835, Charles Conway (1797–1860) was nominated as a Justice of the Peace, but Conway declined the office because of his opposition to the Established Church.[25] The Conways founded and influenced Baptist churches and played a very important part in the foundation of the Baptist College at Abergavenny under Revd Micah Thomas until 1836, and in the continuing life of that College at Pontypool under its new principal, Revd Thomas Thomas (1805–1881).[26] The centre of gravity of Baptist power thus moved to Pontypool while Chartist lodges were preparing for the ill-fated Rising of 1839.[27]

Arguably, the most important event in mid-nineteenth century Monmouthshire was the Chartist Rising in Newport on 3–4 November 1839; it had national significance. The Rising was also a pivotal and revealing episode in the context of Nonconformist attitudes to the development of disestablishment in Monmouthshire.

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23 Richard Hanbury Tenison, *The Hanburys of Monmouthshire* (Aberystwyth, 1995), pp.185–225.

24 Reginald Nichols, *Pontypool and Usk Japan Ware* (Pontypool, 1981), pp.13–14; Davies, *Religion in the Industrial Revolution,* pp. 1–2; A.H. John, *The Industrial Development of South Wales, 1750–1850* (Cardiff, 1950), p. 38; W.E. Minchinton, *The British Tinplate Industry: A History* (Oxford, 1957), p. 93.

25 T.M. Bassett, *The Welsh Baptists* (Swansea, 1977), p. 149.

26 B. Pierce Jones, *Sowing Beside All Waters* (Gwent Baptist Association, 1985), pp. 65–66, 102–103, 104; Derek Garwood, *God of our Fathers* (Pontypool, 1965), p.20; Joseph Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire, Abergavenny, part 2* (Academy Books, 1992), pp.454, 479.

27 A.J. Edwards, *Thomas Thomas of Pontypool* (Caerleon, 2009), pp. 9–18; David J.V. Jones, *The Last Rising* (Oxford, 1985), p. 52.

In May 1839, in the face of the presentation to parliament of the People's Charter, a loyal address was sent to the Queen from the meeting in Risca of the Monmouthshire Baptist Association.[28] This was both significant and sad: significant because it showed the concern of Baptists as the leading Dissenting community in the county to emphasise their loyalty to the Crown and distance themselves from the charge of sedition. It was sad because many Baptists believed that achieving the demands of the Charter was their only hope of securing proper representation for their own religious and social recognition and the disestablishment of the Church of England, which had entered their agenda in the 1830s.[29]

Many Nonconformists distanced themselves from Chartism after the Newport Rising, and some chapel members were excluded for their involvement in it. Thomas Thomas wrestled with the need to respond to the Chartist Rising. He said that he did not say anything before the event because he thought that common sense would prevail. He felt it necessary to preach a sermon after the event in November 1839 in his chapel in Pontypool on *The Civil Duties of Christians*. He preached on words from St. Matthew's Gospel, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's'. This sermon distinguished between a Christian's allegiance to God and his duty to obey the secular ruler in the matters that were under his control. No other commentator responded to Chartism in that way, and the sermon has been misunderstood ever since.[30] He did not assert 'the right to disobey misgovernment' as the most recent commentator on that sermon claimed.[31] He condemned the Chartists' use of force. What Thomas asserted was the right to render to God what belonged to him, namely religious worship, which was not within the jurisdiction of the magistrate to determine. That principle undermined the basis of the Established Church because it stated that the government could not determine the religion of its citizens. The Bible provided no evidence of a state Church and religion was part of God's jurisdiction and not that of Caesar. Thomas's answer to the injustice of the demands of a state Church was simply 'passive submission' as advocated by the Quakers. This meant being passively disobedient and suffering the consequences.[32] The sermon provided theological justification for passive resistance by Dissenters to the attempts of secular rulers to dictate their religious practices. Thomas defended Nonconformists against the false charge that they were mainly responsible for the Newport Rising, even though he may have underestimated the number of Nonconformists involved in the Chartist march on Newport.[33]

Although historians have called attention to the chorus for disestablishment pioneered by the Independent minister Revd David Rees of Llanelli in *Y Diwygiwr* from 1835 with other Independents in west and north Wales, like Gwilym Hiraethog (William Rees) and Samuel Roberts (S.R.),[34] Baptists in Monmouthshire were involved from the date of that meeting in Pontypool on 15 January

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28 Jones, *The Last Rising,* p. 76.

29 R.Tudur Jones, 'The Origins of the Nonconformist Disestablishment Campaign, 1830–1840 *JHSCW,* 1970, p. 45.

30 Thomas Thomas, *The Civil Duties of Christians* (London, 1839), p. 30.

31 Keith B. Jones, 'The Religious Climate of the Chartist Insurrection at Newport Monmouthshire, 4 November 1839, Expressions of Evangelicalism', in *Journal of Welsh Religious History,* 5 (1997), pp. 57–71, on p. 67.

32 Thomas Thomas, *The Civil Duties of Christians* (London, 1839), p. 24.

33 Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters, Vol. 2* (Oxford, 1995), p.512.

34 See Rhodri Glyn, 'Cynhyrfer! Cynhyrfer! Cynhyrfer! David Rees, Y Diwygiwr ac Arwainiad Gwleidyddol Ymneilltuol 1835–1865' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Aberystwyth University, 2010); DWB *sub* Roberts, Samuel, pp. 879–80 and Rees, William, pp.831–832.

1834, referred to earlier. In February 1834 the Monmouthshire Baptists' quarterly meeting sent a petition to Parliament that 'no specific form of religion be the subject of the government's exclusive recognition and legal support'.[35] By 1839 Thomas Thomas was stating that the Church was not entitled to its endowments because it was outnumbered by Nonconformists who were sharing the work for which the endowments had been provided and therefore should be treated equally. Thomas did not argue for concurrent endowment, but for equality and justice for Dissenters. An established Church was contrary to the teaching of the Bible and Thomas was committed to the voluntary principle.

***Church Rate battles***

Thomas taught that the state had no authority to interfere in the religion of its subjects. Religion was provided by Nonconformists entirely through the voluntary donations of church members. By the 1840s it became clear in Wales that more religion was being provided voluntarily than by the Established Church, which substituted human authority (the magistrate) for the integrity of conscience. The individual conscience of many an old Dissenter told him that he should not pay money towards the upkeep of the parish church. Described as the 'giant-sore' of all the Dissenting grievances, and doing most 'to convince Nonconformists at large that piecemeal redress of grievances should give way to the more radical demand for disestablishment',[36] the payment of compulsory Church rate was the rub that Monmouthshire resented most. This section will show the importance of the Church rate struggle in Pontypool and its part in the development of disestablishment in the county.

Church rate was a local tax levied on all property holders in a parish for the repair and maintenance of the parish church; it was still under the control of the parish vestry. The rate had to be agreed by the churchwardens and parishioners at the annual vestry meeting at Easter or after proper notice had been given in the vestry or church. For refusal to pay the rate a parishioner could be brought before an ecclesiastical court, or two Justices of the Peace if the rate was less than ten pounds, as was the case in Trevethin parish.[37]

Dissenters had become increasingly frustrated by their failure to gain the abolition of compulsory Church rate through the Whig government in 1834. [38] After the founding of the Church-rate Abolition Society in October 1836, a branch of the Society was set up in Pontypool in January 1837 on the proposal of Thomas Thomas at a meeting chaired by William Conway (1819–91). Charles Conway condemned the compulsory rate in a long speech and William Williams Phillips, Baptist land agent to Pontypool Park estate, urged the government to act more speedily to abolish it. Resolutions were also proposed by Stephen Price, Baptist minister at Abersychan and David D. Evans, minister of Pontrhydyrun Baptist church.[39]

When the Lord Lieutenant of Monmouthshire, Capel Hanbury Leigh, was supporting the raising of a compulsory Church rate upon all the parishioners of Trevethin to rebuild the parish church, described as 'his estate church',[40] Thomas Thomas was trying to raise the money to build Crane Street Baptist Chapel, which left a debt that was not cleared for twenty years. Thomas made no fuss about that, but he refused to pay the compulsory rate as a voluntaryist on grounds of conscience;

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35 T.M. Bassett, *The Welsh Baptists* (Swansea, 1977), p. 147.

36 Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, part 1,* p. 81; R. Tudur Jones, 'The origins of the Disestablishment Campaign', *JHSCW* (1970), p.65

37 Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, part 1,* pp . 81–83.

38 Ibid, p. 148.

39 *Monmouthshire Merlin (MM),* 14 January 1837.

40 John Newman, *The Buildings of Wales, Gwent/Monmouthshire* (London, 2000), p. 580.

he passively took the consequences and encouraged others to do the same. His protest on principle thus became a threat to the principle of establishment.[41]

Dissenters who were rate-payers could vote to adjourn or avoid Church-rate altogether, as happened in Newport, where Nonconformists outnumbered Churchmen by two to one on the town council, and John Frost as mayor had no difficulty in persuading the council to accept his proposal to petition the government to abolish Church rate in February 1837.[42] Pontypool had to abolish Church rate through the radical Baptists in a town where, like Tredegar, the parish vestry still held sway,[43] but abolish compulsory Church rate they did by 1845, thanks to the leadership of Thomas Thomas with the support of local Baptist and Independent voluntaryists. In two significant battles against the compulsory Church-rate of 1841 and 1845, with distraint upon the goods of the recusants enforced by the magistrates' court, the Pontypool Baptists achieved what could not be done in Abergavenny or Monmouth.[44]

The battles over Church rate in Pontypool are well documented in the reports and letters that were published, apparently unedited, in the *Monmouthshire Merlin*. The parish authorities were outwitted by the Dissenters at the first battle in June 1841, because the curate of Trevethin, Thomas Davies, was not yet in charge as incumbent. The meeting to approve the Church rate was held in the Greyhound Inn, Pontypool, which became overcrowded. When the Dissenters' meeting, under the chairmanship of a sympathetic local doctor, was transferred to Tabernacle Baptist Chapel, a larger building, Thomas Thomas won the sympathy of the meeting by condemning the attempt to levy a compulsory Church rate at a time of great poverty in Pontypool, when

> Trade was in a very depressed state, most of the ratepayers were in trying circumstances, and many were in very real want of bread; and it seemed to argue great want of feeling to attempt under such circumstances to burden the people with a church rate.[45]

Thomas's proposal to adjourn the rate for a year was seconded and carried 'with tremendous acclamation'.

The parish authorities were prepared for the second battle, which they deferred until 1845. By that time Thomas and his associates had been involved in the work of the Anti-Corn Law League, and on his return from the Ministers' Conference in Manchester in August 1841, Thomas had preached a sermon against poverty in which he urged Christians not to be afraid to involve themselves in political affairs because

> While the enemies of liberty and the opponents of the interests of the poor are 'politically religious' [there was no reason why] the friends of freedom and popular rights should not be 'religiously political'.[46]

Thomas thus encouraged them to bring religion into their politics by refusing to acknowledge the

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41 *PFP,* 16 November 1867; J.P. Ellens, *Religious Routes to Gladstonian Liberalism* (Pennsylvania, 1994), p. 20.

42 Gwent Archives, D3598/1; Newport Council Minute Book, 1837–43, 7 February 1837, p. 83; *MM,* 21 January 1837; David Williams, *John Frost* (Cardiff, 1939), pp. 88–89.

43 Andy Croll, 'Local Government' in *The Gwent County History, Vol 4, Industrial Monmouthshire, 1780–1914* (Cardiff, 2011), p. 293.

44 *MM,* 5 and 12 November 1836, 14 January, 2 December 1837.

45 *MM,* 19 June 1841.

46 Thomas Thomas, *A Proper Consideration of the Cause of the Poor* (London, 1841), p.4

power of the state to compromise their Christian integrity. That principle, together with the practice of 'passive resistance', determined the course and outcome of the Church rate battle in 1845. Battle commenced with short notice given of a vestry meeting to take place at 4 p.m. on Friday 16 May 1845 with the Revd Thomas Davies, Vicar of Trevethin, in the chair, to approve a Church rate for the repair of the parish church. At the meeting in a small church vestry that barely accommodated those ratepayers who attended, E.H. Phillips, the senior magistrate, proposed the rate of threepence in the pound after reading a letter from the Lord Lieutenant approving the rate. Thirty-eight ratepayers approved the proposed rate; thirteen Disssenters opposed it. Phillips refused to allow a poll of the whole parish and denounced the Dissenting ministers whom he prevented from proposing an amendment to the rate.[47]

Thomas Thomas subsequently called a meeting at Tabernacle Chapel on 2 June 1845 to object to the payment of the Church rate on grounds of conscience; he also said that the rate was illegal because a poll of the parish of eighteen thousand had been refused. Five resolutions were passed against the compulsory rate; the meeting agreed to refuse to pay the rate and passively take the consequences. Thomas Thomas and about twenty-two other ratepayers (including five ministers) appeared before two sessions of the magistrates in November and December 1845 for not paying the rate. Distraint was made upon their property by the police.[48] The compulsory payment of a Church rate was contrary to their religion. Caesar was making them conform to an enforced religion by demanding payment for the restoration of a parish church which they did not attend.

The issue of class divisions was also raised. An attack was made by the Dissenters on the way in which local government in Pontypool was controlled by 'half a dozen individuals' at the behest of Capel Hanbury Leigh, the Lord Lieutenant.[49] One of the twenty-two recusants brought before the magistrates was a young Pontypool Baptist coal-miner: he was represented by the solicitor John G.H. Owen, well-known for supporting coal-miners and ironworkers and for questioning the easy relationship between ironmasters and magistrates. The chief magistrate, E.H. Phillips, henchman of the Lord Lieutenant, not only proposed the Church rate but also sat in judgement on the recusants.[50] His elder brother, William Williams Phillips, was land agent to the Lord Lieutenant and a senior Baptist deacon. That a Baptist deacon occupied such a position is a reflection of the quality of Baptist leadership in Pontypool at the time. The involvement of other middle class tradespeople, including William Conway, among the recusants, illustrated how the campaign for greater religious and social freedom was facilitated by the cooperation between the working and middle classes.

Thomas had revealed as early as October 1841, on his return from the Manchester Ministers' Conference in support of the repeal of the Corn Laws, that he had long believed that the peace and safety of Britain depended 'on the re-establishment of harmony and goodwill between the middle and lower classes' who had much in common, to work for reform of Britain's 'aristocratic' Constitution, based on such great principles as 'general suffrage and vote by ballot'.[51] Thomas's support for the Anti-Corn Law League (ACLL) in which he had involved others locally, had thus influenced his approach to the campaign against compulsory Church rate.

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47 *MM,* 24 May 1845.
48 *MM,* 14 and 21 June 1845, 14 November, 13 December 1845, 7 January 1846.
49 *MM,* 14 June 1845.
50 J.H. Morris and L.J. Williams, *The South Wales Coal Industry, 1841–1875* (Cardiff, 1958), p.267;*MM,* 13 December 1845.
51 *Nonconformist,* 20 October 1841.

The battles against Church rate in Pontypool showed how the compulsory rate was abolished there by 1845. More than that, the arguments used and the way they were expressed, revealed a readiness for disestablishment in that part of Monmouthshire in the 1840s that has not been appreciated. The battles also revealed the emerging Baptist leadership and the network of personalities that were brought together with important consequences for the future development of the disestablishment campaign in Monmouthshire. By 1845 a significant turning point was reached in the relationship between Dissenters and the Established Church in the district. The Church did not have a monopoly of pastoral care for the rapidly expanding population of industrial workers; it was statistically in a minority.

Thomas had taught the Dissenters not to be afraid of standing up for their principles in public or being 'religiously political'. The Pontypool Dissenters had co-operated in local support for the work of the ACLL and the Complete Suffrage Union (CSU).[52] In January 1846 they were praised in the *Nonconformist* for their stand against the Church rate in 1845.[53]

***Education battles***

Thomas's principles as a voluntaryist clearly separated the jurisdictions of God and Caesar. What applied to the refusal to pay compulsory Church rate applied also to the support of compulsory state schools with their capacity to prescribe religious education contrary to the teaching of Dissenters. Voluntaryists believed that 'the formal teaching of religion should be kept separate from secular education and left to parents and Sunday Schools'.[54] State grants for schools created a 'spirit of dependence and subserviency'; Voluntaryism was therefore the guiding principle in education. Thomas became the leading exponent of Voluntaryism in south Wales.[55]

When the Education Commissioner Jelinger C. Symons reported on the state of Education in Monmouthshire in 1847, he had this to say about the Monmouthshire voluntaryists:

> I am bound to say that the Reverend Mr. Thomas, the principal of the Baptist College at Pontypool; the Reverend Evan Jones of Tredegar; the Reverend Mr. Bright of Newport; W. Phillips, Esq. of Pontymoile and other Dissenters of influence, who expressed in no measured terms their disapproval of the Minutes of Council, gave me very valuable assistance in the prosecution of my labours, which I am desirous of acknowledging with thanks.[56]

This was disingenuous on the part of Jelinger Symons, because he recorded none of the information he had been given by Thomas Thomas or Evan Jones in the course of his inspection.[57] The conflict over education in Monmouthshire in the late 1840s received its leadership from the Baptists, though they had co-operation from such an eminent Independent as Evan Jones of Tredegar (Ieuan Gwynedd).

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52 *Nonconformist,* 24 January, 28 February 1844.

53 *Nonconformist,* 28 January 1846.

54 I.G. Jones, '1848 and 1868: "Brad y Llyfrau Gleision" and Welsh Politics' in *Mid-Victorian Wales* (Cardiff, 1992), p. 113.

55 *MM,* 3 April 1847; Paul O'Leary, 'The Languages of Patriotism in Wales', in *The Welsh Language and its Social Domains, 1801–1811* ed. Geraint H. Jenkins (Cardiff, 2000), p.540.

56 *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales, Part 2, Monmouthshire*, p. 272.

57 Revd Henry Richard, *Crosby Hall Lectures, 1848, On the Progress and Efficiency of Voluntary Education as exemplified in Wales* (London, 1848), pp. 207–208; *MM,* 22 January 1848.

Though Thomas Thomas and his fellow voluntaryists objected to the Reports of the Education Commissioners, they had stronger objections to the Minutes of the Privy Council Committee on Education (The Minutes of Council) whose reports were presented in both Houses of Parliament. The Minutes of August 1846 proposed inspection of schools in return for increasing the government grants for schools. These Minutes were being debated in Monmouthshire while Jelinger Symons was inspecting the schools.[58]

The voluntaryists thought that the educational scheme in the Minutes of Council infringed the principle of religious equality. The scheme was biased towards the Church because there were more church schools to receive the proposed grants, and the grants would bring inspectors,[59] and even perhaps the Church catechism, to be imposed upon Nonconformist children by stipendiary teachers as part of an increased government patronage. Voluntaryists refused government grants for their own schools which were financed from voluntary donations, like their churches. They excluded all doctrinal teaching from their day-schools and gave priority to their Sunday schools as the necessary providers of religious education.[60]

Meetings were called in opposition to the Minutes of Council in Newport and Pontypool; the same resolutions were passed at each meeting. The Pontypool meeting consolidated the supporters of disestablishment: Thomas Thomas and his colleague at the Baptist College, George Thomas, continued to be associated with the Conways, William Williams Phillips, Stephen Price, Baptist minister at Abersychan, David Edwards, Baptist minister at Trosnant and Herbert Daniel, Independent minister, as well as Thomas Brooks Smith, headmaster of the British school in Pontypool.[61] At that meeting Charles Conway opposed the education scheme, referring to its damaging effects upon the 'working classes'. The issue of class was again highlighted a week later when the *Monmouthshire Merlin* announced that a petition, headed by the Lord Lieutenant

> And other respectable and wealthy inhabitants of the parish of Trevethin had been forwarded to Lord John Russell to present in the House of Commons in favour of the Minutes of Council on Education as prepared by Her Majesty's government.[62]

At the end of 1847 the cause of disestablishment was further advanced in Monmouthshire by a planned course of eight lectures, advertised in the *Nonconformist* on 13 October 1847 and sponsored by Charles Conway in defence of civil and religious freedom. The lectures were intended to explain 'the connection between true Christian principles and right political actions' and to support the work of the Anti-State-Church Association. Seven lectures were in fact delivered, during November and December 1847, by four Baptist ministers: Thomas and George Thomas, Stephen Price, Abersychan, and David D. Evans, Pontrhydyrun, and two Independent ministers: Evan Jones, Tredegar, and Thomas Bright of Newport. Thomas Thomas delivered the first and final lectures himself. He used them to state his objections to the 'unscriptural nature and injurious effects'[63] of the union of church and state, which he believed to be morally wrong, as was the payment of compulsory Church

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58 *MM,* 20 and 27 March, 3 April 1847.
59 *MM,* 13 March, 24 April 1847.
60 *MM,* 26 June 1847.
61 *MM,* 3 April 1847; Smith was headmaster there for forty-six years after 1843: E.J. Smith, *A Useful Life: Memorials of the late T.B. Smith of Pontypool* (Pontypool, 1892).
62 *MM,* 10 April 1847.
63 Thomas Thomas, Lecture 1, *The duty of Religious Men to study the times in which they live* (Newport, 1847), p. 15.

rate.[64] Thomas asserted that the state should not set up another Church establishment in the name of government-controlled schools. He claimed that Voluntaryism had achieved more for Wales than the Established Church.

The lectures were not intended to frighten Jelinger Symons in the course of his inspections, and they did not in fact mention him, though they referred to the low opinion held by the lecturers of the Minutes of Council for 1846.[65] The lecturers were all voluntaryists and they upheld their principles in opposition to compulsory education as well as compulsory state Church and compulsory Church rate.

The voluntaryists' response helped to shape the campaign for disestablishment. By the time that Edward Miall, the founder of the Anti-State-Church Association, first visited Pontypool Baptist College in 1848, Thomas Thomas and his associates were committed to the aims and activities of the Association, which became the Liberation Society in 1853.

***The Liberation Society***

Thomas Thomas supported the Liberation Society to obtain political support for the removal of Nonconformist disabilities and to achieve disestablishment. When it became clear to Thomas that there was a better chance of disestablishment in Wales than there was in England, he became an advocate for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales apart from England. By that point Thomas began to depart from the strict agenda of the Liberation Society for general disestablishment.[66]

For two decades after 1847 Thomas Thomas continued to urge Dissenters to join the ASCA 'and cordially aid its operations, especially in Wales', as he did at the meeting of the Monmouthshire Baptist Association at Sirhowy at the end of May 1847. Thomas was reported to have 'thundered forth against the corruption of government help, and in defence of the voluntary principle'.[67] Thomas's address was published in a Circular Letter of the Association under the title of the *Rights and Duties of Christian Citizens*. It was described as 'substantial and cogent' and was an eloquent appeal for disestablishment.[68] Thomas said that the government had never been given the authority to interfere with rights of conscience or with religious instruction. Nowhere in the Bible, he said, did God intimate that secular rulers had any authority 'to choose a religion for their subjects', or 'to support it by means of taxation or endowment'. Thomas condemned the *Regium Donum*, the parliamentary grants given to Dissenting ministers as well as government grants for education. Disestablishment could only be achieved if Dissenters with the right to vote were 'resolute and faithful at the approaching election' in 1847 and voted only for a candidate who supported the voluntary principles of Nonconformists. No Baptist should vote for anyone who would vote in parliament 'regardless of the rights of conscience and the feelings and petitions of Dissenters'.[69]

When Thomas Thomas chaired the 'large and enthusiastic assembly' in the British school-room for Edward Miall's first visit to Pontypool in October 1848, he did not forget the message

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64 Thomas Thomas, Lecture 7, *The Christian Duty of Determined Adherence to Right Principles* (Newport, 1848), p. 8.

65 I.G. Jones, '1848 and 1868: *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision* and Welsh Politics', in *Mid-Victorian Wales* (Cardiff, 1992), p. 129.

66 Thomas Thomas, *The importance of developing the power of Welsh Nonconformity for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control* (London, 1862), p. 8.

67 Thomas Richards ed., *Monmouthshire Baptist Association, Circular Letters, 1832–1945* (Newport, 1947), pp.6–7; Thomas Thomas, *The Rights and Duties of Christian Citizens* (Cardiff, 1847), p.8.

68 Ibid, pp. 3–8.

69 Ibid, p.8.

of the ASCA (Liberation Society) that its work would be conducted in a just and peaceful way to convince people throughout Britain of the need for disestablishment. It was anti state-Church not anti-Church. Edward Miall appealed for people to join the Association, and a Pontypool committee was formed.[70] Miall's lecture tour in south Wales in 1848 was successful as were follow-up tours by other agents in subsequent years.[71] The value of local leadership was shown by the fact that in 1865 Pontypool had one of the largest local committees but only two of its twenty-five members were not members of Crane Street Baptist church.[72]

The Monmouthshire English Baptist Association, set up by Thomas Thomas in 1857, frequently exhorted people to campaign for disestablishment, but the political franchise was inadequate for the election of an MP who would support their cause. There were not enough voters in industrial Monmouthshire to overcome the powerful influence that the candidates of the ruling houses of Tredegar and Beaufort exercised over rural Monmouthshire in the persons of C.O.S. Morgan and P.G.H. Somerset. Even the entreaties for industrial voters to 'plump vote' for the Liberal candidate failed to achieve the desired result in 1868.[73]

Expectation of a Liberal victory in Monmouthshire in 1868 was high, not least among the Dissenters who had been working for it since 1862. The disappointment of the result from Blaenafon to Newport was palpable and produced riots in Blaenafon, Abersychan, Pontypool and Newport.[74] If Baptist ministers were open and eloquent supporters of the Liberal candidate, it was no more than the expression of their desire for a result that could help to deliver disestablishment for the Church of Ireland and voting by secret ballot in the next parliament. Thomas Thomas made known in a meeting in Pontypool in November 1868 his commitment to the Liberal party candidate.[75] Thomas and his associates reflected the political allegiance of the Liberation Society itself. They knew that they had to vote Liberal to achieve disestablishment when Octavius Morgan, one of the Tory candidates, had already vowed determined opposition to the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland.

The Monmouthshire English Baptist Association met in Abergavenny in April 1869. The Association thanked those who had voted Liberal as recommended by the conference in Ebbw Vale a year earlier 'in anticipation of measures having an important bearing on the rights and liberties of Nonconformist churches' in the next parliament. The conference condemned 'the want of fidelity to those principles evinced by some members of the denomination' who voted for candidates openly opposed to the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland.[76] There was no threat of expulsion from any of the churches. The *Star of Gwent* concluded that the only remedy for such disappointment was the secret ballot, eagerly expected in 1868.[77]

### *The Swansea Conference*

Thomas Thomas and his colleagues realised that their campaign for disestablishment would have to proceed one disability at a time. They strengthened their cause as they tackled separate grievances, but they realised that they could not achieve disestablishment without parliamentary support. The

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70 *MM,* 21 October 1848; *Nonconformist,* 18 October 1848.
71 *Nonconformist,* 28 November 1849. Liberation Society Minutes, A/LIB/1, 2, M.407, M.763.
72 Liberation Society Minutes, A/LIB/385.
73 Margaret Escott, 'Parliamentary Representation' in *The Gwent County History, Vol. 4* (Cardiff, 2011), pp. 265–290, on p. 275.
74 *MM,* 28 November 1868; *PFP,* 28 November 1868.
75 *PFP,* 21 November 1868.
76 MEBA, *Circular Letter, April 1869, Abergavenny,* Resolution 11 (Cardiff, 1869).
77 *Star of Gwent*, 28 November 1868.

Liberation Society played an important part in helping them to achieve that support. Thomas Thomas was active in the Society from its inception in 1844 until his retirement from the Baptist College in 1876 when he was thanked by the secretary, John Carvell Williams for 'the steadfastness with which you have supported the society in its work'.[78] It was not so much what Thomas Thomas and his voluntaryists did for the Liberation Society and its aims, but more a case of what the Liberation Society could do to obtain freedom from their Nonconformist disabilities for Thomas and his fellow Baptists, whose ultimate goal was disestablishment. This section will analyse that relationship and its outcome.

On 23 and 24 September 1862 there was a significant conference of the Liberation Society in Swansea to mark the bi-centenary of the great ejection of Nonconformist clergymen from their livings in the Church of England after the Act of Uniformity imposed by Charles II. When the Swansea Conference was proposed, its only purpose seemed to be the need to promote the Society's work in south Wales, where many subscriptions were overdue and there was a vacancy in the Society's agency.[79]

More positively, as I.G. Jones has noted, the Liberation Society wanted to improve the part that could be played by the Liberal MPs for the Welsh constituencies in the Society's parliamentary programme. In a population that was overwhelmingly Nonconformist, devout Dissenters had been urged for decades to vote for MPs who failed to support Liberationist motions in parliament.[80] The need to remedy this was well expressed by the third resolution of the conference:

> That this conference is of opinion that Welsh Nonconformity has never been adequately represented in the House of Commons-that while the population of Wales contains a much larger proportion of Dissenters than is to be found in England, Ireland or Scotland, the relative number of their Parliamentary representatives is much less than in either of those countries; and that, even of those Welsh members who attach themselves to the Liberal party, the majority are in the habit of treating questions deeply interesting to the friends of religious liberty with culpable remissness; that this conference is constrained to admit that, for these reasons, the parliamentary influence exerted by Wales for the advancement of the voluntary principle has been comparatively small, and having such a conviction, the conference is earnestly solicitous that practical steps should be taken for so improving the Welsh representation as to bring it into harmony with the views and feelings of the population.[81]

Thomas Thomas read a long and carefully prepared address, described by *The Cambrian* as 'interesting' and by the *Nonconformist* as

> a voluminous and eloquent paper on 'The importance of developing the power of Welsh Nonconformists to promote the liberation of religion from state patronage and control'.[82]

Most of what Thomas said in his voluminous paper he had said before in earlier published papers. He urged more Nonconformists to 'Qualify and Register' to produce hundreds of Liberal votes so that enlarged constituencies could find 'the candidates of sound principle, and be prepared to make

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78 Cardiff Central Library, MS 4.432, 1 April 1876.

79 Liberation Society, Minutes of Executive Committee A/LIB/3, 1862–1867, M.23; I.G. Jones, 'The Liberation Society and Welsh Politics', *WHR,* 1:2 (1961), pp. 216–219.

80 Ibid, p. 216.

81 *Nonconformist,* 1 October 1862, p. 830.

82 *Cambrian,* 26 September 1862; *Nonconformist,* 1 October 1862, p. 829.

the needful efforts and sacrifices for their return'.[83] Thomas reminded his audience of the formidable difficulties they still had to surmount 'and the powerful classes and interests arrayed against us. The contest is sure to be sharp and, perhaps of longer duration than the more sanguine among us anticipate'.[84]

Thomas went so far as to suggest that the four Welsh dioceses could be abolished as had happened in the Church of Ireland under Earl Grey's government in 1833:

> Ireland lost nothing by the extinction of ten bishoprics and any government who took a similar course in reference to the four Welsh dioceses now would deserve well of our countrymen.

That sentence was carefully omitted from the publication of Thomas's paper in the *Nonconformist*.

In 1862, decades before any government thought that modern Wales deserved separate legislation and before anyone had suggested that Wales alone could win disestablishment without England, Thomas Thomas had the vision to see that it could be done. The Liberation Society would not then countenance the suggestion even from such a loyal supporter as Thomas Thomas, though it agreed to the setting up of the South Wales Committee of the Society, of which Thomas became a member.[85]

John Davies claimed that the Liberation Society was 'the most important means whereby staunch Nonconformists became political activists',[86] but it took a long time to achieve that action, and Davies recognised the Society's failure to support Watkin Williams, MP for Denbigh, when he attempted to introduce a measure for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales in May 1870.[87] William B. George observed that the Society 'displayed a definite reluctance to advocate separate legislation for Wales'.[88] The Society's aim at the Swansea Conference in 1862, as expressed by John Batchelor, its chairman on the first day, had been 'to decide upon the best mode by which the Welsh people can assist in achieving…the liberation of Religion from all state patronage and control [and to help] in creating a majority in favour of disestablishment'.[89]

The interest that Thomas Thomas inspired in his colleagues and students at Pontypool Baptist College helped to develop the Society's work in Wales. That however was not Thomas's primary purpose. The Liberation Society served as an agency to assist Thomas and his colleagues in the political development of Pontypool as well as providing political support for the removal of Nonconformist disabilities. This would ultimately depend upon the disestablishment of the Church, for which the Pontypool Baptists knew that they had to achieve much more political commitment from other Nonconformists than the latter were prepared to give. In March 1859 at a meeting in Pontypool Town Hall against the proposals of Disraeli's Reform Bill, Thomas Thomas was opposed to making the right to vote dependent upon a property qualification. He said that he would give every man a vote, 'every man of full age, sound mind and unimpeachable character.' His Baptist

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83 *Nonconformist,* 5 November 1862, p. 928; Thomas Thomas, *The Importance of developing the power of Welsh Nonconformity for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control* (London, 1862), p. 9.

84 Ibid, p. 11; *Nonconformist,* 5 November 1862, p. 930.

85 *Nonconformist,* 12 November 1862; I.G. Jones, 'The Liberation Society and Welsh Politics, 1844–1868', *WHR,* 1:2 (1961), p.218.

86 John Davies, *A History of Wales* (Penguin, 1990), p. 393.

87 Ibid, p. 433.

88 W.B. George, 'Welsh Disestablishment and Welsh Nationalism', *JHSCW,* 20:25 (1970), p.77.

89 *Cambrian,* 26 September 1862.

colleagues, William Conway, Revd Stephen Price, and Charles Davies proposed a large extension of the franchise in the county and borough elections, vote by ballot and more equal electoral districts. The proposals of the Chartist Petition still resonated. In 1868 universal manhood suffrage and the secret ballot were what they most wanted from a new Liberal government. Without a wider franchise disestablishment was impossible.

***Conclusion***

Thomas's principles clearly separated the jurisdictions of God and Caesar. What applied to the refusal to pay compulsory Church rate applied also to compulsory state schools with their capacity to prescribe religious education contrary to the teaching of Dissenters. What motivated the Pontypool Dissenters was their belief that education was not the business of the state; the government was not qualified to teach religion. When all the Nonconformist abuses or grievances had been removed by 1880, there was still a case for disestablishment based not only upon the scars received by Dissenters in the past, but upon the desire for religious and social equality with the Established Church. This would make it possible for all the Christian churches in Wales to co-operate in the true mission of the Church on equal terms.[90]

The Baptist influence in Monmouthshire in the mid-nineteenth century was greater than any other denomination: they provided the leadership and the institutions at Crane Street Chapel and Pontypool Baptist College to influence much of south Wales by 1880. Before the official programme for the disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales had even begun, they had made it unstoppable. Disestablishment was supported according to the teachings of Thomas Thomas because the union of state and church was repugnant to the revealed word of God, hostile to liberty of conscience and incompatible with the lordship of Jesus Christ. In Wales the vast disproportion between the attendance figures for Church and Nonconformity highlighted the unfair position of the Established Church. Thomas's perspective on the reasons for Welsh disestablishment was supremely that worship belongs only to God and a Christian's conscience cannot be compromised by acts of parliament that limit his religious freedom.

The activities of the Baptists centred on Pontypool in the mid-nineteenth century have been examined against a background of immense and rapid changes in industrial Monmouthshire. Under the leadership of Thomas Thomas they were able to overcome the forces of government from the social and political hegemony of the Hanburys to the encroachments of the government's educational programme. The Newport Rising left a legacy of frustrated political demands which contributed to the campaign for social and religious freedom. The Baptists succeeded where the Chartists had failed; they were forceful but passively submissive. The avowed aim of the Liberation Society to proceed peacefully was pursued alongside the programme of the Society, so long as it suited the plans of the Pontypool Baptists.

Historians have wondered whether the recorded history of Wales faithfully reflects the historical experiences of its people.[91] This article has revealed that the causes of disestablishment as they arose in the border county of Monmouthshire over a significant period in the nineteenth century were more nuanced than those generally presented for the whole country of Wales. Moreover there

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[90] Thomas Thomas, *The Baptists and Christian Union: the address at the autumnal session of the Baptist Union* (Manchester, 1872), p. 11.

[91] Matthew Cragoe, 'Wales', in *A Companion to Nineteenth Century Britain,* ed. Chris Williams (Blackwells Publishing, 2004), pp. 521–533.

is a historiographical gap in the subject. 'Monmouthshire… has been neglected by historians' was the reason for its choice as one of the four Welsh counties to be analysed in the standard work on the Religious Census.[92] The strength of the Baptist contribution to the disestablishment campaign in Monmouthshire needs to be acknowledged.

[92] K.D.M. Snell and Paul S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* (Cambridge, 2000), p.207.

# THROUGH THE LENS:
# FEMALE LABOUR IN MID-VICTORIAN TREDEGAR

**By Christabel Hutchings**

Manchester Art Museum's Gallery of Costume at Platt Hall possesses an embossed brown leather album containing photographs of Tredegar iron workers. The majority of photographs are of 'patch girls' who dug iron ore from patches where the iron came to the surface on the rim of the south Wales coalfield. However, the Census for 1861 for Plumbers Row Tredegar, describes women and girls undertaking a number of tasks. Not all were concerned with iron ore as the Tredegar Iron Company was also involved with coal extraction.[1] In this article the name 'tip girl' is used to describe a variety of labours undertaken by working women and the term became the generic term for female surface workers involved in a range of activities at south Wales iron mines and collieries. In the Lancashire coalmines the term 'pit brow lasses' was used to cover a variety of jobs undertaken by working women.[2] Fig. 1 shows the Tredegar tip girls wearing their customary skirts and long aprons which contrast with fig. 2 showing Lancashire pit brow girls wearing trousers, short aprons and head scarves.[3] With the exception of fig. 2, the photographs are presumed to be the work of William Clayton, a Tredegar photographer.[4] On the album's inner leaf is written the name of the original owner of the album, 'C B Crisp' and the date '19 April 1865'. However, we do not know if William Clayton created the album or if the photographs were purchased by C.B. Crisp as a loose bundle. The owner of the album might have been the C.B. Crisp named in a newspaper article relating to Tredegar. He appears to be a person of some status in the town as he received information about the changes to the postal service between Bristol and Tredegar in 1865.[5]

***William Clayton and his Photographs***

Clayton's work is important because it is a rare example of early Welsh working class photography representing popular culture and gender differences. Each of the photographs in the album is a *carte de visite*. This is a small photograph of a type patented in Paris by photographer André Adolphe Eugène Disdéri in 1854. It became popular because it reduced costs by taking several portraits on one photographic plate. They were introduced to Britain in 1857, and in May 1860 gathered popularity after J.E. Mayall took portraits of the royal family. As the name suggests, the photographs were left as visiting cards but people began to collect portraits of their family, friends and celebrities and mounted them in albums. The craze for collecting *cartes de visite* reached its peak during the 1860s, but the format remained popular until the beginning of the twentieth century. However, photography was also being used for non-social purposes. Dr. Hugh Welch Diamond made a collection of photos of

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1 See 1861 Census for Tredegar, Bedwellty Parish District 13, Plumbers Row. The Census mentions the following tasks, in Plumbers Row: 'gathering iron mine', 'iron mine filler', 'unloading iron ore' and one woman is stated to be a 'coal filler'. See also Tables 1 and 2 below.

2 Angela V. John, *By the Sweat of their Brow: Women workers at Victorian coal mines* (1980) reprinted Oxford, 2006, pp. 84–5.

3 For female workers wearing trousers see John, *By the Sweat of their Brow:* Ch. 3 and especially, p. 85.

4 Gail Baylis,'Visual cruising in South Wales in the 1860s: Tredegar Patch Girls'. In: *Visual Culture in Britain*. 2006, Vol. 7, No. 2. p. 21, fn.4, states that the photograph of the Pit Brow Women was taken by photographer John Cooper of Standishgate, Wigan.

5 C.B. Crisp is mentioned in the *Merthyr Telegraph and General Advertiser for the Iron Districts of South Wales,* 11 Feb.1865. The same newspaper 24 Dec. 1864 records a person named Crisp giving Penny Readings.

Fig.1: Tredegar tip girls wearing their customary skirts and long aprons. Photograph Album of William Clayton, 1865: Ref. 2008.40.9. Image courtesy of The Gallery of Costume, Manchester Art Gallery.

Fig.2: Lancashire pit brow girls wearing trousers, short aprons and head scarves. Photograph Album of William Clayton, 1865: Ref. 2008.40.9. Image courtesy of The Gallery of Costume, Manchester Art Gallery.

his patients in Surrey County Asylum from 1855–58 and between 1871 and 1876 photographs were taken of prisoners at Usk Gaol.[6] In the mid-1860s Arthur J. Munby amassed images of working-class women, often using photographers such as Clayton, to add to his collection.[7] Clayton's collection of photographs was a response to a movement which aimed at abolishing female labour at iron mines and collieries, but the photographs are now more closely associated with working class clothing, as the album is part of the Cunnington Collection in Manchester Art Gallery's Museum of Costume. Drs Cecil and Phillis Cunnington were authorities on English costume and their collections of clothes, accessories and photographs were purchased by Manchester Art Gallery in 1947. However, there is no knowledge as to how the Cunningtons obtained the album of 48 unique photographs.[8] There are also newspaper cuttings pasted into the album, two from *The Merthyr Telegraph and General*

[6] Twickenham Museum, Dr Hugh Welch Diamond, http://www.twickenham-museum.org.uk/detail.php?aid=293&cid=21&ctid=1 (last accessed, 13/06/2021). For prisoners at Usk Gaol see Gwent Archives, Q/CG 38.

[7] Sarah Edge, *The Extraordinary Archive of Arthur J. Munby: Photographing Class and Gender in the Nineteenth Century*. London, 2020.

[8] The album would have been of interest to Cunnington as he also published books on costume. For his obituary see the *Guardian,* 25 Jan. 1961.

*Advertiser* and one from *The Bristol Mercury,* with articles relating to the abolition of female labour.[9] The importance of the album has been recognised by conceptual artist Jeremy Deller and by Sarah Edge and Gail Baylis from the School of Communication and Media at Ulster University, but this article studies Clayton's photographs from a south Wales historical perspective.[10]

The Museum of Costume has also produced an online database of 50 photographs.[11] The first two are of Tip Girls and are by Clayton, but they are not from the Album although there are copies of the same photographs in the album. Unfortunately the 50 pictures in the online database do not have a consecutive reference numbering system at present. Therefore apart from the images reproduced for this article, it has not been possible to specifically reference other images in the database. However, an attempt has been made to count the total number of Tredegar patch girls that are represented in the photographs. In order to achieve this it is necessary to deal with the difficulty of facial recognition. Also certain photographs needed to be excluded because they did not represent tip girls, or because they were repeats of the same photograph, or were different photographs of the same people. However it can be estimated that there are approximately seventy-three individual Tredegar working girls represented in the photographs.

The 1891 Census states that photographer William Clayton was born in Blackburn, situated on the Burnley Coalfield of Lancashire, while his wife Eliza was born in Hampshire. By 1860 Clayton was living in Lymington, the coastal area of Hampshire, where his daughter Georgiana was born.[12] Why William Clayton chose to move to Tredegar is not known. However it would appear that Lymington's salt industry was dying out in the 1860s and he would have been familiar with the growth of industrial areas on the coalfields which had led to a trend in photographing female workers. This might also explain why the album contains the photograph of two Lancashire 'pit brow' girls. Whatever his reason for settling in Tredegar, he was resident by 1865 as the date in the album confirms.[13] The 1871 Census reveals Clayton was fifty-one years of age and was living with his wife and daughter. He traded as a photographer in Tredegar until 5 October 1895 when he died at his home in Iron Street, aged 79.[14]

***Tredegar an Iron Town***

In order to understand Clayton's album of photographs one needs to be familiar with the society in which it was created. By the middle of the nineteenth century Britain had changed from a predominantly rural population to an urban one and the 1851 census reveals that 51 per cent of the population lived in urban settlements. These were areas of increasing wealth and the growth of Tredegar was based on the development of the iron industry. This can be traced back to the eighteenth

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9 *The Merthyr Telegraph and General Advertiser* henceforth *The Merthyr Telegraph* and *The Bristol Mercury Daily Post, Western Counties and South Wales Advertiser,* henceforth *The Bristol Mercury*.

10 The album has been used by 'English conceptual, video and installation artist' Jeremy Deller: *All that Is Solid Melts into Air*, London, 2014, and by Dr Gail Baylis, whose research and publications focus on 'an interdisciplinary approach that combines photographic theory, visual studies, social history and memory'. See fn. 4.

11 The reader wishing to consult the online database is directed to 'Manchester Art Gallery, Photograph Album, William Clayton', reference https://manchesterartgallery.org/collections/title/?mag-object-53341. (accessed 11/06/2021).

12 The first census in which Clayton can be identified is the 1871 Census for Tredegar town in Bedwellty Parish. It states that both William and his wife Eliza were born in Hampshire. However, the evidence of the 1891 Census contradicts this and states he was born in Blackburn in Lancashire.

13 As Clayton does not appear in the 1861 Census he was presumably not resident in Tredegar at this time.

14 *Cardiff Times,* 13 October 1895.

century when a forge was known to have operated in the area. Expansion took place after 1800 when a large area of land on Bedwellty Common near Tredegar was leased from the Tredegar Estate. For most of its working life the Tredegar Ironworks was owned by the Homfray, Fothergill and Forman families. By the time Clayton was in residence in 1869 the company had 9 blast furnaces, served by 300 coke ovens for the production of pig iron and 80 puddling furnaces which produced wrought iron. The Tredegar Ironworks was producing approximately 1,000 tons of wrought iron each week during 1869.[15] The Welsh iron trade was manufacturing 850,000 tons per annum and Tredegar was one of the larger iron works situated along the top of the coalfield. In the 1870s, Edward Williams and partners acquired the ironworks which was then remodelled, and in 1875 the company was renamed the Tredegar Iron and Coal Company to include the development of additional coal mining capacity. In 1882, two Bessemer converters were installed to allow conversion to steel production which allowed the iron works to survive into the 1890s.[16]

The tip girls and pit brow workers were an example of an emerging urban group which middle class society tended to see in a disapproving light, and photographs such as those taken by William Clayton were aimed at endorsing this negativity. However, many artists had already found industrial scenes interesting subjects. Artists such as Henry Gastineau, who painted a Copper works at Swansea and George Childs,who painted the Dowlais Ironworks at Merthyr Tydfil, were especially fascinated by the light effects created by the smelting processes.[17] Nantyglo Ironworks was situated to the east of Tredegar and a picture painted *c*.1830, possibly by Gastineau, shows the effect of light from the furnaces. A figure stands isolated on the bridge in contemplation of what art historian Peter Lord refers to as the 'other world'.[18] Tredegar was an example of this 'other world' and a town such as Tredegar was experiencing rapid industrial growth with an accompanying rise in population which grew from 1,132 in 1801 to 34,685 in 1881.[19]

Clayton's customer base in Tredegar would usually have been the wealthier inhabitants who wanted to be seen in a way which reflected their affluent status. However, his photographs of men and women in their working clothes were aimed at creating the opposite effect. It was the workers' dirt and ragged clothes that were of value to him. Although William Clayton lived in close proximity to his subjects, he was separated from them by class, as is shown by trade directories which listed him under 'Commercial'.[20] He lived in Iron Street, in the centre of the town, an area inhabited by shop keepers and business men and frequented by labourers who had migrated in large numbers from rural Wales and areas of England and Ireland. He was familiar with his subjects and was not just an observer like the man in the picture looking at the Nantyglo Ironworks. Clayton's clientele was the wealthier residents of Tredegar, essentially a company town whose early development had been planned by Samuel Homfray.[21] Clayton lived in a growing, industrial town where public health

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15 RCAHMW, Coflein,Tredegar Ironworks: https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/34142/details/tredegar-ironworks (accessed 13/02/2020).

16 *The Times,* 'The Welsh Iron Trade', 30 December 1869.

17 Peter Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales, Industrial Society,* Cardiff 1998, pp. 134 & 135. See Henry Gastineau, *Hafod Copper Works at Swansea*, c. 1830, and George Childs, *Dowlais Ironworks'*, c.1840.

18 National Museum of Wales, *Nant-y-Glo Ironworks*, Accession Number: 62.385, https://museum.wales/industry/images/?action=show_item&item=2512 (accessed 23/06/2020). See also Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales, Industrial Society,* Cardiff, 1998, p. 136.

19 RCAHMW, Coflein gov.uk., Tredegar Ironworks. Also see above fn. 17.

20 *1871 Post Office Directory of Monmouthshire and South Wales;* Tredegar, Commercial section, p. 97.

21 Paul O'Leary, *Claiming the Streets: Processions and Urban Culture in South Wales, c.1830–1880,* Cardiff, 2012, pp. 42–43.

was poor, housing inadequate and where poverty and disease were rife. The town's death rate was consequently high. Furthermore the population was volatile. The area was renowned for the violence of the Scotch Cattle who punished blacklegs in the 1830s, and many men from Tredegar joined the Chartist march on Newport in 1839. During Clayton's residence in Tredegar there were 'election' riots in 1868 and in 1882 there were violent protests against the Irish living in the town.

***The opposition to females working at the mines and collieries***

It is crucial to understand why William Clayton wanted to photograph the tip girls of Tredegar. Victorian opinion generally disapproved of the work they undertook and discussions about the tip girls' role were appearing in newspapers. Although some areas of Britain knew little about the effects of increasing industrialisation, tip girls were a common sight to the inhabitants of the iron towns. It was understandable that iron towns such as Merthyr and Tredegar should be interested in the subject. In the 1830s the Dowlais Ironworks at Merthyr was the largest in the world, employing more than 5,000 people, and by 1851 Merthyr was the largest town in Wales.

Clayton's photographs aimed at portraying the harsh realities of a working life which remained grim despite the fact that social progress had already taken place with laws being passed which sought to improve working conditions in iron mines and collieries.[22] In 1842, distressing illustrations and oral witness accounts of children's working conditions had appeared in the report of the *Children's Employment Commission 1842*. A summarised edition of the main report was compiled from the appendix of the main report.[23] Published in May 1842, the report shocked Victorian society and led to the Mines and Collieries Act being passed in the same year. The act prohibited all underground work for women and girls and also for boys under ten. The Mines and Collieries Act appointed only one inspector, Seymour Tremenheere, with limited powers.[24] The Coal Mines Inspection Act became law in 1850 and created more inspectors and empowered them to make underground visits and report accidents. In 1855 it was amended and the act increased the inspectors' powers which included the creation of annual reports.[25] The south Wales coalfield had seams of coal containing gas which caused serious mine disasters. On 21 June 1865, the year the album was dated, an explosion in Bedwellty Pits caused the death of twenty-four men and boys, two of whom were aged twelve. In 1868 the mines inspector for the area reported that there had been sixty-one accidents in his area, however only one of these was a surface accident.[26]

Much of the opposition to tip girls' labour was the result of the working clothes they wore. Furthermore, they were visible working in the landscape and walking about the towns. In 1873 *The Graphic* provided a description of tip girls' clothes and the various roles they undertook in an article entitled 'Tip-Girls in South Wales'. There was a strike in south Wales at this time which increased national curiosity.

> Her costume is a canvas frock, reaching a little below the knees, displaying well-shaped legs and feet, clothed in hob-nailed shoes or half-boots. Over her head she wears a light coloured handkerchief tied closely over the hair to protect it from the black dust. On top of the handkerchief is a hat, often

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22 Mines referred to the extraction of iron mine (ore) and collieries to the extraction of coal.

23 *The Condition and Treatment of the children employed in the mines and collieries of the United Kingdom,* London, 1842, See also https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=mfRSh-ctOR4C&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed 13/06/2021).

24 John, *By the Sweat of their Brow,* Oxford, 2006, Chapters 1–3.

25 *Ibid*. pp. 168 & 172.

26 *The Times,* 26 June 1869.

> ornamented with large blue beads. Her skirts are, of course, short and all the rest of her costume is durable and consistent with her work. The Tip-Girl works in all weather on the exposed tips, or rubbish heaps, brought from the mine. She picks out with a hammer the bits of ore left among them. She stacks the ore thus found in oblong beds, and also empties the tram-waggons. Besides this, she works on the patches, which is that part of an iron mine where the ore is near enough to the surface to be dug out without the aid of machinery or the sinking of deep pits; often, too, she stands at the mouth of the shaft to receive the ore or rubbish.[27]

The majority of people who read *The Graphic* would have been distanced from the iron and coal workers by class and geography. However Table 1, taken from the Census of 1861, gives insight into the composition of a working family with four girls employed in 'Gathering Iron Mine'. The census records Thomas Lewis and his family living at 2 Plumbers Row in Tredegar. Presumably it was necessary to send the girls to work as the family did not possess boys to work below ground where they could earn more money than female surface workers. Thomas Lewis had four daughters and all the girls would have started work as soon as they were legally able, aged ten.

| Name | Relationship | Status | Age | Occupation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Thomas Lewis | Head of household | Married | 41 | Coal Miner |
| Sarah Lewis | Wife | As above | 39 | |
| Margaret | Daughter | Unmarried | 18 | Gathering Iron Mine[28] |
| Catherine | As above | As above | 15 | As above |
| Mary | As above | As above | 12 | As above |
| Rebecca | As above | As above | 10 | As above |
| Elizabeth | As above | As above | 5 | Scholar |

Table 1: 1861 Census; 2 Plumbers Row, Tredegar, Bedwellty Parish.

***The Role of Newspapers and the Select Committee on Mines 1865–67***

The increasing disapproval of tip girls' work was stoked by newspapers and the fact that C.B. Crisp pasted three newspaper cuttings concerning the topic inside the album, endorses their role in spreading information to readers. Following the repeal of the tax on newspapers in April 1855, *The Merthyr Telegraph and General Advertiser for the Iron Districts of South Wales,* began publishing on 30 June 1855 as a weekly newspaper 'ministering to the wants and sympathizing with the great heart of suffering humanity'. It cost one penny. On 4 October 1856 *The Merthyr Telegraph* had printed an article entitled 'Female Labourers'.[29] The article pointed out that people living in Merthyr had become inured to the labour of women in what they termed a 'masculine species of employment'. The author referred to the time before the 1842 Mines Act when 'females descended into the deep pits, and toiled in rude contact with too often dissolute men.' The article also quoted from the reports of Hugh Seymour Tremenheere, the first Inspector of Mines.[30] His views endorsed opposition to 'the custom of employing females in an unfeminine capacity' working on the tips, cinder and mine banks

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27 *The Graphic,* 1 Feb 1873.

28 Mine was another word for iron ore.

29 *The Merthyr Telegraph* was in existence between 1855 and 1881 and was a weekly publication distributed in the iron-producing areas of south Wales.

30 Hugh Seymour Tremenheere, had been the Inspector of Schools for the Committee of Council on Education for Monmouthshire and Herefordshire in 1839 and was therefore familiar with the area.

as well as in the iron works. He considered it 'degrading to the female character' and thought it 'undermined their modesty and self-respect' and was 'injurious to the progress of good morals'. He also noted that females at work were exposed to association with men which led to a 'deteriorating influence of language, manners and habits.'[31] The newspaper article went on to refer to the need for women to be brought up to be suitable mothers and stated that tip girls, up to the age of ten, received only a basic education, knew little of home-making and were ignorant of child management. Such views echoed a prevailing opinion that women should be in the home and that such physical work was incompatible with the role of motherhood. Descriptions of tip girls frequently used derogatory stereotypical language to convey their masculine appearance. In contrast the Victorian middle class ideal of the place of the wife and mother was at home organising the children, with servants to help and spending time on accomplishments considered suitable for women such as painting, needlework and music. Furthermore it was considered that the wife at home, engaged in domestic duties and especially motherhood, was a basis for society's social improvement. Conversely, as Sarah Edge states, 'the masculine outside world was increasingly constructed as immoral, impersonal and dangerous' and 'the working classes were often imagined as sexually and morally uncivilized'.[32] Although there is evidence that the working class family unit allowed girls to work from the age of ten, there are some indications that in south Wales the wife of a working man would not necessarily be involved in industrial work. In Tables 1 and 2 the wife is not given an occupation. This did not mean that the wife was living a life of leisure like her middle class counterpart, as it was her role to organise the home which was often packed with children and lodgers. If there was no man in the home she would have to work and fig. 3 appears to represent a working mother and child and there are at least three photographs of working mothers and children in the album.

Fig 3: A working mother and child. Photograph Album of William Clayton, 1865: Ref. 2008.40.9. Image courtesy of The Gallery of Costume, Manchester Art Gallery.

In 1863 the National Association of Coal, Lime and Ironstone Miners of Great Britain held their conference at Leeds. During their discussions it became apparent that there was strong feeling among all the delegates that females should be withdrawn from employment at the mines and collieries. They termed the practice as 'degrading and disgusting'. The south Wales delegate went further and referred to 'instances of depravity through the girls coming into contact with

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31 The Inspector of Mines Report (1850) was quoted in the *The Merthyr Telegraph* 4 October 1856.

32 This was referred to as the 'cult of domesticity' or 'the separation of spheres' and by the 1840s women's labour was acquiring a popular meaning of 'immorality'. See Sarah Edge, 'Reading historical photographs: Class and gender in nineteenth-century images of Wigan of pit brow women', in John Storey ed., *Directions in Cultural History, The Making of English Popular Culture*, London, 2016, pp. 65 & 67.

the male sex at their work …' [33] Following the conference a petition with 14,000 signatures was sent to Parliament asking for an inquiry into the safe working of the mines, and the sufficiency of inspection. They further stated that, 'the practice of employing females on or about the pit bank of mines and collieries is degrading to the sex, leads to gross immorality and stands as a foul blot on the civilisation and humanity of the kingdom'.[34] The Parliamentary motion for a select committee was agreed on 9 May 1865.[35] The committee comprised fifteen Parliamentarians and they began hearing evidence in June 1865. The Select Committee on Mines 1865–1867 brought the subject of female working at the mines and collieries to the notice of the general public. Some members of the Select Committee were industrialists. Henry Austin Bruce (later 1st Baron Aberdare) was one of the members on the committee, as was Henry Hussey Vivian (1st Baron Swansea).[36] Both were appropriate choices because they represented mining and smelting areas. As the Select Committee was made up of Members of Parliament, it was a male committee. The committee had the power to send for persons, papers and records.[37] They heard evidence from local dignitaries and industrialists who were asked questions about female workers' occupations, dress and immorality, but working women were not interviewed.[38] Although the mine petitioners had objected to female working at the pit head in 1863, the Select Committee on Mines eventually came to its conclusion in 1867 stating that it did not consider the petitioners' complaint to have been established by the evidence.[39]

Welsh local newspapers followed the national debate. On 7 January 1865 *The Merthyr Telegraph* requested readers' views on the question: 'Should Female Labour be Employed in the Iron Works?' The author, presumably the editor, stated 'Iron is a hard subject and the workers in it become hardened by hard usage and unsuitable labour.' While acknowledging the need for some women to obtain remuneration, he objected to the fact that women and men worked night shifts. Just as there had been objections to employing women and men in the darkness of the mines in 1842, the editor objected to men and women working on the surface at night. He also noted that men's wages would rise if women were not employed, but thought that pecuniary considerations should be tempered with moral obligations and concluded that it was the duty of society to agitate to bring about the advancement of civilisation. As requested, correspondents provided their views in letters to the editor using pseudonyms, which were typically used to disguise their identity. On 14 January 1865 a correspondent argued against the employment of females in the iron industry because they made poor wives and mothers and lacked the skills necessary to be home-makers. However, the author pointed out that tip girls had more freedom than girls who worked as housemaids who were virtual prisoners in their employers' houses, whereas the tip girls lived at home and had freedom after work. The next letter, on 21 January 1865, written by a man firmly on the side of commerce

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[33] *The Transactions and Results of the National Association of Coal, Lime and Ironstone Miners of Great Britain,* London, 1863, pp. 13, 17 & 100. https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=fiJeAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA150&dq=British+National+Association+of+Coal,+Lime,+and+Iron-stone+miners+1864&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjz5eiJodbpAhVPi1wKHX8WC5MQ6AEITTAE#v=onepage&q=British%20National%20Association%20of%20Coal%2C%20Lime%2C%20and%20Iron-stone%20miners%201864&f=false (accessed 13/06/2021)

[34] Edge, 'Reading Historical Photographs', p. 69. See also *The Times,* 12 August 1867.

[35] See Hansard, House of Commons debate 09 May 1865 https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1865/may/09/motion-for-a-select- (accessed 13/06/2021.)

[36] Bruce had been returned unopposed as MP for Merthyr Tydfil in December 1852 while Henry Hussey Vivian was Member of Parliament for Glamorganshire from 1857–85, and the Swansea District from 1885–93.

[37] John, *By the Sweat of their Brow,* p.159, fn. 3.

[38] Edge, 'Reading Historical Photographs', p. 69.

[39] *The Times,* 12 August 1867.

and the iron masters' interests, supported the continuation of female labour because it kept wages low. The following letter, on 28 January, took place when there was a sickness epidemic in Merthyr. The correspondent took a medical view that the tip girls' arduous labour made them more liable to disease. He also highlighted the moral danger of night work as they worked alongside men. On 11 February a correspondent brought up the topic of philanthropy. He pointed out that Merthyr relied too much on the iron masters to fulfil the role of philanthropy and that their self-interest lay in cheap female labour. He suggested establishing a Female Protection Society.

C.B. Crisp was concerned about the work undertaken by female workers in the iron and coal industry and had obviously followed the series of letters on the subject which were sent by members of the public and published in *The Merthyr Telegraph*. He placed two of the letters in the album. The first newspaper extract was dated 18 February 1865 and there is the possibility that Crisp was the author. The correspondent agreed that there should be a society for the protection of females but stated there was no point in waiting for the ironmasters to take the lead. He reminded people that, as with the abolition of the Corn Laws and the passing of the Reform Bill, pressure came from outside Parliament. He felt there were many intelligent and good men in Merthyr who would surely come forward and form such a protection society. The second extract Crisp placed in the album was dated 4 March 1865 and appears to be by the editor of *The Merthyr Telegraph* because the title was slightly changed to include coal works.[40] The correspondent recognised that the articles had directed public opinion to a very important social question and wanted to assist in the establishment of a Female Protection Society. He blamed the geographical isolation of Merthyr for the lack of interest in the subject. However, the correspondent had little faith in the efficacy of an Act of Parliament to change the system of female work because such acts were framed in the interests of the masters. He noted that little change could take place in the present aristocratic House of Commons and looked forward to a time when it was more representative of the people. He trusted that the evils which could befall female workers were rare occurrences and looked to education, the pulpit and the press as a means of softening the 'asperities in our social system'. The third article in Crisp's album was from *The Bristol Mercury* which was a weekly newspaper which also covered south Wales.[41] The article dated 29 April 1865 was not a letter. It provided more detail about the girls' work and the clothes they wore because, whereas the readers of *The Merthyr Telegraph* were familiar with the sight of these working girls, many readers of *The Bristol Mercury* needed more explanation and the article underlines the tip girls' curiosity value for a wider public.

> To do this work women and girls are employed and wear a peculiar style of dress, consisting of a short frock and apron, tight upon the neck, made of a material resembling hop cloth or fine sacking and red worsted stockings, and lace-up boots heavy with hobnails, tips and toecaps that would pull the legs off some of the ploughmen in the Middle Counties. The bonnet or hat, for it is difficult to discern to which of the classes this headdress belongs, is bedecked with beads, brooches, and feathers, the later addition in a small way imitating the Prince of Wales plume. In this dress, with faces black with dust and smoke, it is difficult when elevated … to discern the sex to which these objects belong.[42]

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40 The production of coal was overtaking iron in importance at this time.

41 Monmouthshire had close ties with Bristol and packet boats sailed regularly from Newport to Bristol.

42 *The Bristol Mercury,* 29 April 1865.

***The lack of photographic evidence of female coal and iron workers in south Wales***

One would have thought that given the lively debates that took place in Parliament and in the newspapers there would have been more photographs of tip girls in south Wales archives, but photographs are quite rare. Conversely there are many portrayals of working men. For example, industrialist Francis Crawshay held his workers in high esteem and commissioned a series of paintings by W.J. Chapman *c*.1835. The men are depicted sympathetically and named but there are no women represented in the series.[43] Clayton's photographs, dated 1865, coincided with the publicity which the newspapers gave to the Select Committee on Mines, but although demand for such photographs was high in Lancashire there does not seem to have been the same amount of interest in Wales. Gail Baylis suggests that the album may have been a commission and this would account for a lack of similar photographs by William Clayton held in other archives. However, Clayton also produced photographs to sell individually as is proved by the first two in the database, framed in cardboard and not part of the album. Also a copy of one of Clayton's tip girls' photographs is in the National Museum of Wales's collections but it is not a new photograph of a tip girl but is one that is also in the album.[44] This shortage of photographic evidence relating to female mine and colliery workers in south Wales has also been noted by Ceri Thompson, the Curator of Coal Mining Collections at National Museum Wales.[45] However, one must bear in mind that the lack of photographs makes the album more important, even though it only contains visual evidence in one iron town, in one year, 1865. Wirt Sikes, writing in 1881, suggests a possible reason for the dearth of Welsh visual evidence. In his book *Rambles and Studies in Old South Wales*, he states 'perhaps the roughest work which women do in Wales is that of the tip-girls'. He compared them with the Lancashire pit brow girls and commented,

> In Wales it (the class of tip-girls or pit-women) is beyond question better – less ignorant, more moral, less abject. … The Welsh pit woman, like the Welsh miner, is commonly a worthy church-going person, not infrequently possessed of a rosy prosperity of aspect one would hardly expect to see in such a class. There is even beauty among them; … Of course a certain coarseness prevails as a rule.[46]

This quotation indicates that Sikes felt that south Wales tip girls aroused less curiosity and censure than their counterparts in Lancashire and suggested that religion might have been a factor. The 1851 Census of Religious Worship had revealed that 'Wales was fundamentally a more religious nation than England'.[47] Non-conformity in Wales was gathering strength and was increasingly considered to be synonymous with a concept of 'Welshness'.[48] The relationship between the workers, the Tredegar Iron Company and nonconformity was a strong one as can be seen in 1875, when the company gave

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43 Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales, Industrial Society,* pp. 65–7.

44 Baylis, 'Visual cruising in South Wales in the 1860s', p. 3. See also National Museum Wales Collections, 'Colliery worker, photograph' accession number 28.199/2.

45 Ceri Thompson, Curator of Coal Mining Collections at National Museum Wales has conducted research into photographs of female iron and coal workers in south Wales and reports that there is little photographic evidence. (Conversation, 2/03/2020).

46 Wirt Sikes, *Rambles and Studies in Old South Wales*, Barry, 1973, pp. 244–245. (First edn. dated 1881).

47 Christopher Turner, 'The Nonconformist Response', in Trevor Herbert & Gareth Elwyn Jones, *People and Protest Wales 1815–1880*, Cardiff, 1988. pp. 73–74. On Sunday 30 March 1851 a count was made of accommodation available for worship and attendances in all denominations, morning, afternoon and evening.

48 Bill Jones, 'Banqueting at a moveable feast: Wales 1879–1914', in Gareth Elwyn Jones and Dai Smith, *The People of Wales,* 1999, Llandysul, p. 169.

land for the construction of a new Congregational Church. The manager of the Iron Works was invited to the laying of the foundation stone along with Benjamin Whitworth MP, a director of the company. Whitworth stated, 'We, as a Company shall do our best to find employment for the people, and help them to support themselves, their families and their religion.' He further stated 'The Welsh are known to be a religious people.' Furthermore, as a member of The British Association for the Promotion of Temperance, he hoped that the new chapel would support the movement.[49] Chapels exercised considerable social control over their members, many of whom would have been the workers of The Tredegar Iron Works and so Sikes' comment about 'church' attendance was apposite.[50] Another reason for the dearth of photographic evidence was the isolation of the iron communities at the top of the south Wales valleys and the familiarity with tip girls' work which created an acceptance of their role.[51]

Sikes had used the Welsh artist T.H. Thomas to illustrate his book *British Goblins*, which was a study of Welsh folklore.[52] Thomas was a polymath with a great interest in the subject and provided Sikes with information and it is therefore probably not a coincidence that there is a similarity of viewpoint between Sikes and Thomas concerning tip girls. Thomas produced a romanticised painting of a tip girl which was painted sometime before 1880.[53] He called it *Sackcloth and Ashes. Tip Girls Leaving Work, the South Wales Coal District*.[54] [See fig. 4.] As the son of Dr Thomas Thomas, the past President of the Baptist College at Pontypool, Thomas had received a devout religious upbringing and the

Fig 4: *Sackcloth and Ashes. Tip Girls Leaving Work, the South Wales Coal District*. Oil Painting by Thomas H. Thomas. Courtesy Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery.

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49 *South Wales Daily News,* 3 December 1875.

50 Sikes was the American Consul to South Wales and would have used the term 'church' to embrace all places of worship.

51 See the comment in *The Merthyr Telegraph,* 4 Oct. 1856, referring to the population of Merthyr being 'inured' to Pit Girls' labour.

52 Wirt Sikes, *British Goblins: Welsh Folk-lore, Fairy Mythology, Legends and Traditions,* London, 1880.

53 Christabel Hutchings, 'T. H. Thomas's oil painting: "Sackcloth and Ashes Tip Girls Leaving Work, South Wales Coal District".' In *Morgannwg* Vol LX 2016, pp. 69–88.

54 He also produced an engraving of the picture which shows the same subjects in a more abject condition. The engraving's copyright is with Cardiff University's Scolar Collections and Archives.

painting's title relates to the sackcloth they wore and the biblical reference to penitence and grief. Thomas's painting bathes the tip girls in the light of the setting sun in order to allow them to stand out from the barren landscape denuded by industry. He provides a single stick as a symbol of the vegetation that had been lost.[55] Thomas was obviously making a statement against their arduous work but, for him, the penitence and grief would have been society's rather than belonging to the tip girls and the sunlight a reference to their innocence and importance in the sight of God and he imbues the central figure with a sense of dignity.

***Decoding the photographs***

An artist such as T.H. Thomas could create his own background and add figures, symbols and colours that were of relevance when understanding the underlying meaning of his work of art. One might assume that a photograph produced in 1865 provided more objective evidence than an artist's painting but that is not the case as the tip girls in the photographs have been manipulated by Clayton to suit his purpose. He wanted the tip girls to be seen as dirty and ragged and even in 1865 Clayton had several ways of creating this effect. A photographer could consider pose, clothes, props, backdrops and location as well as lighting, angle and distance.[56] Roland Barthes, the French philosopher and cultural theorist, applied semiotics, the study of signs, to text but he also applied this to 'reading' or 'decoding' photographs. He suggested a photograph had a 'denoted message' which was acquired through the mechanical process of producing the photograph, but also possessed a 'connoted message' which came via cultural aspects which needed to be considered. Thus, to apply Barthes' theory to Clayton's photographs they not only represent a captured moment, but also possess underlying cultural meaning.[57] With this in mind it is possible to decode Clayton's photographs.

In the photographs, the Tredegar tip girls' stance was important as the majority posed in their working clothes and working boots, often carrying props as they waited for the exposure to work. The majority stand face-on to the camera, although several photographs show subjects not directly facing the camera or seated. The majority stand on their own but almost as many are in pairs and groups of three and they often touch each other in some way to provide reassurance. A study of their faces suggests that some of the girls in these groups were probably related. Emyr Morgan in his valuable research for the Blaenau Gwent Access to Heritage Project points out that no names have been attached to the photographs but he has possibly identified two young women.[58] In fig. 5 there is a group of three women who have facial similarities but two of them are so alike that they appear to be identical twins. From the 1861 Census Morgan has identified twins living at 1 Plumbers Row, namely Anne and Mary Morgan, with Elizabeth an older sister standing between them. They were the same age and their occupation was 'unloading iron mine'. If these are the twins in this picture they would have been about 22 years of age in 1865.

The girls' expressions are also important. They have presumably been told not to smile and they stand demure and sometimes look frightened and uncomfortable and lack the confidence of many photographs of pit brow women. One lady in fig. 6 is shown in a particularly confident pose

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55 The painting can be seen at Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery and there is also a copy in Blaenavon Community Museum.

56 Edge, 'Reading Historical Photographs', pp. 62 & 67.

57 *Ibid*. 62, for information about Roland Barthes (1915–1980), French philosopher and author of *Camera Lucida*.

58 Emyr Morgan,The Blaenau Gwent Access to Heritage Project for schools.

Fig. 5: Group of three possibly related women; two might even be twins. Photograph Album of William Clayton, 1865: Ref. 2008.40.9. Image courtesy of The Gallery of Costume, Manchester Art Gallery.

Fig. 6: A confident pose; this woman sits cross-legged smiling at camera. Photograph Album of William Clayton, 1865: Ref. 2008.40.9. Image courtesy of The Gallery of Costume, Manchester Art Gallery.

| Name | Relationship | Status | Age | Occupation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| David Morgan | Head of household | Married | 55 | Iron Miner |
| Mary Morgan | Wife | Married | 48 | |
| Elisabeth Morgan | Daughter | Unmarried | 23 | Unloading iron mine |
| Mary Morgan | As above | As above | 18 | As above |
| Anne Morgan | As above | As above | 18 | As above |
| Caroline Morgan | As above | As Above | 6 | Scholar |

Table 2: 1861 Census, 1 Plumbers Row, Tredegar, Bedwellty Parish, District 13

which could even be said to be provocative and she appears three times in the database, but two of them are the same photograph. She smiles at the camera and is sitting cross-legged, showing off her thick striped stockings. There is also another photograph of the same subject but it is a different 'take' and is of poor quality. Nevertheless, it is important as it shows the soles of her hobnailed boots which

were regarded as a masculine signifier.[59] For the purpose of social improvement her provocative pose endorses the view of many people that female work was associated with immorality. However, she represents only a small percentage of the sample of tip girls in the online photographic database and she also appears to be one of the older ladies.

The girls' working clothes make a statement and were important to Clayton because this was what made them appear masculine. Arthur J. Munby's archive, held by the Wren Library at Cambridge University, provides a wealth of information about working girls as he collected early mass-produced photographic images of them in England and Wales and campaigned for the right of tip and pit brow women to continue their work.[60] Two pictures in Munby's archive are of Jane Brown, one in her working clothes with a spade and another in her Sunday best with books. These photographs prove that femininity can change in different 'historical environments, contexts and locations'.[61] Fig. 2 is the only photograph in the album of Lancashire pit brow girls and they were wearing trousers. The wearing of trousers became the norm in Wigan but in south Wales girls usually wore skirts. However, there is evidence that trousers were worn at Abernant Colliery in Aberdare.[62] Certainly it was the trousers worn by these women that caused most comment. But even though the south Wales tip girls usually wore skirts, their distinctive clothing was recognised as being different from the accepted norm of femininity and attracted criticism. As the photographs reveal, they wore dresses to below the knee with protective aprons, thick stockings and hobnailed boots and scarves and hats to protect their hair. They would undoubtedly have possessed best Sunday clothes and might have preferred to be photographed in them but that was not Clayton's aim. Some girls appear in cleaner clothes which indicate a pride in their working attire but others, particularly in fig. 7, appear abject. In 1874 the *Western Mail* described the clothes of one of the two hundred tip girls working for the Tredegar Iron and Coal Company:

> … the tip girl in her quaint attire - muffled about the head, and tied, bandaged, strapped, and so arranged from her neck down-wards as to defy, so far as possible, the defilement of the hated coal-dust which on mountainous steeps of burning cinders she wheels with methodical gait, and tips with a due display of mechanical knack – skilful and masculine, form a subject exquisitely picturesque …[63]

The use of the word 'masculine' underlines the major objection to their work, but the term 'exquisitely picturesque' focuses on their curiosity value and Peter Lord refers to the Victorian transference of interest from descriptions of people studied by anthropologists to an emphasis on what he terms 'working class exotica'.[64] The book accompanying Deller's exhibition entitled, *All that Is Solid Melts into Air*, 2013, has a picture of a Tredegar Patch girl on the front cover together with the comment, 'The example of Victorian anthropology shows a new tribe in the making of the industrial worker.'

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[59] This photograph of the tip lady in fig.6 is of poor quality but endorses the comment above in *The Bristol Mercury*, 29 April 1865, concerning boots 'that would pull the legs off some of the ploughmen in the Middle Counties'. See fn. 42.

[60] A. J. Munby's MSS are held by Trinity College Cambridge and includes diaries, letters, photographs and drawings. His interest in working women led to his secret marriage to Hannah Cullwick, a maid-servant. See also Edge, *The Extraordinary Archive of Arthur J. Munby*, London 2018.

[61] Edge, 'Reading Historical Photographs', p. 71.

[62] Ibid. pp.183–84; Angela V. John's book records that in 1980 there were photographs in Aberdare Library. However it has not been possible to trace the photograph.

[63] *Western Mail,* 27 April 1874.

[64] Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales, Industrial Society*, p. 152.

Not all the girls were dressed in exactly the same way and in Clayton's pictures one can see that sub-groups had emerged and their social cohesion was represented in their choice of clothing. Facial similarity and similarity of clothing suggest family groups but in other instances there are friendship groups members of which have influenced each other in their choice of clothing. Several photographs show tip girls wearing shawls or similar forms of head dress. Some of the shawls are in such good condition as to suggest they were worn especially for the photograph. One aspect of the girls' attire that deserves comment is their hats, although not all the girls are shown wearing them. They probably served several functions. They were a help when carrying raw materials on their heads which was the usual method of carrying loads.[65] The hat also helped hold the scarf in place which protected their hair and necks from the dirt and grime. However, the hats also served a non-functional purpose as the girls decorated their hats with feathers, beads and ribbons and this allowed them to achieve a level of individuality and femininity in a working situation that defeminised them. [See fig. 1]

Fig. 7: The threadbare clothes of this girl make her appear particularly abject. Photograph Album of William Clayton, 1865: Ref. 2008.40.9. Image courtesy of The Gallery of Costume, Manchester Art Gallery.

Backdrops and locations are other factors that need to be studied when 'reading' a photograph. Many of the photographs were taken in Clayton's studio and in some photographs one can see the drapes that he used for his fee-paying clientele. However, he was not according the girls the same treatment as he reused plates and sometimes it is possible to see the 'ghosts' of middle class clients on the photograph behind the girls. The large skirting boards are evident in many photographs and made the girls seem smaller and more vulnerable. [See fig.1.] Other photographs are taken outside and Gail Baylis suggests that some were taken 'either within the ironworks or against its outer façade'.[66] However, careful study of the photographs suggests they were most probably taken in Clayton's yard where similarities of wooden fencing and piles of stone can be seen, which created the illusion of a working environment. [See figs. 3, 6 & 8.]

Clayton included an abundance of props to emphasize the arduous nature of the girls' work. Several photographs include girls with the double-sided pick that was used for removing iron ore from the Tredegar patches and also for breaking limestone needed as a flux in the blast furnaces. There are several girls with hammers used for breaking up iron ore. Only two photographs online include a spade. A question occurs as to whether Clayton increased the size of some of their

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65 Hutchings, 'T. H. Thomas's Oil Painting', pp. 72–3.

66 Baylis, *Visual cruising in South Wales in the 1860s*, p. 14.

Fig. 8: Clayton sought to emphasize the arduous nature of the girls' work. Here two subjects are overloaded with props. Photograph Album of William Clayton, 1865: Ref. 2008.40.9. Image courtesy of The Gallery of Costume, Manchester Art Gallery.

tools and equipment as a means of emphasizing the arduous nature of the work. If one accepts that the photograph's location was his studio or yard, he would have provided the tools as the workers would not have taken them home. One photograph in particular, fig.8, shows girls overloaded with props to the extent that the picture loses its air of authenticity.[67] It shows two girls carrying loads on their heads. One is carrying a box and the other a can. The can could have carried oil used by the 'Drammer Girl' who oiled the tracks on the 'dram' or 'tram' roads; the box seems to have a white substance falling from it, possibly representing limestone. However, the most usual prop held by the girls was the food and water can which they carried to and from work and this further suggests that the girls' photographs were taken in his studio or yard before or after their shifts had finished.

***Changes in the law post-1865***

Before the 1872 Mines Act, women could work up to twelve hours a shift and sometimes more. Also, the girls were expected to work at night and the objection to night work was based on the middle class Victorian view of possible immorality as they worked alongside men. When Parliament was debating amendments to the 1872 Bill, various views concerning the abolition of female work were discussed. Mr Assheton Cross, MP for south-west Lancashire, pointed out that 'The evidence of the Inspectors of Mines was, that it would be a great hardship to these women to prevent their labouring' and added 'that they were as moral a sort of women as any in the kingdom, and that the work was free from indecency'. Conversely J. Mundella, MP for Sheffield, a hosiery manufacturer stated, 'this employment of women was degrading and disgraceful to the nation'. He referred to females dressed like men, smoking pipes, drinking in public houses and fighting in the streets. Mundella's comments were typical of people who confused the pit girls clothes and dirt with morality. However, Richard Fothergill, the MP for Merthyr protested against the idea that any woman who wore soiled clothes must necessarily be immoral. He ironically suggested that immorality was principally confined to women who wore smart clothes. As he had lived in a mining district all his life, he had no hesitation in saying that the wives and daughters of colliers and miners were as well able to take care of themselves and their honour as any other class of women in the country. It was said that they wore men's clothes, but Fothergill stated that as a matter of propriety their trousers

[67] There are two identical photographs of fig. 8. in the database, one with Clayton's details below and framed in cardboard, presumably for individual sale, and another of the photograph taken from the album.

were lengthened to their ankles, and occasionally they put on a man's coat to protect themselves from the rain.[68]

Age was another factor in the denigration of female labour. In 1865 female workers could be as young as ten years of age, as Table 1 reveals. The four photographs of younger girls in the album show them with an older relative, as in fig.3. In. 1866, the 'Report on the Employment of Women and Children in the Iron Works of South Wales' [Table 3], reveals that at the Dowlais Iron Works the majority of the female workers working on the surface at collieries and mines were in their late teens and early twenties. Furthermore, only fifteen girls were between ten and thirteen years of age in collieries while there were none at iron mines and limestone quarries.[69] Interestingly forty-one girls in this age group were employed on forges and mills and furnaces which was dangerous work but did not receive public condemnation.[70] Similar aspects of female work would have existed in the Tredegar ironworks but Clayton's photographs only display tip girls. Michael Hiley's study of Victorian working women gives many graphic examples of nineteenth-century women whose working situations needed to be addressed.[71] The reason for society's emphasis on tip girls was connected to their distinctive clothing, their visibility in the landscape and because, as Table 3 shows, they were a large employment group and so were a threat to male workers in a volatile industry.

| **Places of work** | **10–13 Boys** | **10–13 Girls** | **14–18 Boys** | **14–18 Girls** | **Over 18 Men** | **Over 18 Women** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Forges and Mills[72] | 92 | 25 | 258 | 76 | 1664 | 82 |
| Furnaces | 13 | 16 | 32 | 59 | 573 | 15 |
| Collieries | 237 | 15 | 358 | 34 | 1342 | 37 |
| Mine Works & Limestone Quarries | 96 | 0 | 122 | 41 | 1248 | 200 |

Glamorgan Archives, DG/C/5/15a: Extract from Report on the Employment of Women and Children in the Iron Works of South Wales, 1866 compiled by William Menelaus.

Table 3: Number of Persons in the Employ of the Dowlais Iron Company 1st May 1866

The photographs were produced at a time when there was increasing concern about the role the state should play in social reform. Gradually its *laissez faire* principle was being eroded as was evidenced by the laws passed to improve working conditions in various industries. The accident reports indicate that underground working was dangerous, especially in pits with high levels of gas as at Tredegar, but accidents also occurred on the surface. A survey of 114 deaths between 1852 and 1890 showed that 30 per cent were caused by falling down pit-shafts and 34 per cent were caused by moving wagons.[73] Separating the rubbish that came from the mine shaft into drams or wagons

[68] Hansard: PART I. *HC Deb 21 June 1872 vol 212 cc29-46* 29: Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children. Clause 4 (Employment of women and children in mines). https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1872/jun/21/part-i#S3V0212P0_18720621_HOC_68 (accessed 6/03/2020).

[69] The number of boys is greater as in 1866 as the numbers include underground workers from the age of 10.

[70] Glamorgan Archives, DG/C/5/15a. Report on the Employment of Women and Children in the Iron Works of South Wales, Number of persons employed in the Dowlais Iron company, 1 May 1866, containing details of the number of persons in the employ of the Dowlais Iron Co.; 15 were aged 10–13, 34 aged 14–18 and 37 over 18. On the forges and mills there were 41 aged 10–13, 135 aged 14–18 and 205 aged over 18.

[71] Michael Hiley, *Victorian Working Women*, London, 1979.

[72] These numbers were obtained by combining the number of workers from two separate areas of work listed in the Dowlais Iron Company return, the 'Old Works' and the 'Ifor Works'.

[73] John, *By the Sweat of their Brow*, pp. 166–74.

was especially dangerous and girls could be pulled back down the shaft if a wagon broke free. The death of Hannah Rees aged seventeen working for the Tredegar Iron and Coal Company illustrated the danger of working near the pit shaft. She mounted the cage to collect the loading drams coming up from the pit bottom and fell down the shaft.[74] The oil cans in some of the photographs were for oiling the dram roads which carried the wagons from the pit shaft. The movement of wagons was always hazardous and in 1865 there was considerable publicity over the death of Ellen Hampson aged twelve who was crushed moving a wagon at Moss House Colliery in Lancashire on her first day of work.[75] At Ty Trist colliery in Tredegar, Elizabeth Prothero was killed when cleaning the sidings and was crushed by shunted wagons.[76] The skirts worn by most south Wales tip girls were another hazard and the tip girls who wore trousers were safer.[77] In 1858 at Hopewell Colliery at Coleford in the Forest of Dean, Margaret Atkins a sixteen year old 'banker', who loaded and unloaded wagons into the cage at the Pit mouth, was crushed to death when her skirt caught in the landing machinery.[78] Another area of safety difficult to explore is work and pregnancy in nineteenth-century Britain. Many of the workers in Clayton's photographs might be pregnant and certainly one lady rests her hand on a noticeable bulge in her stomach.[79]

It was the 1872 Mines Act which brought major change. The act abolished night working by prohibiting female work between 9pm. and 5am. Hours of work were reduced and the act also prevented work on a Saturday afternoon or on a Sunday.[80] This was not always welcome to the girls because of their monetary loss. Changes in education law also played a part in changing the tip girls' working conditions. In the 1861 Census many children under ten are referred to as scholars, probably attending British or National schools. The 1870 Education Act set up school boards but education was not made compulsory for all children.[81] In 1880 the Elementary Education Act (Mundella's Act) made every district in England and Wales pass bye-laws regulating school attendance. School was compulsory from the age of five to ten and those under fourteen could only work if they had certificates proving educational proficiency, or past attendance.[82] However there were loopholes and children who lived more than two miles distant from a public elementary school were exempt. Furthermore, the employment of children out of school hours was not forbidden and conditions of exemption and judgements of educational proficiency varied between districts.[83]

The number of female surface workers was gradually declining and in 1880 there were 3,000 fewer female workers than there had been ten years previously.[84] The reasons for this reduction were the changes taking place in the iron industry. Since 1874 there had been a reduction in demand for wrought iron rails and as the iron and coal industries were interdependent, the coal industry suffered as well. Iron mines closed and workers lost their jobs or were placed on half time and experienced a reduction in their wages. The slump came at a time when productivity was rising

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74 *Ibid*. p.167.
75 *Ibid*. pp.170–71.
76 *Ibid*. p.169.
77 *Ibid*. pp.183–84 for girls wearing trousers in Abernant Colliery..
78 *Ibid*. pp. 173–174.
79 She cannot be identified by a number on the database but is placed after fig. 1 on the database.
80 John, *By the Sweat of their Brow,* p. 91.
81 The Act set up locally-elected bodies which drew funding from the local rates.
82 John, *By the Sweat of their Brow,* p. 76.
83 *Ibid*. p. 76.
84 *Ibid*. p.136.

in Germany and the USA.[85] In 1878 a serious famine developed in south Wales.[86] In 1884–7 there was a prolonged cyclical depression with a severe winter in 1885–6.[87] Although the first miners, Thomas Burt and Alexander MacDonald were returned to Parliament in 1874, they both proved to be exclusionists.[88] For many, the exclusion of female labour was self-interest rather than Victorian ideals of motherhood. Miners and colliers were in favour of abolition as a means of maintaining men's jobs in a depressed industry but conversely employers valued women as a cheaper supply of labour.[89] Furthermore a prevailing attitude expressed by men was that 'almost all women look forward in their youth to marriage and motherhood as a career' whereas for men it was 'their life work' and so their role was regarded as needing to take precedence.[90]

So what were the views of the working girls whom Clayton portrayed in their working clothes, looking squat and vulnerable as they stood in front of high skirting boards with tools in their hands? A.J. Munby strongly supported their desire to keep their jobs and campaigned on their behalf. In 1886 a 'Commission on Accidents in Coal Mines and Means for their Prevention' provided further fuel for exclusionists. At Tredegar in April 1886, a large meeting was held to support women's work in an area where the Tredegar Iron and Coal Company employed over 200 women. A meeting was held in Tredegar to condemn the proposed legislation which intended to prohibit the employment of women. At the meeting the following resolution was unanimously carried:

> That this meeting expresses its opinion that the proposed legislation for prohibiting the employment of women about the collieries is impracticable and will inflict grievous hardship upon a large number of deserving people who, in the absence of any such employment, would become a burden to the rate payers.[91]

As the century drew to a close, working conditions improved and the hostility to female surface work subsided. The *Western Mail* in 1886 published an article discussing female labour in Wales and emphasised the advantages of pit work over other areas of female employment. The correspondent thought their attire beat that of Eskimo women 'in point of ugliness' but continued,

> … these girls do not seem to consider their lot hard. They enjoy the freedom and independence which it brings them, and look down with an amount of pity … on those unfortunate girls employed in domestic service. After the day's work is over, and on Sundays and holidays, they carry their heads high as duchesses. … However, with all the faults and drawbacks of the position of these girls … their lot is ever so much better than many farmhouse servant girls in some rural districts of Wales. In certain places … the condition of farm girls is often one short remove from that of slavery.[92]

On 31 January 1887 the 'Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment Bill' received its first reading but it was defeated on 6 May 1887.[93] Realising another bill would soon be presented, the defenders of

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85 Kenneth O. Morgan, *The Rebirth of a Nation, A History of Modern Wales,* Oxford 2002, p. 62.
86 *Cambrian News,* 4 January 1878.
87 John, *By the Sweat of their Brow,* 142. See also *South Wales Daily News,* 17 August 1886 for depressions in industry.
88 *Ibid*. pp. 144–5. Exclusionists sought to exclude female labour from working in the mines and collieries.
89 *Ibid*. pp.199–200.
90 *Western Mail,* 7 June 1873.
91 *Western Mail,* 15 April 1886. Note the burden on the rates was the major factor.
92 *Western Mail,* 27 March 1897.
93 John, *By the Sweat of their Brow,* p. 138.

female labour sprang into action. Walter McLaren, MP for Crewe, took up the cause of women's right to work and organised a deputation of Lancashire pit brow workers and took them to London. They visited the Home Office on 17 May, some in their best clothes and some in working clothes. The visit was carefully orchestrated and vocally their input was limited.[94] The eventual Mines Act of 1887 did not remove their right to work, but raised the minimum working age to twelve and prohibited any boy, girl or woman from carrying out the dangerous task of moving wagons.[95] In the early 1900s there were still girls working on the surface of the coalfield aged twelve, spending half their day at school.[96] By 1914 the number of tip girls declined to 6,500, but during the First World War there was a dramatic increase in female labour on the coalfield to replace the men at war.[97]

***Conclusion***

William Clayton's photographs are an important early visual record in the story of female mine workers, because so few photographs of women miners exist in Wales. Created to make a statement about the unsuitability of the work undertaken by female surface workers in the iron industry, the photographs cannot be taken at face value. One must understand the historical and cultural background, the freedom these girls experienced when compared to servant girls and the unrealistic Victorian view of ideal woman-hood which motivated censure. It is also salutary to realise that the right of the tip girls to work was being decided by men, many of whom had a vested interest in mining or were workers who, in a time of economic hardship, regarded female work as a threat to men's livelihoods. In the next century the demands of a home front labour force during World War One did much to prove that women were capable of undertaking work traditionally done by men. The first woman to take her seat in the House of Commons, in 1919, was Nancy Astor, a Viscountess, rather than a working woman. Furthermore women did not have equal voting rights with men until 1928. In the twentieth century women were to continue to fight for the right to work on an equal basis with men and to shake off the idealised cult of motherhood which marginalised sections of female society in the home. The tip girls' wish to remain working can be seen in the light of a fight for equal treatment with men which has culminated in the Equality Act 2010, in which the rights of women to equal treatment are espoused along with the rights of all sections of society.

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94 *Ibid*. pp.145–146.
95 *Ibid*. *pp*. 76, 93 & 158.
96 John, *By the Sweat of their Brow*, p. 76.
97 *Ibid*. p. 227.

# IN SEARCH OF THE 'GAY LIFE': EXPLORATIONS OF PROSTITUTION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY NEWPORT

**By Chris Williams**

This article falls into three parts, each of which has a number of objectives. The first part considers the definitional, historiographical and statistical frameworks for the study of prostitution in the nineteenth century. The second part constitutes an investigation of the phenomenon of prostitution in Newport during the nineteenth century, seen as it was as a problem to be responded to by the town's authorities. Finally the question is tackled from the perspective of the prostitute herself: what evidence exists as to why women entered prostitution, and to what sort of situation was prostitution a rational response?

One might be forgiven for thinking that it is fairly easy to define a prostitute. For a start a prostitute is invariably a woman. Although male prostitution exists and existed historically, the volume of evidence dealing with it in the past is often so small as to render the phenomenon almost invisible. A common sense, contemporary definition would therefore be that prostitution involves a woman selling her body for sexual activity. That is a definition which is present within the meaning of the term in the nineteenth century, but it is not coterminous with 'prostitution'. A brief perusal of the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is sufficient to provide ample evidence that the terms 'prostitute' or 'prostitution' could refer to many other things besides simply the sale of sexual favours.[1]

There a prostitute is defined firstly as 'A woman who is devoted, or usually offers her body to indiscriminate sexual intercourse, especially for hire'. Such a definition contains within it the conventional meaning but it goes well beyond that as well: it can mean a woman who is '*devoted* … to indiscriminate sexual intercourse', or who 'offers her body to indiscriminate sexual intercourse'. And whilst a commercial relationship is *usually* involved, evidently it is not a necessary condition of the term being applied. This broader and evidently moralistic use of the term is even more obvious in the second definition of the term as 'A person given over to infamous practices; an abandoned person'. This carries no mention of any commercial transaction, but, we are told, may include 'a corrupt and venal politician'! If one turns to the term 'whore' a similarly wide-ranging set of meanings may be found: including 'a woman who prostitutes herself for hire' but also 'an unchaste or lewd woman; a fornicatress or adulteress; occasionally applied opprobriously to a concubine or kept mistress'.

It is not only the pages of the *OED* that give evidence of the flexibility of meaning of these terms. Henry Mayhew, that great observer of London street life in the mid-nineteenth century, divided prostitutes into six categories, one of which was kept mistresses.[2] The others were women living together in well-kept lodging houses; women living in low lodging-houses; sailors' and soldiers' women; park women; and thieves' women. Evidently Mayhew's definition of kept mistresses ('those women who are kept by men of independent means') as 'prostitutes' involved the censure not so much of offering sexual favours for commercial hire, but of the practice of sexual liaisons

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1 Although the *OED* was only published whole for the first time in 1928, the release of the letter 'P' took place in 1909, while that of 'W' was delayed until the first complete edition. The first edition of the *Shorter* abridgement was 1933. The edition used here is the third, published in 1944.

2 Mayhew, Henry, *London Labour and the London Poor: Selections made and introduced by Victor Neuberg* (Penguin, London, 1985) 476.

outside marriage. This is clear evidence of the instability of meaning attached to this term prostitute, supporting Michel Foucault's contention that:

> Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct …[3]

Far from being confined to those who sold sexual favours, in the nineteenth century the term 'prostitute' could apply to a wide variety of women: streetwalkers, promiscuous women and mistresses as already mentioned, but even unmarried mothers and rape victims could find themselves so labelled.[4] As Barbara Littlewood and Linda Mahood have noted:

> Young women who dressed and behaved immodestly … mill girls, socialists, and young women who had no visible means of support, were all liable to be accused of prostitution by one commentator or another.[5]

As Mahood argues elsewhere, the 'prostitute' was a frequently contested category, whose boundaries were continually being redefined. For Mahood, the prostitute is not a valid observational or subject category with numbers to be counted, characteristics investigated and history documented but is instead a censorious label:

> … the term 'prostitute' has been conceptually defined as a censure applied to women whose dress, behaviour, physical appearance or vocation caused them to be labelled as 'prostitutes' within the framework of the discourse, as defined by middle-class observers. The term 'prostitute' appears in quotation marks throughout the book in formal recognition of the fact that it is a label and not an objective form of human behaviour.[6]

The term 'prostitute' was applied to many women who would not fit into our contemporary definition of someone who sells sex. If nineteenth-century womanhood was represented by the 'Angel in the House', the sexually-docile middle-class wife and mother who busied herself solely in the private sphere then the 'prostitute' was indeed the 'Other': at one end of the spectrum a woman whose sexually-voracious nature challenged moral propriety, at the other an unfortunate 'fallen woman' whose sexual misdemeanours were publicly-visible and thereby subject to moral scrutiny. Far from being a marginal, shadowy outcast figure in the urban landscape, the female prostitute stood at the crossroads of many of the most powerful debates in Victorian Britain: held to represent degraded womanhood she also signified both women's oppression and women's determination to challenge the forces that ground them down. Debates about respectability and civility, order and disorder often took the prostitute as the starting-point for their arguments, and charitable, temperance and religious

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3 Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality*, *Volume I: The Will to Knowledge* (Penguin, London, 1998) 105.

4 For example, 18-year-old Catherine Jones of Pillgwenlly, Newport, was raped on 18 December 1844 by three men. The defence argued that Jones was a prostitute who worked in Cardiff and who had agreed to having sex with the men for threepence each. The prosecution contended that she was 'very well conducted, and industrious' and the prisoners were committed for trial at the next assizes. *M[onmouthshire] M[erlin]*, 28 Dec. 1844.

5 Littlewood, Barbara and Mahood, Linda, 'Prostitutes, Magdalenes and wayward girls: dangerous sexualities of working class women in Victorian Scotland', *Gender and History,* III (1991), 160–75: 162.

6 Mahood, Linda, *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* (Routledge, London, 1990) 13.

organisations frequently had to confront the difficult problem of prostitution in deciding how best to meet the challenges posed by what was an increasingly capitalistic, urban and secular society. Prostitutes both defined and confounded gender stereotypes. Whatever the precise circumstances, as Clive Emsley writes, 'the prostitute was the total negation of the ideal of womanhood in the Victorian period'.[7]

There is another side to this definitional problem, which is that there were probably many women whose practice of prostitution (defined as the sale of sexual favours) may have remained invisible to the historian. This is most clearly evident when one looks at the criminalisation of prostitution. Prostitution was not a criminal offence although solicitation and living off immoral earnings were. As solicitation was often difficult to prove, when the police wanted to crack down on streetwalking they often had to resort to prosecution under alternative headings such as drunk, disorderly or indecent behaviour, loitering or vagrancy. By reading accounts of court cases (in newspapers or elsewhere) with care it may be possible to identify the practice of prostitution, but it is difficult to know to what extent fluctuations in the prosecution and conviction of prostitutes actually reflect changing policing and legal strategies as much as any changing incidence of prostitution itself. As Lucia Zedner explains in her *Women, Crime and Custody in Victorian England*, the fall in the percentage of women being prosecuted who were prostitutes from 28 per cent in 1857 to 12 per cent in 1890 may reflect the introduction of a new criminal heading of 'habitual drunkard' to which prostitutes may then have been ascribed. Conversely, as Zedner suggests, it is possible that Victorian moralism had previously incorrectly identified drunkards as prostitutes.[8]

Evidently in attempting to address the subject of prostitution we are entering a discursive maze, a historical hall of mirrors in which evidence and source material is distorted and contorted in manifold ways. Rather than despairing at what might appear to be the inherent 'unknowability' of the subject, we can also rejoice in the opportunities it affords us for understanding much more about Victorian society. Michel Foucault has offered not only the revelation that sexuality is a historical construct, but also the insight that the modern age has witnessed a veritable explosion of discourses on the subject of sex. In *The Will to Knowledge* he contends that far from Victorian society refusing to speak about sex, 'it put into operation an entire machinery for producing true discourses concerning it'.[9] In studying those discourses we may understand not only the subject itself, but also the nature of the power relations which operated on sexuality, and thus on the lives of all Victorians.

This deconstructionist perspective on prostitution can be distinguished from two other theoretical perspectives which have influenced the development of the historiography.[10] The 'double-standard' model has strong links to Freudian theory. It suggests that the Victorian ideal of pre-marital chastity for courting couples forced men to resort to prostitutes so as to satisfy their 'natural' urges, and that even after marriage the sexually-passive nature of Victorian wifedom forced men to continue using prostitutes so as to ensure complete sexual gratification. Thus a 'double-

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7 Emsley, Clive, *Crime and Society in England, 1750–1900* (Longman, London, 1996) 153.

8 Zedner, Lucia, *Women, Crime and Custody in Victorian England* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991) 22.

9 Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, p. 69.

10 For which see Mahood, *Magdalenes,* 10–12; Levine, Philippa, 'Rough usage: prostitution, law and the social historian', in Wilson, Adrian (ed.), *Rethinking Social History: English Society 1570–1920 and its Interpretation* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1993); Zedner, *Women, Crime and Custody*; Finnegan, Frances, *Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York* (C[ambridge] U[niversity] P[ress], Cambridge, 1979); Walkowitz, Judith R., *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (CUP, Cambridge, 1982); eadem, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Virago, London, 1992).

| | On Indictment | Summarily | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1857 | 22 | 132 | 154 |
| 1858 | 16 | 134 | 150 |
| 1859 | 21 | 107 | 128 |
| 1860 | 12 | 120 | 132 |
| 1861 | 6 | 108 | 114 |
| 1862 | 11 | 80 | 91 |
| 1863 | 10 | 71 | 81 |
| 1864 | 8 | 72 | 80 |
| 1865 | 8 | 53 | 61 |
| 1866 | 4 | 105 | 109 |
| 1867 | 3 | 94 | 97 |
| 1868 | 0 | 88 | 88 |
| 1869 | 9 | 84 | 93 |
| 1870 | 7 | 83 | 90 |
| 1871 | 3 | 72 | 75 |
| 1872 | 23 | 114 | 137 |
| 1873 | 6 | 67 | 73 |
| 1874 | 5 | 67 | 72 |
| 1875 | 1 | 77 | 78 |
| 1876 | 2 | 81 | 83 |
| 1877 | 3 | 92 | 95 |
| 1878 | 12 | 107 | 119 |
| 1879 | 2 | 100 | 102 |
| 1880 | 4 | 141 | 145 |
| 1881 | 2 | 149 | 151 |
| 1882 | 6 | 117 | 123 |
| 1883 | 2 | 112 | 114 |
| 1884 | 1 | 83 | 84 |
| 1885 | 1 | 85 | 86 |
| 1886 | 4 | 73 | 77 |
| 1887 | 0 | 76 | 76 |
| 1888 | 2 | 77 | 79 |
| 1889 | 0 | 80 | 80 |
| 1890 | 0 | 77 | 77 |
| 1891 | 0 | 63 | 63 |
| 1892 | 1 | 54 | 55 |

SOURCE: *Parliamentary Papers* Command Nos. 2246 (1857), 2407 (1857-58), 2508 (1859), 2692 (1860), 2860 (1861), 3025 (1862), 3181 (1863), 3370 (1864), 3534 (1865), 3726 (1866), 3919 (1867), 4062 (1867-68), 4196 (1868-69), C.195 (1870), C.442 (1871), C.600 (1872), C.871 (1873), C.1055 (1874), C.1315 (1875), C.1595 (1876), C.1871 (1877), C.2154 (1878), C.2418 (1878-79), C.2726 (1880), C.3088 (1881), C.3333 (1882), C.3763 (1883), C.4170 (1884), C.4518 (1884-85), C.4808 (1886), C.5155 (1887), C.5553 (1888), C.5882 (1889), C.6164 (1890), C.6443 (1890-91), C.6734 (1892).

Table 1: Prostitutes Proceeded Against, Newport Borough, 1857–92

standard' operated: wives remained pure and monogamous, husbands enjoyed sexual freedom and pleasure, at the expense of course of an army of non-virtuous or fallen women. However, although the 'double-standard' model recognises certain realities about nineteenth-century prostitution, it relies on a view of sexual behaviour as rooted in biological or psychological differences, rather than being understood as a social construct.

The second paradigm focuses on the oppression of women. It is argued that prostitution was a working-class trade with working-class customers, and women were exploited and oppressed by all classes of men. Women were forced into prostitution by limited economic opportunities and oppressed by gendered constructions of both family and society. Although there is much to commend this perspective, it tends to construct women as victims and denies them agency.

On prostitution in Wales in this period we have fragments rather than a comprehensive study of any kind. David Jones, in his *Crime in Nineteenth-Century Wales*, tells us that according to police and court records there were more than 1,600 prostitutes in Wales in 1860, and that although there were pockets of prostitution in Holyhead, Caernarfon, Carmarthen and Haverfordwest, nearly a thousand of this total could be found in Cardiff, Swansea, Merthyr and Newport.

> Most of these were young females in their late teens and early twenties, with Irish, Welsh and English surnames – in that order – and about a third of them were recent arrivals in the district.[11]

Jones provides us with evidence of campaigns against prostitution in Cardiff and Newport from the 1860s to the 1880s, and elsewhere both he and Alan Bainbridge on the one hand, and Keith Strange on the other, have studied in some depth the close association between prostitution and crime in the 'China' district of Merthyr Tydfil in the 1840s.[12] Many scholars have utilised the journal of an Anglican 'Scripture Reader' in Merthyr in 1860, held in the National Library of Wales, this being a gentleman whose main work, it seems, was devoted to trying to 'rescue' a later generation of 'Chinese' prostitutes (most of whom were actually Welsh).[13] Ryland Wallace in his book *Organise! Organise! Organise!* devotes a valuable sub-section to the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts in Wales in the 1870s, and Russell Davies in his *Secret Sins* argues that prostitution was a rural as well as an urban phenomenon in Carmarthenshire.[14] In his more recent social history of Wales, Davies provides a brief Rabelaisian account of 'these glandular women, hard-boiled and loaded with sin' and of brothel owners – 'entrepreneurs of vice, who controlled their vicious empires with a savage severity'.[15] And Lesley Hulonce has conducted an impressive investigation of approaches to

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[11] Jones, D. J. V., *Crime in Nineteenth-Century Wales* (U[niversity of] W[ales] P[ress], Cardiff, 1992), 196.

[12] Jones, D. J. V. and Bainbridge, Alan, 'The "conquering of China": crime in an industrial community, 1842–64', *Llafur*, 2, 4 (1979), pp. 7–37; Strange, Keith, 'In search of the celestial empire', *Llafur*, III (1980) 44–86.

[13] The original is National Library of Wales MS 4943B: *Merthyr Tydfil in 1860: journal with observations on the social life and conditions of the town*. 'China' was the name applied to the Pontystorehouse area of the town.

[14] Wallace, Ryland, *Organise! Organise! Organise! A Study of Reform Agitations in Wales, 1840–1886* (UWP, Cardiff) 170–83; Davies, Russell, *Secret Sins: Sex, Violence and Society and Carmarthenshire 1870–1920*, (UWP, Cardiff, 1996) 162.

[15] Davies, Russell, *Hope and Heartbreak: A Social History of Wales and the Welsh, 1776–1871* (UWP, Cardiff, 2005) 300, 303. In the follow-up volume, *Sex, Sects and Society: 'Pain and Pleasure': A Social History of Wales and the Welsh, 1870–1945* (UWP, Cardiff, 2018) the hyperbole is unrestrained.

prostitution in Swansea.[16] Beyond this there is relatively little scholarship and there is considerable scope for further research on this topic in local context. It is a subject that always has the capacity to surprise: David Jones found evidence of Italian brothel owners in Cardiff, casting new light on the image of the Bracchi shops if nothing else, and The National Archives hosts a police report on prostitution in Cardiff in 1908 which drew attention to the large number of 'foreign Jewish prostitutes' in the City.[17]

As for prostitution in Newport, the main source is the newspaper press: good for reports of police court dealings and more serious trials, and good for relaying (or even precipitating) 'moral panics' and for publishing verbatim accounts of various public meetings on the subject. But the press presents us overwhelmingly with the respectable face of the town: it tells us more what the opinion formers thought of prostitution than it tells us of prostitution itself. Only once is the seemingly authentic 'voice' of a prostitute represented, when the *Star of Gwent* published a letter in 1872 by someone who signed themselves 'An Unfortunate'.[18] Prostitution appears as a subject in the press only when the press decides to notice it, and such reports as are published are often hedged about with euphemistic language that demands decoding: prostitutes are 'nymphs of the pave', inhabitants of the 'Isle of Cyprus', 'women of the town', or 'women of questionable character'.[19] What exactly is being identified by such terms may fall outside any agreed contemporary definition of prostitution and one has to be very careful in evaluating this sort of evidence.

A supplementary source are criminal statistics, collected for Newport Borough regularly from 1857 onwards.[20] These allow one to measure the rate at which prostitutes were prosecuted during the second half of the century, but rates of prosecution are not necessarily a reliable indicator of the incidence of a crime, as they are subject to other pressures including policing resources, changes in the law and the application of the law, and the incidence of 'moral panics' which highlight certain crimes at the expense of others.[21] It is therefore no easy task, for instance, to interpret the statistics contained in Table 1. Whilst it seems likely that crime was actually falling from an earlier peak by the time criminal statistics begin to be collected, it is difficult to know how to respond to various surges in prosecutions under this heading in (for instance) 1866, 1872 and at the end of the 1870s. It is certainly unsafe to regard the fluctuating level of prosecutions as in some way a reliable gauge of the fluctuating level of prostitution.

Other criminal statistics are even less satisfactory than the rates of prosecution. Between 1858 and 1873 the Newport Constabulary reported on the number of 'known brothels in the town', the number of 'licensed inns and beershops where prostitutes resort', and the numbers of prostitutes who resided in brothels and beershops (Table 2). For the period 1858 to 1867 prostitutes were also broken down into those below the age of sixteen (the age of consent was, at this point, twelve) and those above. The percentage of prostitutes under the age of sixteen fell from 14 per cent in

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16 Hulonce, Lesley, ' "A Social Frankenstein": Inciting Interpretations of Prostitution in Late Nineteenth-Century Swansea', *Llafur: Journal of Welsh People's History*, 9 (2007), 47–60.

17 Jones, *Crime in Nineteenth-Century Wales*, 197; The National Archives, HO10354/149817, 'Report on Prostitution in Cardiff, 1908'.

18 *S[tar of] G[went]*, 30 Nov. 1872. See Appendix for the full text of this letter.

19 For such usages see, for example, *MM*, 14 March 1840, 9 March 1844; 4 July 1855.

20 For a more sustained discussion of the potential of criminal statistics in the context of Victorian Newport, see Chris Williams, 'Crime and Social Order in Victorian Newport', *Gwent Local History*, 127 (2019), 13–32.

21 Gattrell, V. A. C. and Hadden, T. B., 'Criminal statistics and their interpretation', in Wrigley, E. A. (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data* (CUP, London, 1972).

| | Known Brothels | Licensed Inns & Beershops where Prostitutes Resort | Prostitutes residing in brothels | Prostitutes residing in beershops | Total Prostitutes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1858 | 55 | 38 | 282 | 87 | 369 |
| 1859 | 59 | 25 | 249 | 38 | 287 |
| 1860 | 72 | 34 | 279 | 46 | 325 |
| 1861 | 57 | 49 | 210 | 45 | 255 |
| 1862 | 57 | 29 | 196 | 37 | 233 |
| 1863 | 52 | 38 | 193 | 42 | 235 |
| 1864 | 56 | 13 | 209 | 24 | 233 |
| 1865 | 53 | 10 | 187 | 19 | 206 |
| 1866 | 54 | 13 | 165 | 9 | 174 |
| 1867 | 46 | 26 | 172 | 9 | 181 |
| 1868 | 48 | 23 | 151 | 7 | 158 |
| 1869 | 42 | 16 | 123 | 0 | 123 |
| 1870 | 36 | 10 | 125 | 0 | 125 |
| 1871 | 39 | 16 | 142 | 0 | 142 |
| 1872 | 36 | 16 | 155 | 0 | 155 |
| 1873 | 34 | 12 | 131 | 0 | 131 |

Sources: *SG*, 26 Oct. 1861, 11 Oct. 1862, 10 Oct. 1863, 21 Oct. 1865, 20 Oct. 1866, 17 Oct. 1868, 16 Sept. 1869, 12 Oct. 1872, 25 Oct. 1873; *Parliamentary Papers* 1858-73 as for Table 1.

Table 2: Known Brothels and Prostitutes, Newport Borough, 1858-73

1858 to about 6 per cent a decade later.[22] It was estimated in 1855 that a twentieth of Newport's female population were engaged in prostitution (this would have amounted to a total of around five hundred) and that there were more prostitutes per capita in Newport than in any other 'English' town.[23] Although this may well have been an exaggeration, and although the percentage of prostitutes amongst Newport's female population almost certainly fell consistently throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, it remains the case that prostitution was a pervasive feature of urban life in the Monmouthshire town.

It is possible to map the location of brothels that were named in various court proceedings and police reports and show just how widely scattered they were. Map 1 shows that there was no single concentration. The most notorious area for 'houses of ill-fame' was Friars' Fields, but others were mentioned as being in existence on Marshes Road, in Corn Street, on North Street in Baneswell, on Canal Parade, Tredegar Street and Ruperra Street, Dolphin Street, Quiet Woman's Row, Waters' Lane, Bishopsgate Parade, Lewis Street and Merchant Street, immediately behind the Town Hall. The road from the bridge towards Maindee and Caerleon was held to be paraded by 'unfortunate and debased women'.[24] Barrack Hill was also a favourite area for prostitutes. In 1873 Lieutenant-Colonel

[22] According to the Scripture Reader there had been prostitutes in Merthyr as young as ten and as old as eighty.

[23] *MM*, 1 Aug. 1855. The claim was made by the chaplain of Usk Gaol.

[24] *SG*, 7 March 1863.

L'Estrange, Commanding officer of the Royal Artillery stationed at the Barracks complained that it was 'infested' with 'a large number of the worst description of prostitutes' who gathered opposite the residences of the married soldiers. It seems that they waited on a 'heap of manure' just outside the barracks for their clients, and when bored, threw bricks and other missiles over the wall into the barracks.[25] Brothels were not therefore confined to just one area of the town, despite suggestions from time to time that they could be drawn into one quarter and a 'kind of cordon' be placed around it.[26]

The visibility of both prostitutes and brothels highlights a number of interesting compromises that Victorian officialdom was prepared to make. On the whole the Victorian police believed that prostitution was inevitable and unavoidable: there was little point in attempting to eradicate it and the best approach was to attempt to regulate and control it. As a police sergeant told Mayhew 'people of all classes must have recreation'.[27] For the surgeon William Acton, author of the major nineteenth-century work *Prostitution, considered in its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects, in London and other Large Cities and Garrison Towns, with Proposals for the Control and Prevention of its Attendant Evils*, prostitution was an organic part of society and efforts to repress it would inevitably end in failure.[28] In Newport many took a similar line. Thus the *Monmouthshire Merlin* argued in 1850 that prostitution could not be legislated against and that its cure could come only through 'the increased prevalence of moral and religious principles'.[29] An 1847 debate about action against brothels in the Town Council elucidated the view that 'no sooner was one put down in one quarter, than up sprung another in another quarter'.[30]

One of the great test cases for public approaches to prostitution came with the introduction of the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869. Britain's poor military performance during the Crimean War had caused considerable soul-searching on the part of the military establishment, and one remedy that was being proffered by the beginning of the 1860s was the eradication of venereal disease amongst the regular soldiery. The Acts were applied to garrison towns and naval ports such as Portsmouth, Plymouth, Woolwich, Chatham, Aldershot, Colchester and Southampton and under the Acts police were given powers to arrest those suspected of being 'common prostitutes', order them to undergo an internal examination at a certified or 'lock' hospital, and if found diseased, detain them there for treatment and cure.[31] The Contagious Diseases Acts aroused opposition amongst moral reformers in part because they allegedly sanctioned the existence of prostitution. For some this was sinful in itself. For others the Acts were examples of legislation aimed against women by men.

In Newport the Contagious Diseases Acts were never applied, but they nevertheless aroused interest. The first serious discussion of them came at a Watch Committee and Board of Health

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25 *SG*, 21 June 1873.

26 *SG*, 15 May 1869. The cordon idea was broached in 1868 (*SG*, 17 Oct. 1868).

27 Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, pp. 479–80. The police themselves were far from immune from temptation: in 1862 two constables were found, supposedly on duty, in a brothel 'under circumstances as admitted neither of denial nor excuse' according to *SG*, 15 March 1862.

28 First published in 1858. Marcus, Steven, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1966) 4.

29 *MM*, 9 March 1850. See a similar line in the *SG*, 5 July 1862 ('No legislation can deal with the moral evil').

30 *MM*, 6 Feb. 1847. Borne out by experiences in Cardiff, according to Jones, *Crime in Nineteenth-Century Wales*, 197.

31 Bartley, Paula, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860–1914* (Routledge, London, 2000), 12.

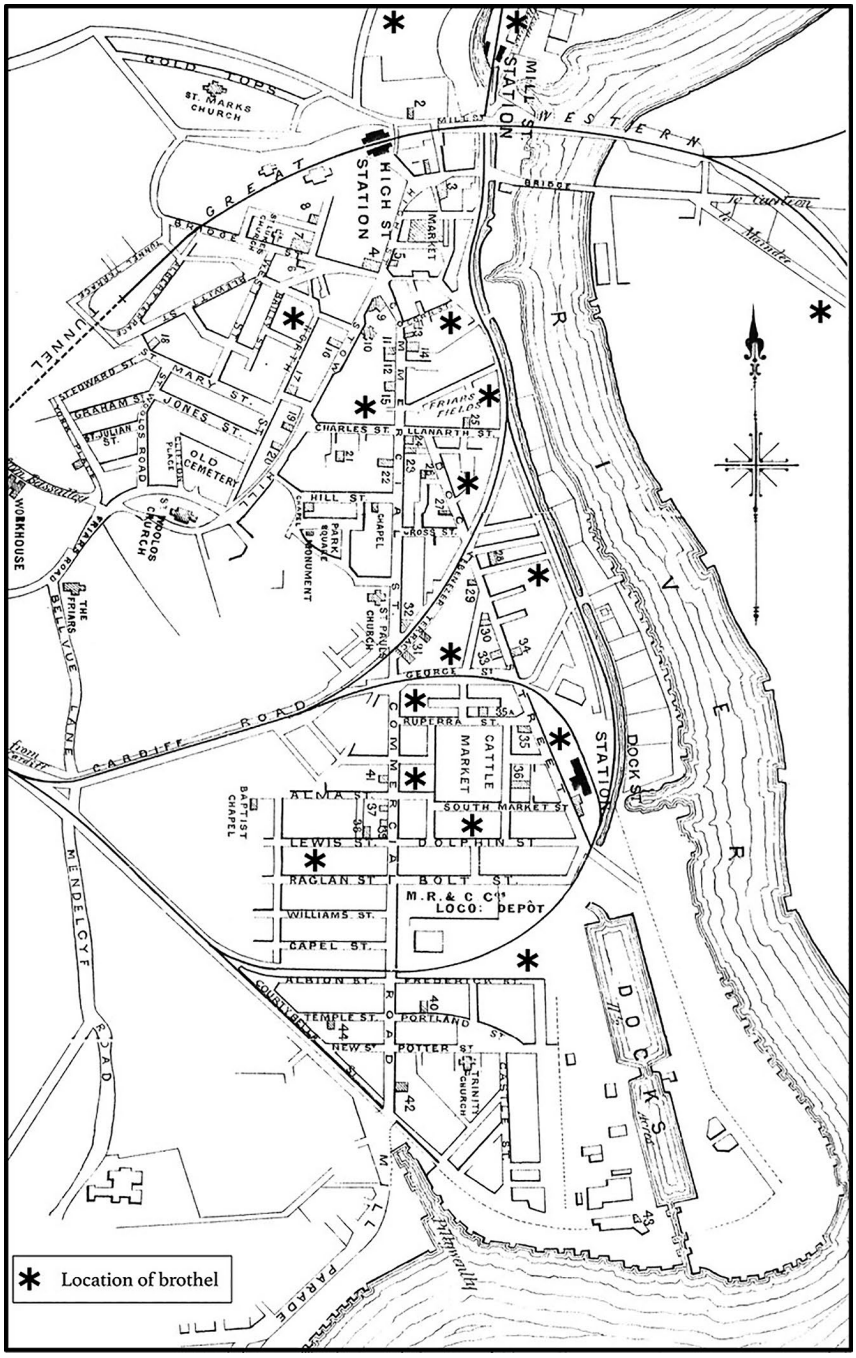


Fig. 1: Location of Known Brothels in Mid-Victorian Newport
Map based on that found in *Mullock's Guide to Newport* (H. Mullock, Newport, 1875). The locations attributed are inevitably approximations, and not all brothels would have been operating simultaneously.

Meeting in October 1872 when Major Stirling of the Royal Artillery complained that eleven out of the twelve of his men currently in hospital were suffering from venereal disease and that this was due to the 'number and condition' of the 'unfortunate girls' of Newport, whom, he felt, represented a great nuisance, *particularly on Sundays*.[32] Following the aforementioned 1873 revelations concerning prostitution in the vicinity of the Barracks the Newport Watch Committee pondered the adoption of the Act but felt that this step was a very grave one. Josephine Butler was outraged at the suggestion that Newport might be the next target for the Acts and a few weeks later attended a meeting held in the Town Hall on the subject, with timber merchant and former town councillor Nelson Hewertson presiding, supported by the Congregationalist minister Henry Oliver. A committee was formed to oppose the Acts. sparking a lively press controversy with allegations that child prostitution and seduction was rife in Newport and that greed and ambition rather than poverty were the true causes of prostitution.[33] Nevertheless, at this time thirteen Newport girls were consigned, apparently voluntarily, to a London hospital, by the Newport police working with the War Office, and occasionally further calls for the application of the Contagious Diseases Acts were heard.

A more common response was to focus on the association between prostitution and criminality. This connection was nowhere more apparent than in the concerns that centred upon Newport's Friars' Fields area in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. By the early 1840s this district was notorious for its 'disgraceful houses', and in the public mind its criminality was inseparable from its identification as one of the worst areas in terms of overcrowding, sewerage, sanitation and poor public health.[34] Even as late as 1859 the *Star of Gwent* claimed that it was responsible for 'five-sixths of the vice and crime of the town', 'the haunt of rogues and thieves, prostitutes and vagabonds, of the vilest and most dissolute description'.[35] In 1843 Mary Ann Jones and Margaret Morris ('the former possessing a rubicund countenance, and a superabundance of fat, and the latter wearing the most shrivelled and unobtrusive apology for a face that could well be imagined'), were charged with being 'drunk and a common nuisance' and received one month's hard labour each. To the *Monmouthshire Merlin* they were typical of:

> The very lowest and most abandoned of Friars' Fields depraved and disgusting females, whose very name is a taint on society, and [who] almost nightly, and even in the broad day, [are] heard cursing and swearing, and using the most obscene language that can offend the ears of delicacy and not unfrequently glorying in pursuing their victims' footsteps with shouts of derision, with blackguard oaths, and the vilest obscenity.[36]

The newspapers contain frequent reports of robberies taking place in the brothels of the district.[37] In July 1846 commercial traveller Jacob Turney was allegedly robbed of £105 in notes. Turney claimed that he had met 'a woman of the town' in Blackwood's (spirits) shop on Skinner Street, and had then returned with her to 'a house of ill fame' in Friars' Fields. At ten o'clock the next morning he sent out for a bottle of porter but it seems to have been drugged, for he then fell asleep for nearly five hours.

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32 *SG*, 12 Oct. 1872.

33 Wallace, *Organise! Organise! Organise!*, 173; *SG*, 2 Nov. 1872, 1 Feb. 1873. Hewertson, who had lost his seat in 1871, was re-elected to the Town Council the following week. The Contagious Diseases Act was repealed in 1886.

34 *MM*, 8 Oct. 1842.

35 *SG*, 13 Aug. 1859.

36 *MM*, 11 Feb. 1843.

37 *MM*, 8 Oct. 1842, 6 Nov. 1847.

When he awoke he had been robbed. The case, against one man and three women (including Harriet Martha Williams also known as 'Welsh Martha' and Elizabeth Rees also known as 'Bet Loshy') was dismissed for lack of evidence.[38] Five years later and 'a poor Welsh tailor, from North Wales' was the unhappy victim. He was found walking in Commercial Street, 'stripped of nearly all his clothes and talking as stupidly and strangely as if he had been drugged'. He too claimed to have been robbed in 'the Fields' but was unable to give any further information that could help the police.[39] The weekly newspaper the *Monmouthshire Merlin*, though happy to report all cases of brothel robberies, was equally blunt that those who were robbed were to blame for their own misfortune.[40]

Friars' Fields was also the home of the notorious Yarwood family that stood at the centre of Newport's 'criminal class'. Jack Yarwood was the head of the family, and his equally formidable wife was Mary, known as 'Mary the Cripple'. Mary's sister was Catherine Edwards (alias 'Long Kit').[41] Mary ran a brothel, and her daughter Ann ('the Young Cripple') was, it seems, one of her prostitutes.[42] Ann made her first public appearance aged sixteen in 1848, sentenced to fourteen days' gaol for 'disorderly conduct' outside the Town Hall. According to the *Merlin* Ann was 'a nymph of the pave, arrayed in the most tawdry finery, and enough about her cheeks and eyes to indicate the kind of life she led'.[43] This was the first of many such court hearings for Ann, who had the misfortune to be in gaol on census night 1851 and thus be one of six women in Newport to have her occupation recorded as 'prostitute'.[44] That year there was a major crackdown on the Yarwoods and a few years later many of the Friars' Fields properties were bought up by the Corporation, but the district continued to be regarded as a 'centre of vice'.[45]

An alternative to chasing brothel robbers was for the authorities to prosecute the owners of beershops or inns that were the 'haunts' of prostitutes, if only because licensing laws provided an opportunity to clamp down on such activities. Thus in 1849 John Cokeley, landlord of the *Hare and Hounds* pub in Commercial Street was fined £5 for allowing 'disorderly persons, prostitutes and others' to assemble in his house (including the aforementioned 'Young Cripple', along with Mary Lester, alias 'Manchester Moll').[46] Eighteen to twenty prostitutes and 'several men of bad character' were similarly found in the *Crown and Anchor* Inn in 1855, although there the landlady Mrs Westlake escaped with a fine of only ten shillings.[47] After the passage of the Beerhouse Licensing Bill in 1869 magistrates had greater powers to refuse licences to premises which provided a base for prostitution, and a number of licences were revoked on such grounds.[48] Edward Harris, landlord of the *Salutation*

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38 *MM*, 25 July 1846.
39 *MM*, 6 June 1851. For other cases see *SG*, 3 June 1853, *MM*, 7 Oct. 1853, 21 June 1856.
40 *MM*, 17 March 1849. See also *MM*, 16 March 1850.
41 Matthews, James, *Historic Newport* (Williams Press, Newport, 1910), 158–9, provides other names: 'The Duchess', 'Nancy Bwlch', 'Ann the Doctor', 'Annie the Sawyer', 'Julia the Slattern', 'Amelia the Smut', 'Mary the Pickaxe'.
42 *MM*, 31 March 1849.
43 *MM*, 22 July 1848.
44 *MM*, 16 June 1849 for 21 days' gaol for Ann. Four 'prostitutes', all unmarried, were in gaol in 1851: Ann Yarwood (aged 18, born Newport), Ann Lewis (aged 23, born Hay-on-Wye), another Ann Lewis (aged 30, born Pontypool) and Mary Loder (aged 13, born Courtmacsherry, County Cork, Ireland). Another two were recorded as living in a property in Waters Lane: Elizabeth Davies, a 25-year-old unmarried woman from Bridgwater in Somerset, and Sophia Pointon, a 28-year-old married woman from Bristol.
45 *SG*, 18 July 1868.
46 *MM*, 17 Feb. 1849.
47 *MM*, 29 Sept. 1855.
48 *SG*, 25 Sept. 1869.

Inn at the top of Commercial Road was the subject of a prosecution in 1875 for allowing prostitutes to be on his premises for longer than was necessary for the purpose of refreshment, and there seems to have been a concerted clean-up campaign in this year directed not only at pubs (the *George and Dragon* in Pentonville was another target) but also at the *Parrot* Music Hall in Commercial Street.[49]

Many prostitutes operated out of brothels rather than public houses or beershops, and if brothel keepers avoided being implicated in robbery or other serious crimes then they could probably manage to avoid coming into conflict with the authorities. The general exception to this rule was where brothels were started up in streets inhabited or frequented by 'respectable citizens', particularly if they were members of the Town Council. Establishments that were tolerated in Friars' Fields were not so easy to accept if they could be seen from one's own house.[50] Thus in 1861 Councillor James Murphy protested that a brothel had been opened in Dock Street virtually opposite his own front door. He claimed that 'the men and women who frequented it conducted themselves in a manner so outrageous as to render the den a perfect nuisance to the respectable persons in that locality' and that on the previous Sunday night men and women, 'half-dressed, were fighting in the street'.[51] In 1867 the Tredegar Wharf Company's Samuel Homfray noted that in Ruperra Street ('one of the most respectable streets in the town') a 'house of ill-fame' had been opened, and its girls stopped people as they passed 'in open day light', whilst in Tredegar Street two brothels were receiving people 'all hours of the night, disturbing the neighbours … sometimes the visitors made mistakes and knocked at the doors of the other houses.'[52] The following year Councillor Knapp alleged that 'he could not look out of his dining-room window without seeing a gaudily dressed lady standing at the door for the purpose of enticing persons in'.[53] He left no information as to whether or not he was thus enticed.

Streetwalking was more often the target of policing campaigns. If prostitutes gathered *outside* the *Parrot* for instance then they were likely to be moved on, and if they resisted then could be arrested for 'being improper characters and obstructing the thoroughfare'.[54] 'Respectable citizens' periodically complained at the 'crowds of abandoned women who infest this town, and … congregate at the corners of the streets'.[55] If prostitutes carried on their trade in public (if they were 'round-the-corner Sallies') then they certainly ran the risk of arrest, as befell Sarah Jane Elliott ('a young girl' from Marshes Road) when she was caught having sex with an artilleryman in 1873.[56] Public festivities, such as the annual Stow Fair, taking place in fields adjacent to the town, were regarded as generating 'a considerable amount of vice'.[57]

When legal action did take place it was not always without its embarrassments for the town's elite. When lists of the owners of the properties being operated as brothels in George Street were put up in Commercial Road in 1861 they were found to contain the names of a number of prominent members of Dissenting chapels in the town.[58] In 1867 George Street again was the focus of attention when the Town Council endeavoured to address the problem of the 'social evil'. Forty inhabitants

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49 *SG*, 30 Jan., 11 Dec. 1875.

50 See *MM*, 6 Feb. 1847 for Iggulden's admission that whilst it was 'useful' to suppress a brothel in Ruperra Street it was not worth the bother for 'more questionable neighbourhoods'.

51 *SG*, 26 Oct. 1861.

52 *SG*, 14 Dec. 1867.

53 *SG*, 17 Oct. 1868.

54 As happened to Margaret Jones, Mary Jane Fletcher and Eliza Edwards (*SG*, 24 July 1875).

55 *MM*, 2 Apr. 1842.

56 *SG*, 19 Apr. 1873.

57 *MM*, 1 June 1855.

58 *SG*, 31 Aug. 1861.

and property owners in Upper George Street appealed to the Mayor for protection against the increase in 'disreputable houses', as apparently there were eight brothels operating in the street.[59] The Watch Committee debated the best course of action, acknowledging that prosecution would not solve the problem but most probably shift it elsewhere.[60] It was decided to support the police in an attempted crackdown on a number of brothel-keepers across the town and so various arrests were made the next month.[61]

The ensuing court cases provide interesting evidence of social attitudes. The defence lawyer for the brothel-keepers initially tried to claim that the houses the police had raided were not brothels at all. When informed that the police had found male clients in bed with more than one woman at a time his quick response was to suggest that they might have been Mormons. When that line of argument failed he pointed out that some Town councillors patronised these particular brothels and that if prosecutions were persisted in it would prove embarrassing for them. However, the prosecutions did go to the Quarter Sessions in January 1868. Of the three men and five women committed for trial two were acquitted as there was no evidence that they had been paid any money by the prostitutes in their house, but the others received sentences ranging from three months to a year. What seems to have particularly horrified the court was that in one brothel there had been many rooms with two beds in and couples had been found in both beds at the same time. A further affront to respectable opinion was provided by Selina Jenkins, prostitute, who in giving evidence claimed that when she was drunk she didn't know 'whether I have a man with me or not'.[62]

Although seemingly a success, some local figures criticised the prosecutions as having been a waste of public money.[63] Controversial councillor James Brown wanted the application of the Contagious Diseases Acts and the recognition of prostitution, stating at a meeting of the Watch Committee that:

> It is absurd and ridiculous to suppose you can deal with this subject as with the cattle plague, and stamp it out, and this by the prosecution of ten or twenty people living in a particular neighbourhood. With 150,000 women of bad character in England, depend upon it the ranks will everlastingly be replenished.[64]

Most brothel-keepers, at least until after the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, were female. It has been estimated that women made up between 54 and 70 per cent of all those tried for 'keeping disorderly houses', and only by the 1890s were male pimps outnumbering female madames in the prostitution trade.[65] To some extent this change had been brought about by the 1885 Act which had made it easier to prosecute brothel-keepers, and which afforded an opportunity for vigilance groups to put pressure on landlords.[66]

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59 *SG*, 30 Nov. 1867.
60 *SG*, 14 Dec. 1867.
61 *SG*, 28 Dec. 1867.
62 *SG*, 4 Jan. 1868.
63 Further prosecutions followed, periodically. See *MM*, 1, 9, 16 Jan. 1880.
64 *SG*, 11 Jan. 1868.
65 Zedner, *Women, Crime and Custody*, 40.
66 See Bland, Lucy, *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality, 1885–1914* (Penguin, London, 1995) 101; Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 82–3. According to the evidence of the Scripture Reader in Merthyr Tydfil in 1860, landlords could expect to rent houses to 'bad women' for four times the normal rent.

Another initiative was the establishment of reform and rescue 'homes', which aimed to rehabilitate prostitutes by providing them with accommodation, meals, and training, with a view to their return to respectable employment, usually as domestic servants. There were calls for the establishment of some sort of 'penitentiary' in Newport as early as 1855, but it was not until 1863 that there is evidence of the establishment of what was called a 'House of Mercy', which apparently contained twenty-two women.[67] This may have been the forerunner of the 'Newport Industrial Home for Penitents' that was opened on Cardiff Road in June 1864 under the direction of the Anglican minister the Reverend J. T. Wrenford and with the backing of local Nonconformist ministers.[68] In the first nine months the Industrial Home (as it became known) took in twenty women, of whom four left after a short time and a further two absconded, three went into domestic service, and one was transferred to a similar institution in Bristol, leaving ten remaining in the home, many of whom were under seventeen years of age, one of whom was fourteen and another thirteen. They were viewed very much as victims – 'ignorant and helpless' – as the *Star of Gwent* put it, but willing and anxious to work.[69] They were dressed in the 'ordinary costume of domestic servants'.[70] The Industrial Home never seems to have gained a secure place in the hearts of Newport's charitable classes, despite Wrenford's efforts. It continually suffered from financial difficulties, which often restricted its ability to take in new 'penitents'.[71] When the local Watch Committee and Board of Health was asked in 1867 to make a grant to the home it was decided that the money was better spent on the 'Ragged Schools' of the town.[72] Evidence of its impact is limited, but taking a number of annual reports together for the late 1860s one can show the destinations of those who passed through the Industrial Home: just over a third left or absconded, approximately a quarter entered domestic service, a fifth married, and smaller proportions transferred to other establishments of a like nature, were 'restored to friends' or died.[73]

Sometimes the philanthropists gave up: in February 1875 Leah Roberts and Mary Costello, both late inmates of the home, were charged with stealing a skirt and other articles from the home. Roberts had been apprehended in a brothel in Canal Parade. The Chief Superintendent of Police gave his opinion that 'everything had been done to reform Roberts that could be done'.[74] About a year earlier she had been charged with being drunk and disorderly and given three weeks in gaol.[75]

The Industrial Home managed to exist for at least fifteen years.[76] Occasionally its efforts were complemented by 'crusades' amongst prostitutes: in 1864 a temperance organisation known as the 'Female Garibaldi Crew' was reported as making 'great efforts' to reclaim 'fallen women', involving offering places in the Industrial Home.[77]

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67 *MM*, 1 Aug. 1855; *SG*, 17 Oct. 1863.
68 *SG*, 9 Apr. 1864.
69 *SG*, 4 March 1865.
70 *Scott's Circular and Monthly Magazine*, 1 Oct. 1865.
71 *SG*, 15 July 1865.
72 *SG*, 9 March 1867.
73 The Scripture Reader allows some insight into why some women did not tolerate such establishments, the complaints being that there were 'too confined', not permitted to go out, worked too hard, that the diet was meagre, that they had to get up too early in the morning. Evidence on destinations is taken from *SG*, 4 March 1865, 21 July 1866, 23 Feb. 1867.
74 *SG*, 20 Feb. 1875.
75 *SG*, 3 Jan. 1874.
76 *SG*, 21 March 1874; *MM*, 14 June 1878.
77 *SG*, 26 Nov. 1864.

There was a renewed interest in 'rescue work' amongst prostitutes towards the end of the century. This was stimulated by the campaign against child prostitution sensationalised by W. T. Stead, the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in 1885 and which was directly responsible for the raising of the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen in the Criminal Law Amendment Act of that year. This has been seen by many historians as marking the beginning of 'vigilance' and 'social purity' campaigning.[78] Certainly Newport witnessed meetings of the National Vigilance Association, with again Anglican ministers in the vanguard.[79]

One phenomenon which almost certainly did exist in Newport, as in other centres of prostitution, but about which we have very little information, is casual prostitution. There is little doubt that the numbers of prostitutes recorded by the police approximates (unsatisfactorily no doubt) to the numbers of 'full-time' prostitutes: those women that were engaged in prostitution on a regular (though not necessarily permanent) basis. It is unlikely that the police had any way of measuring the numbers of women who engaged in occasional or casual prostitution, yet there is considerable evidence from other sources and other areas that this was a widespread phenomenon.

Henry Mayhew tells us that most of the 'park women' were 'amateur', 'clandestine' prostitutes or 'dollymops', servant-maids, nursemaids, shop girls and milliners who would dabble in prostitution, usually picking up clients (often it seems, in London, soldiers) in the city's parks.[80] And Walter, the author of the eleven-volumes of Victorian sexual memoirs, *My Secret Life,* tells of a number of encounters he has with women who were not 'gay' (that is, engaged in prostitution, as conventional parlance had it). One such involves a fifteen-year-old girl named Kitty whom Walter meets in the street and takes back to a bawdy house. After they have had sex he asks her how long she has been 'gay'. She denies that she is, although she admits that she lets men have sex with her for money. She distinguishes between her own case and those 'gals who come out regular of a night, dressed up, and gets their livings by it'. Her reason for selling her body is that her food is needed to feed her brother and sister, as her father has died and her mother earns little as a charwoman. She feeds herself (on sausage rolls, meat pies and pastries) with the proceeds from her prostitution.[81]

It was quite possible that women who dabbled in casual prostitution would become full-time prostitutes. This does in fact happen to Kitty, when her mother can no longer work having been disabled by rheumatic fever.[82] But it was not an inevitable 'downward spiral'. Walter tells another story of a young girl whom he meets in the suburbs and pays six pence for a kiss. This progresses in time to half a crown for masturbation, but although Walter wants to have intercourse with her, the girl continually refuses. She spends her money on sweets, fruit, sugar candy and bull's eyes, and in riding on omnibuses. Were she to spend her proceeds on anything more visible and permanent her family would begin to question how she was coming by such an income.[83]

Evidently, there is no clear dividing line to be drawn between dollymops and full-time prostitutes. There were varying degrees of activity, and women may have moved in and out of the sex trade as circumstances demanded. Although Victorian morality held that prostitution could only end in death and degradation, there is much evidence to suggest that, on the contrary, it was frequently little more than a stage in the life-cycle for some working-class women. Thus although

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78 See, for example, Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 246.

79 *South Wales Argus*, 22 Jan. 1896, 4 Jan. 1905. According to 'lay missioner' Thomas Horne, writing in 1884, drunken mothers were prostituting their daughters in Newport.

80 Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 486.

81 Marcus, *Other Victorians*, 105–7.

82 Ibid., 108.

83 Ibid., 140–5.

Henry Mayhew believed that 'the sensitive, sentimental, weak-minded, impulsive, affectionate girl, will go from bad to worse, and die on a dunghill or in a workhouse', William Acton, in his key study of 1858, exploded this myth.[84] As he wrote, the 'downward progress and death of the prostitute in the absolute ranks of that occupation are exceptional'. Rather prostitutes were usually healthy, and by far the greater number of women who resorted at one time or another to prostitution returned sooner or later to a more or less regular course of life. As Acton put it, 'prostitution is a transitory state, through which an untold number of British women are ever on their passage'.[85]

The route out of prostitution was usually marriage, sometimes with one of the clients. Walter tells the story of Sophy who comes to London to work as a prostitute but who marries an artisan and has two children by him. They lived respectably for a while, but eventually Sophy's husband died and she returned to her previous trade.[86] Another, tragic, example comes from Newport in 1859, where Sarah Smith aged twenty-two, originally from Watchet in Somerset, was murdered by her common-law husband Matthew Francis at Temple Street. Smith had married early, when fifteen, a man living in Bristol. She and her first husband had lived for a while in Chepstow but her husband had left her after her conduct had become 'improper'. She came to Newport where she worked as a prostitute for a time. She met and married Francis, and from that time on her conduct, we are told, had been 'strictly proper': she was 'a good wife and an industrious woman' who found work as a tailoress. The marriage, however, ran into difficulties, and in 1857 Francis (himself a tailor) had been sentenced to a month's hard labour for assaulting Smith. Two years later Francis slit Sarah's throat because he said he could not live without her, and he hung for his crime.[87]

Most prostitutes were not so unfortunate. They were likely to be under the age of twenty-five, perhaps former dressmakers or domestic servants, laundry women or charwomen or street sellers. Frances Finnegan, in her study of prostitution in York, estimates that three-quarters practised prostitution for less than five years and that there was a high turnover in the profession.[88] Some insight into an individual case is afforded by the Monmouth Assizes of August 1853, when Catherine Kennedy, a 'notorious character', was charged with stealing a tobacco box and two shillings. Although found not guilty, a list of her previous summary convictions was published in the *Monmouthshire Merlin*, indicating that she had been (in the eyes of the authorities at least) a prostitute for at least four years up to that point.[89]

November 1847: stealing iron, discharged.
April 1848: stealing a pair of boots, committed to trial.
February 1849: obtaining goods under false pretences, convicted.
June 1849: stealing clothes, discharged.
July 1849: for being a disorderly prostitute, 14 days' gaol.
August 1849: stealing 7s 6d, discharged.
October 1849: for being disorderly, fined.
November 1849: stealing a silk handkerchief, convicted.
April 1850: for being a disorderly prostitute, 14 days' gaol.

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84 Ibid., 5–6. Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 489.
85 Cited in Marcus, *Other Victorians*, 5, 6. See also Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 18–19.
86 Marcus, *Other Victorians*, 121–3.
87 *SG*, 19 March, 2 April, 6, 27 Aug. 1859.
88 Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, 82–3.
89 *MM*, 5 Aug. 1853. Jones, *Crime in Nineteenth-Century Wales*, 172, notes that Mary Ann Williams of Newport appeared on her sixteenth charge of being 'disorderly' in 1880.

May 1850: for stealing a watch, committed to trial.
February 1851: for being disorderly, 1 month's gaol.
May 1852: for being disorderly, 14 days' gaol.
June 1852: for being disorderly, cautioned.
December 1852: for being disorderly, fined.
January 1853: stealing 9s 6d, discharged.
May 1853: for wilful breakage of windows, paid damages and costs.
June 1853: for being a disorderly prostitute, 21 days' gaol.

It seems very unlikely that this unfortunate woman was making a comfortable living out of her activities. Nor was she successful at escaping the attentions of the police.[90]

Why did women choose prostitution? Although Victorians often believed that prostitutes had depraved natures the most common characteristic of prostitutes was their poverty. For Acton this was the primary cause, and for the 'Unfortunate' who wrote into the Newport press she claimed that 'nineteen twentieths of our prostitution is caused by poverty'.[91] But it would be wrong to believe that prostitution was necessarily a last resort, that women were driven into prostitution from 'sheer want' at the actual point of starvation. As Judith Walkowitz has shown, it was a choice that women made, and one that was conditioned by expectations and personality. They were 'women who made their own history, albeit under very restrictive conditions':

> They were not rootless social outcasts but poor working women trying to survive in towns that offered them few employment opportunities and that were hostile to young women living alone. Their move into prostitution was not pathological; it was in many ways a rational choice, given the limited alternatives open to them.[92]

This point was appreciated by at least some contemporaries. Councillor Morgan, preferring to grant money to the town's Ragged Schools rather than its Industrial Home for Penitents in 1867, observed 'the fallen women had a choice, but not those of the Ragged Schools'.[93]

Compared with other occupations open to working-class women, prostitution could be a lucrative trade. It has been estimated that prostitutes might earn as much as fifteen times the average earnings of a working-class woman in trades such as dressmaking.[94] However, on the whole prostitution did not lead to wealth: most prostitutes were poor, taking small sums from equally poor clients (we know little about clients but we can assume that many were transients, soldiers, sailors,

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90 Born in Ireland, Kennedy was a widow in her early thirties at the time of her arrest. At the 1851 census she was lodging in Friars' Fields with three unmarried women aged 21, 23 and 40.

91 Marcus, *Other Victorians*, 7; *SG*, 30 Nov. 1872. In the following edition (7 Dec. 1872) Edwin J. Gill responded to 'An Unfortunate', contending that greed and ambition rather than poverty was the true cause of prostitution. The individual cases explained by the Scripture Reader in 1860 generally involve abandonment and a lack of alternative ways to make money. Ann Jenkins's explanation of her 'downfall' was that 'she is forty years of age married & lived with her husband several years until he gave himself up to drink – not giving her any support – & at times abused her shamefully. That she had then one child & that she was supporting herself by washing about the houses and by falling into bad company she began to drink to excess & at last gave herself up to prostitution.'

92 Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 9.

93 *SG*, 9 March 1867.

94 Strange, 'In search of the celestial empire', 56, provides evidence that in Merthyr a prostitute could expect to earn in one or two days what a working woman had to wait a month for.

travellers, as well as other working-class men resident in the town). The notion of middle-class demand and working-class supply is largely a myth.[95] Prostitution has to be seen as a form of penny capitalism, a response to immediate difficulties. There tended to be an increase in the numbers of prostitutes at times of trade depression (when perhaps employment opportunities for women were more scarce). In 1861 the *Star of Gwent* noted that 'with the bad times, an increase of immodest women and girls has taken place in Newport a full two hundred per cent'.[96] Indeed, as Walkowitz puts it, 'There is perhaps no more telling commentary on the exploitative character of Victorian society than the fact that some working women regarded prostitution as the best of a series of unattractive alternatives'.[97]

## APPENDIX

*The Star of Gwent*, 30 November 1872

### THE SOCIAL EVIL

*To the Editor of the Star of Gwent and South Wales Times*

Mr. Editor, – I have read in your paper with a great deal of interest the report of a meeting and the correspondence of three gentlemen, on the Contagious Diseases Acts but, to my mind, neither the speakers at the meeting nor the writers in your journal grapple with the difficulty under discussion, and the only remedy proposed at the meeting for the greatest curse of our day was to have a street tramway from door to door to distribute tracts among our Unfortunate Class.[98] I will dismiss the letter of 'Observer' simply by asking him if he have never been the cause of one of those he calls dissolute, abandoned, and fallen women, falling still lower?[99] Let us ask what is the cause of the evil; if we can get at the cause, we can attack the evil at its root, and if it's possible to remove the

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[95] Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, 114–16, 134, 213. According to the Scripture Reader, 'Ann Jenkins a China prostitute' testified that 'there are no men going to China now but the vilest of the vile – that some of the clerks of the town & well dressed men used to go there … but now that they are never coming nigh'.

[96] *SG*, 31 Aug. 1861.

[97] Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 31.

[98] The report of the 'Great Meeting of Ratepayers at Newport' had appeared in *SG*, 2 Nov. 1872, along with a letter from 'Observer'. In addition to the two letters referenced by 'Observer' and Mr Gill, *SG*, 23 Nov. 1872 had published a letter from Samuel Fothergill of Keswick. Mr Fothergill was the parliamentary agent of the Society for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, and had been the main speaker at the meeting held at the Town Hall on 29 Oct. 1872. The Reverend W. Knox of Bristol had also spoken at the meeting and was reported as saying '[t]hey talked of having tramways to convey them from door to door. Oh! for some moral tramway to convey missionaries with hearts and hands and purses to help these poor outcasts, and act towards them the part of a good Samaritan!'

[99] 'Observer' had not used the terms 'dissolute', 'abandoned', or 'fallen women' in his letter. He did warn of the risk of boys and young men being seduced by prostitutes (implying some direct or indirect personal experience) and urged readers to 'adopt any measure that will any way stay the Destroyer in our midst, and let us not rest till we have driven vice at any rate from our public places of resort to hide its hideous head in holes and corners'.

cause, the effect will vanish. Mr. Gill[100] says that 'thousands make it their life study to seduce the innocent, and after they have robbed the virgin of her life's brightest, dearest, treasure – chastity, they abandon the wretched victim to barter her degraded person for hire.' So far so good; it is a clap-trap too true. But how is it that while she is driven from the society (and very properly, too), of the good and virtuous, and if a person of education and attractive appearance, after, perhaps, becoming the toy of philosophers, poets, and professors, she sinks, step by step, till life is to her a burden, and she becomes

> Mad from life's hist'ry,
> Glad to death's myst'ry
> Swift to be hurl'd
> Anywhere, anywhere
> Out of the world![101]

He, the seducer, the villain that has spent his treasure, his time, his skill, and almost encompassed heaven and earth to effect her ruin, is received into society, and his acquaintances, male and *female*, respect him not one wit the less, nay, rather they appear to glory in the ruin he has wrought. Time was when there was punishment for sins as well as crimes, and breaches of the moral law were visited with temporal penalties. The poor victim of misplaced affection had a court of appeal (and was not as now forced to suffer in silence) where her betrayer was subject to some outward expression of the disapproval with which good men regard acts of sin, and was liable to open disgrace. But your improvements in religion removed those restraints upon the vicious propensities of man, and decreed there was no higher law than his pleasure or perceptions, and when your modern Radicalism abolished the Ecclesiastical Courts, it swept away the last remnant of what Mr. Froud, in his history, calls 'the greatest institution ever yet devised by man, representing upon earth, in the principles by which it was guided, the laws of the great tribunal of Almighty God.'[102]

But I come to by far the largest class of our frail sisterhood – those whom poverty has driven to prostitution to prevent starvation, and to whom even a one-sided and degrading Contagious Diseases Act is a blessing. I have no hesitation in saying that 19-20ths of our prostitution is caused by poverty. We see thousands of our young girls growing up in our midst in the most squalid poverty, and more

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[100] A letter from Edwin J. Gill (who had also spoken at the meeting on 29 October) had been published in *SG*, 16 Nov. 1872, in which reference was made to being 'ruthlessly deprived of his darling, only son, through the vile contamination of a vile herd' (presumably his son's contraction of venereal disease following an encounter with a prostitute). Although his lines are apparently quoted here, they are in reality paraphrased. The relevant passage reads as follows: ' … thousands on this teeming soil of ours make it a life study to betray the innocent and ensnare the unwary; - thousands who prowl from day to day, and from house to house, seeking "whom they may devour" – who admire virtue only to betray it – who, when they see a girl with blushing modesty enrobed, at once proceed to drain their coffers of their gold, their land of wealth, forget ease, lack peace, pine themselves shallow pale, fret 'till the bile gnaws appetite away; yea, make a pawn of their soul only to rob the wearer of it; and no sooner have they deprived the virgin of her life's brightest, dearest, treasure – chastity, but straightaway they abandon the wretched victim of their cruel lust, and cast her forth to perish or to further barter her degraded person's use for the wretched means to live! – thus becoming abandoned in a double, nay, a treble sense, until she eventually seeks an early end to all her heaped-up miseries, or lives to avenge her fall, by spreading indiscriminately the venom of her pollution among the sex which first defiled her.'

[101] Lines from Thomas Hood's 'The Bridge of Sighs' (1844).

[102] A reference to the historian James Anthony Froude (1818–94), and to his twelve volume *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth* (1856–70), in which he argued that the Bishops' Consistory Courts of the Middle Ages facilitated 'a system of spiritual surveillance over the habits and conduct of every man, extending from the cottage to the castle'.

ignorant than the heathen in whom our missionary societies take such an interest. We see, year by year, a few rise to float on a sea of wealth, while the many are sinking lower and lower in the mire of want and pauperism. We are told that wealth increases, but poverty increases with it: and the avarice of the rich bears year after year heavier on the poor. Look at yon squalid dwelling, not fit for human habitation! Enter it; you will find a family or two in every room. Grown up boys and girls crowded together without the slightest regard to the decencies of life. Dr Hunter, the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, tells us that the population of England in 1861 was 5-34ths per cent greater than in 1851; while the house accommodation was 4-5ths less. He further says, 'There are twenty large colonies in London whose miserable condition exceeds almost anything I have seen elsewhere in England, and is almost entirely the result of their bad house accommodation. The overcrowded and dilapidated condition of the houses in those colonies is much worse than it was 20 years ago.'[103] In the rural districts, as well as the large towns the commissioners appointed to enquire into the condition of the people report that 'overcrowding is the universal consequence of their poverty, and gross immorality the result.' One of the assistant commissioners, the present Bishop of Manchester, says, 'It is a hideous picture, and the picture is from the life;' but, Sir, how much of this poverty and pauperism is caused by the self-indulgence of the poor themselves![104] What would any one who came amongst us, knowing nothing of our habits and customs, think of us when we told him that in one year we expended in poor relief £7,673,100, and drank 23,561,743 gallons of spirits, paying a duty of £10,437,168, and brewed 25,388,600 barrels of beer, and smoked 38,293,521lbs of tobacco. This represents a fearful expenditure for selfish indulgence. Those evils are not to be remedied by Acts of Parliament; the remedy lies in the moral sphere: they are moral defects, which can only be dealt with in a society animated by thoroughly Christian principles: they are evils with which nothing short of the practical influence of religious charity can cope. We must form again those strict ties and close bonds that once existed between all classes of the community, the rich and the poor must no longer form 'two nations;' all classes must learn self-denial, and we must see all classes recognise more the sacredness of the relations between man and man.[105] To begin, we must educate our poor girls and rescue them from the gutter, and their education must be the work of pure Christian love. They stand more in need of Christian schools than they do of Christian preachers. In the fitting of them to become proper wives and mothers lies, to a great extent, the salvation and future happiness of our country.

I would say more, but I fear I have trespassed too far on your kindness.

AN UNFORTUNATE

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[103] Dr Henry Julian Hunter (1823–1908).

[104] The Reverend James Fraser (1818–85), Bishop of Manchester from 1870, who had served on the 1867 Children's Employment Commission.

[105] Benjamin Disraeli's novel *Sybil, Or the Two Nations* (1845) had introduced the term into common discourse.

# REVIEWS

**Norman Doe (ed.), *A New History of the Church in Wales. Governance and Ministry, Theology and Society*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2020. ISBN 978-1-108-49957-6. Hb. Pp. xxii + 370.**

Disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales was perhaps the greatest achievement of what was then described as 'political Nonconformity', that movement of Free Church political and religious opinion which, led by the Liberation Society, set its heart on freeing British society from the dead hand and inequities of State-supported religion. Gladstone's disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1869 set a clear precedent, and with a number of other victories behind them, such as the abolition of compulsory church rate, Nonconformists could set their sights on the main prize, the disestablishment of the Church of England. Here Wales was evidently the weakest link, Anglicans constituting a mere quarter of churchgoers, and massively overshadowed by the Free Churches. Yet disestablishment here had to wait until the Liberal landslide of 1906, and even then years of wrangling followed, and the legislation finally enacted in 1914 was delayed by the First World War and not effected until 1920. It is this last date, then, that stands as the founding year of the autonomous Church in Wales, its centenary celebrated last year. Welsh Anglicans fought disestablishment bitterly. But something unexpected happened. The political triumph of Nonconformity in Wales paradoxically marked the beginning of its sharp and prolonged decline, as Welsh Anglicanism began to thrive on its new-found independence and evolving ability to associate itself with Welsh national identity. Only in the 1970s did the Church itself begin to decline.

Norman Doe has edited a magnificent survey of the hundred years of the Church in Wales's independent existence, drawing together eighteen contributors, both church leaders and academics. The book is divided into four main parts, covering historical background, governance and ministry, doctrine, rites and liturgy, and the relation of the Church to Welsh society. Many of these chapters pursue a broadly chronological order, so that they effectively complement each other. A century is a sufficiently concentrated period to enable the fruitful combination of themes and narrative. There are some drawbacks with this approach, inevitably, perhaps the most important being the absence of a central, framing arc of interpretation. Yet to my mind this is just a necessary casualty of the collaborative method. It is difficult to think of a better place to start in order to understand the modern history of Anglicanism in Wales than this book.

The standard of contributions is never less than very high, but there are some really outstanding ones. They come mostly from the 'professional' academics, perhaps inevitably. Norman Doe's own chapter on the Church's constitutional history is a masterpiece of succinct analysis. Densil Morgan supplies an excellent overview of Christianity in Wales – hardly surprising from the author of *The Span of the Cross* (1999). There's a fine survey of the doctrinal history of the Church by Peter Sedgwick – a difficult thing to pull off, given that in a sense the Church in Wales does not have a doctrinal position significantly different from that of other Anglican provinces, though as Sedgwick shows, it does have characteristic emphases and distinct developments. Rowan Williams, a former bishop of Monmouth and Archbishop of Wales, has a chapter on the relationship between Welsh Anglicanism and the broader cultural history of Wales which itself is a brilliant introduction to the complex undercurrents of Welsh religious identity. The three chapters on bishops, on clergy, and on laity and patterns of ministry, by Arthur Edwards, Barry Morgan, and Rhiannon Johnson, dovetail together very nicely, and provide a very helpful overall point of reference. But there are no weak chapters, and different readers will doubtless find their own highlights.

Despite the number of contributors, common themes recur again and again. One is the ambivalent relationship the Church has had with the Welsh language. Anglicanism played an important part in Welsh's survival as a written language, through sponsoring vernacular translations of the Bible and the Prayer Book at the Reformation. But for centuries, as an integral part of the Church of England, its hierarchy and many of its parish clergy were non-Welsh speakers, and the language itself, in gentry circles, was considered debased or barbarous. That condescension for Welsh folk culture hampered the Church's mission as Nonconformity thrived. Gradually a different view came to prevail after disestablishment, and with the growth and renewal of Welsh cultural and educational institutions. Bilingualism amongst the clergy is more common now than it once was, though still, many would argue, insufficient. Another theme is the perceptible change from a Church that, somewhat demoralized at first by having disestablishment forced on it, was conservative and cautious in its outlook, to one increasingly confident and, more recently, forward-looking in its readiness to engage constructively with the challenges of contemporary mission.

There are a few omissions, which probably won't trouble most readers. Surprisingly, although there is a fine chapter on the 'road to disestablishment' by Jeffrey Gainer, the actual legal, constitutional, financial and administrative details of the process of disestablishment are mostly spread over several chapters, and in some cases left a little under-explained. The progressive moderation of the proposals for disendowment over several years, for example, could perhaps have been highlighted more, and it was a surprise to find that the abolition of lay patronage – a highly significant measure in itself which has been mooted several times in England, but never achieved – is mentioned only in passing. (p.118) Personally I'd have been interested in seeing a chapter on the changing sociology of the Church in Wales since 1920, and in particular its demographic, occupational, and social class profiles, though again there are plenty of pertinent observations throughout the book.

But this is to quibble anyway. Handsomely produced, with colour plates, a good bibliography, and index, this is a tremendous way to mark the Church's centenary. It is difficult, in the nature of things, to say whether there will be an appetite for another celebration in a hundred years' time – sceptical voices inevitably are raised often about whether traditional, institutional Christianity as we know it now will survive that long in our secularised culture – but there is plenty of evidence here of a rich and lively historic tradition that has found ways of adapting as best it can to changing circumstances, and which continues to innovate. One of the most dramatic potential changes in the Church's structure, organization and work was proposed in the Harries Report as recently as 2012, when the creation of Mission or Ministry Areas was proposed, combining parishes and moving away from the parish itself as the basic unit of ministry, and it is of course much too soon to tell what difference, ultimately, that will make. But assessment of it will be a fascinating challenge to future historians.

**Jeremy Morris**

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**Richard Watson, ed. *The Diary of William Southern Clark 1854: Cardiff Steals a March*. South Wales Record Society No.32. 2019. ISBN 978-1-9998326-4-3. Pbk. £18.**

Richard Watson provides an introduction of thirty-eight pages to Clark's Diary for 1854 which begins on page 61 after photographs and figures illustrating the text. There are biographical notes on people relevant to the text beginning on page 145, followed by a bibliography on page 163 and

finally an index from pages 167 to 172 of this attractively produced edition by South Wales Record Society.

Clark was mineral agent to the Marquess of Bute from 1845 to 1864. His manuscript diaries for these years are in the National Library of Wales. John Davies in his important study, *Cardiff and the Marquesses of Bute,* described them as 'an invaluable source of information on estate matters'. Davies claimed that the importance placed by the second marquess upon Clark's appointment, is demonstrated by the salary of £600 a year paid to Clark when he was brought from Newcastle. This was increased to £720 in 1854, the year in which the four major events in Clark's career as mineral agent are recorded in his diary with details beyond the routine matters with which Watson claims most of his other diaries are concerned.

The first of these events was the failed attempt to build a floating harbour on the River Ely; this turned into the successful project to increase Cardiff's dock capacity. Clark played a leading part in the building of the Bute East Dock and the Bute Tidal Harbour; this depended upon the erection of coal staithes. Coal staithes, known later as coal tips, were simply installations made by Clark to enable the wagons bringing coal from the collieries for shipment to be deposited easily. Cardiff's rival ports at Newport and Swansea did not have these installations, which contributed greatly towards Cardiff's later superiority as a coal exporter. Sixty-four entries in Clark's 1854 diary refer to these coal staithes.

The passing through parliament of the Rhymney Railway Act and its extension involved Clark in much work in the middle of 1854, not least in visits to London for meetings and in the personal part that he played in constructing the railway and surveying possible routes for its extension. This made possible the diversion of the mineral traffic of the Rhymney Valley from Newport to Cardiff and justifies the subtitle of this book, 'Cardiff Steals a March'.

Clark's fourth project was the sinking of the new colliery at Cwmsaebren Farm (the Bute Merthyr Colliery) and searching for steam coal there. The Bute trustees gave him a free hand to do this, but he left the day to day management to his assistant, Hortensius (Horty) Huxham while Clark himself laid out the plans for the mining village of Treherbert which developed near the colliery. The first train of steam coal from the Bute Merthyr colliery was shipped from Cardiff in December 1855.

Watson's introduction ranges well beyond the internal evidence of the diary, including Clark's small part in resolving the hostile dispute between Bute and John Guest, the owner of the Dowlais ironworks, over the Dowlais lease of Bute's land in 1848. An edition of a diary should be more careful about dates than this is in places. After the death of Clark's clerk, Joseph Genitone, from cholera on 13 October 1854, Clark paid his funeral expenses and wages up to 14 October to Genitone's widow on 21 not 14 December (P.152). Clark was given the use of the Bute cottage in Cathays Park on 2 not 8 August (p. 9).

Watson refers twice to Clark's grief at the sudden death of Genitone. In the first he says that there 'were hardly any entries in the diary for the next three weeks' (p.8) and later that 'he made no entries in the diary until 4 November (p.34). In fact there were two entries (p. 135). There is a helpful index and seventeen pages of biographical notes. One obvious omission was the name of William Thomas Lewis, Clark's apprentice from January 1855 when he moved into the Mardy, Aberdare, with Clark and his wife and remained until 1914 by which time he was not only Clark's successor as mineral agent to the Bute estate, but he had been knighted in 1885, made a baronet in 1896 and raised to the peerage as Baron Merthyr of Senghenydd in 1911. Lewis eclipsed Clark but he was his most appreciative pupil; he provided Clark with a memorial tablet in St. Elvan's church Aberdare, placed a tombstone on Clark's grave in Cefn Coed Cemetery and named his first son Herbert Clark Lewis.

This edition of the Diary of William Southern Clark will serve to remind us of a 'gentleman of considerable eminence as a mining engineer' as his obituary in the *Aberdare Times* described him; it also claimed that 'his memory will long be cherished'.In fact he was soon forgotten. Richard Watson now claims that 'he should be well remembered'. The Diary should also provide a useful source book for students of the industrial history of south Wales.

**Arthur Edwards**

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**Rod Cooper and Prys Morgan eds., *A Gower Gentleman: The Diaries of Charles Morgan of Cae Forgan, Llanrhidian 1834–1857*. South Wales Record Society, No. 33. 2021. 298 pp, 39 illustrations, 4 maps. ISBN 978-1-9998326-5-0. Pbk. £23.**

The South Wales Record Society's series of published diaries are both enjoyable reading and valuable historical sources. The latest is the diary of an Anglo-Welsh gentleman farmer in nineteenth century Gower. In 1977 Professor Prys Morgan discovered two biscuit tins in a neighbour's house. Inside were volumes of Letts Diaries for the years 1834 to 1857. Charles Morgan had used them as diaries, much as Walter Powell of Llantilio Crossenny used a series of almanacs for his record of events in Monmouthshire during the Civil War. The richness of Charles Morgan's narrative makes one realise how much we have lost bv the survival of only a small part of Powell's work. The total diary entries amount to some 600,000 words. Rod Cooper transcribed these, from a small and sometimes difficult script and converted them to a useable computer format. The published text comprises about a tenth of the whole, but the full text will be available on line later. The originals will be deposited in the West Glamorgan County Archives.

Prys Morgan provides a lengthy introduction describing the life and career of this member of the 'working gentry'. Charles Morgan (1796-1857) was from a wealthy Anglo-Welsh family of lawyers from Lincoln's Inn, with links to Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire They had acquired the tithes of the vast parish of Llanrhidian in north east Gower as lay impropriators. Charles was sent to Gower by his brothers to manage the family property and in particular to collect the valuable tithe income. Tithes, originally a ten per cent church tax going back to Anglo Saxon times, had been annexed over the centuries by laymen, often absentees, and could be bought and sold like other property. They were unpopular both with landowners and with small farmers, many of whom in Wales were nonconformists. At the time of his arrival in Gower, an Act to convert tithe payments in kind to cash was going through parliament. Charles's farm needed a range of barns and storehouses round the farmyard to store the tithe payments, but these would soon be unnecessary. It was a time of change. Charles could travel by stagecoach (outside or inside), or by the new railway and could pass his evenings with the latest instalment of the current Dickens serial. Apart from his labours as farmer and tithe collector, his diary records more leisured activities- picnics, cricket matches (which he introduced to Gower), and social calls.

In 1833, Charles, soon after his arrival in Gower, married Caroline ('Carree'), daughter of the Rector of Penmaen and purchased Cae Forgan farm in Llanrhidian, where they had a new house built for them , set up house and began to raise a large Victorian family, This 'man of the city and of law' now had to cope with ' horses, pigs and cattle' He even branched out into industry, establishing a small brickworks, though this does not seem to have been an outstanding success. Charles spent much time in the difficult task of assessing and collecting tithe payments, sometimes sweetening the pill with a 'tythe dinner ' in a pub for the tithe payers, often with music and conviviality, though the

village ‘ turnspit club day’ (at which Charles was not present! ) ended in drunkenness and broken heads, with the pub windows broken. Charles was an Anglican and some of the tithe money was spent on establishing village schools and on the restoration of the chapel of ease of Llanyrnewydd above Penclawdd. This involved acquiring the land (sometimes the gift of a local landowner) and arranging for its building and staffing, though the Bishop of St Davids refused to open the new chapel of ease, since a nonconformist had been appointed as village schoolmaster. In his later years, Charles shared his time between Gower, Sherborne, where one of his sons was in school, and his wife’s inherited property of Herbert’s Lodge near Caswell Bay.

There are many maritime reminders, with frequent references to the Swansea-Bristol paddle steamers (no Severn Tunnel and the railway just building when he arrived) . There is the ‘Dollar Wreck’ – ‘the lately discovered ancient wreck (full of silver) near Worms Head’ otherwise ‘ the submarine wreck on Rossili sands’. Charles hoped to obtain one of the coins (a number of which have been found recently in the sands by metal detectorists) There is an account of the wreck of the Cork to Bristol paddle streamer City Of Bristol , still visible at low tide, in November 1840 with heavy loss of life. He describes its aftermath, with the recovery of bodies and the beach strewn with dead pigs and cattle. This and other wrecks would be followed by sales on Rhossili beach of the ship’s timbers and other flotsam

This book will give great pleasure not only to those familiar with Gower, but to anyone who enjoys the landscapes and way of life of rural south Wales. It is well illustrated with views of places in Gower with which Charles would have been very familiar, a series of family portraits and illustrations of his possesions, which Prys Morgan inherited from Charles’s last surviving grandson and some useful maps. The editors, and the South Wales Record Society, are to be warmly congratulated on this everyday story of Victorian countryfolk .

**Jeremy Knight**

# OBITUARIES

## IAN STANLEY BURGE (1933–2021)

Ian Burge, our President from 1982 to 2013, was a well-known and much liked figure in Monmouthshire. His father, Graham Burge, was partner in the long established firm of Newport solicitors Seale and Burge. After serving his articles, Ian entered the firm, later Llywellin and Burge. He had an unusually broad knowledge of land and property law, enabling him to offer valuable advice to clients. He eventually joined with the firm of Harding Evans as a consultant before retirement. A fellow lawyer has described him as 'one of the best liked and most respected members of the profession in Newport and Monmouthshire'

He took a very active role in our Association, serving as Chairman from 1970 until 1982, when he succeeded George Boon as President. His wise counsel in committee was of great value to our Association. For many years Ian and June lived at Glen Usk in Llanhennock before moving in 2004 to Oaklands in that parish. Many of us will remember their hospitality there. He had a great love of the landscape of the lower Usk valley, though he was saddened by recent developments there.

We are indebted to Nigel Williams for the details of Ian's professional career and to Arthur Edwards who has written the following in tribute.

Jeremy Knight

## IAN STANLEY BURGE

Ian was a staunch Anglican churchman. His involvement in the diocese of Monmouth brought him election to the Diocesan Conference and also the Electoral College for the election of a new Bishop. Ian was also elected to the Representative Body of the Church in Wales which administers the property of the Province, including churches and churchyards. In his home parish of Llanhennock Ian spent many years of his life caring for the parish church of St. John the Baptist, which he loved, together with its churchyard, which he watched over assiduously; he was adept at obtaining subscriptions for its maintenance and overseeing the grass-cuttings. Ian was never a churchwarden, but he was church treasurer at St. John's for many years; he retired from the office only months before his death. Ian knew everything about his fellow parishioners who in turn liked him and respected his leadership. Like rectors before me I was always grateful for Ian's interested support.

Ian was always well supported by his loving wife June whom he met in 1950. They married in 1960 and celebrated their diamond wedding quietly during the 'lockdown'. They had five sons and seven grandchildren. One of their sons, Sebastian, died prematurely from a brain tumour a few years after his marriage. At his own request Sebastian is buried in Llanhennock churchyard and Ian's grave is next to Sebastian's.

Ian's interest and involvement in the many different fields described above included not only being Chairman of the MAA from 1970 to 1982 and its President from 1982 to 2013, but also being the first Chairman of the Governors of Rougemont School from 1974 to 2001 and then President of Rougemont School Trust Ltd. Ian had originally been a pupil at Drayton High School on Risca Road, Newport, from which Rougemont School developed. The history of the school was written by Ian in 2016. From Rougemont Ian went on to St. John-on-the-Hill School in Chepstow and afterwards to Cheltenham College. In 1970 Ian was Chairman of the Monmouthshire branch of the Campaign

for the Protection of Rural Wales. He later became Vice President of St. David's Foundation. In the words of one of Ian's oldest friends, he had 'a very happy life' thanks to his natural disposition, his gift for leadership and his warm and close family.

Arthur Edwards

## DAVID JOSEPH RIMMER (1946–2021)

### County Archivist

(This has also appeared in *Gwent Local History*, 130)

David Rimmer was born in Market Drayton, in Shropshire and educated at Adams Grammar School, Newport (Shropshire); he went on to read history at Manchester University. After gaining a Diploma in Archive Administration from Liverpool University, David took up a post as Assistant Archivist at the Coventry City Record Office in 1971. In 1974 he took over as Coventry City Archivist. He was to remain at Coventry for nineteen years before becoming County Archivist at Gwent Record Office (later to become Gwent Archives) in October 1993. After 15 years in post David retired in 2008 having settled in Ponthir where he lived until his death.

The year before he left Coventry, he published 'Record Office or Local Studies Centre', in the *Journal of the Society of Archivists*. The paper showed him to be an archivist who thought deeply and seriously about his profession, and indeed the heritage sector generally. About the same time his *Pulpit & Pew*: *A History of Warwick Road Church 1891–1991* (1992) demonstrated his keen interest in local history and the value of archives in researching local and community history. It was heavily based on the church's archive recently deposited at the City Record Office.

David brought this interest to his new post in Gwent. He retained his enthusiasm for archives and history up to the end of his life. His passion for the history of World War One and a fascination with the county historian, Joseph Bradney, culminated almost inevitably in 'Colonel Bradney: a Monmouthshire Soldier's Great War', published in *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* in 2015.

As County Archivist David sat on the general committee of the Gwent County History Association from its beginnings in 1997and most of GCHA's meetings took place in the offices of Gwent Record Office at Cwmbran. After his retirement David also became a member of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association and in due course took a place on its committee.

David was most definitely an 'old school' archivist, more comfortable with traditional paper and parchment than digital archives; he was far more at home with title deeds than electronic files though he recognised that both were inextricably part and parcel of his evolving profession. He probably published less than he would have liked but he remained an avid reader with a retentive memory. Until his illness was well advanced he was ever ready to regale people with the contents of the book he was currently reading. His latter days were overshadowed by failing health which had been advancing even before his retirement in 2008. His wife, Marcia died in 2006 but he found consolation in regular visits to his brother Malcolm and his family in Australia. He also became involved with his local church, St Cadoc's in Caerleon.

Both family and church life will have fulfilled him greatly as he reached the end of his days and he was proud to have become county archivist, the top rung of his profession. To have served as such for as long as fifteen years (1993–2008) is no mean achievement.

Tony Hopkins

# EVENTS: COPING WITH COVID LOCKDOWNS

We can never predict what life will throw at us and on 20th June 2019 my husband Richard, the treasurer of the MAA, died suddenly. He had been a great support to me as secretary and was missed by the committee. Fortunately Clare Robinson was able to step into the breach and on a personal level Anne Dunton became a great support with the remaining visits for 2019 which are listed in volume 35 of *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* and were very successful. On 16th March 2020 the Covid lockdowns began, which caused an even bigger problem as the PM announced 'now is the time for everyone to stop non-essential contact and travel'.

One of the problems facing organisers of the MAA's traditional outings and visits programme is the lack of somewhere to hold regular meetings for lectures, so we organised visits. We had discovered that working with other societies was beneficial, for example holding an annual study day in conjunction with the Gwent County History; we had one arranged for 2020 based on Risca. We also had a study day arranged with GGAT for 21st March 2020, 'Research on Roman Caerleon' which was cancelled. Before the first lockdown we had only managed one event in 2020, on Saturday January 18th, which was a Talk by Dr Toby Driver. I had arranged this in the Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre for the Friends of the National Museum Wales which included the MAA many of whose members attended. Our chairman, Professor Ray Howell and some MAA members took advantage of Toby Driver's visit to Cardiff and met with him. Our chairman discussed a new venture concerning archaeological research to be undertaken with Chepstow Archaeological Society based on Dr Driver's aerial research. The future of the MAA was on track, but the lockdowns caused a major rethink. Many societies began to provide information online and in this way the MAA channelled information to members. Fortunately there were very few members who suffered through lack of internet connections. Fortuitously we had published Volume 35 of the Journal which kept such members updated about our Association, as well as disseminating excellent research. Anne Dunton and I organised the journal's distribution suitably masked; fortunately many members were able to collect their volumes when they came to Newport to have their vaccines. They in turn delivered other copies to members in the areas in which they lived and we were very grateful.

By October 2020 we realised more needed to be done. Many societies began to provide lectures for their members and I was involved in instigating this with another society and had been taking lessons from my daughter Rhian on arranging Zoom talks. Two members of the MAA kindly decided to fund the Zoom subscription and we began to plan a programme. We began on 24th November 2020. We set up a formula which involved our chairman introducing the speaker and giving the vote of thanks and this worked really well. It was decided that unlike some societies that were obtaining speakers on archaeological subjects from various parts of Britain, we would concentrate on local areas of historical and archaeological research.

***The Talks***

1. **On Tuesday 24th November 2020**, Dr. Elizabeth Walker gave an excellent talk on Burry Holms, Gower, a site which she had excavated and was preparing for publication. Principal Curator of Collections and Access at the National Museum Wales, Dr Walker is a specialist in Palaeolithic and Mesolithic archaeological collections. She is an expert on prehistoric stone tools, archaeological archives and collection management. She has worked on a number of cave excavations around Wales including Pontnewydd Cave in Denbighshire and Hoyle's Mouth Cave in Gower. She directed her own excavation at Cathole Cave, Gower which the MAA visited with our President

Jeremy Knight in 2016. Her fascinating talk on Burry Holms, now a coastal island but a hill some 12 miles inland during the Mesolithic period included discussion of seasonal settlement which typified the Mesolithic period. While bone and wood did not survive well on the site, many flints were recovered. So too were the residues of roasted hazel nuts which appear to have been eaten on the site as well as celandine tubers. Dr Walker also discussed the Iron Age roundhouse and medieval monastery which were later built on the site.

2. **On Tuesday 8th December 2020**, Peter Strong, one of our committee, gave a festive talk on the 'Ghost of Christmas Past – Gwent Christmases in the 1880s'. Peter, a former history teacher, is well known in Gwent and is involved in many societies as well as the MAA, notably the Gwent County History Association and the Caldicot Local History Society. Peter's talk used newspaper articles to create an interesting portrayal of how people celebrated Christmas in the 1880s. Christmas foliage and food was to the fore but the town councillors remembered the poor in the workhouse, the children in the Ragged Schools and the schoolchildren who attended the National and British Schools. Religion was very much a part of the celebrations and the difference between the Established Church and Nonconformity was apparent. Peter Strong has a large collection of talks available for people to choose from and this one fitted the festive period perfectly.

3. **On 19th January 2021** Adam Gwilt, principal curator of prehistory at the National Museum Wales, reported on the exciting 'Dyfed Iron Age Chariot burial'. This talk was organised in conjunction with Chepstow Archaeological Society and attracted 76 participants. The chariot dig was co-directed by Adam Gwilt and Dyfed Archaeological Trust, working with volunteers. MAA member and Senior Curator (Roman) at the National Roman Legionary Museum, Dr Mark Lewis, also co-excavated and co-managed the conservation of finds. Adam Gwaryilt began with the discovery of the site by Metal Detectorist Mike Smith. He stated that the discovery of the chariot burial was important because it was not just the first in Wales, but also in southern Britain. All previous British chariot burials had been discovered in northern England and Scotland. Adam Gwilt also referred to the possible identity of the individual buried with the chariot. However, as soil conditions were not conducive to the preservation of human or animal remains the identity remains unknown. He also referred to the discovery of the bronze horse fittings decorated with designs linked to late La Tène-style art which indicated the person's high status. Discovered at the entrance of a previously unknown Iron Age promontory fort, this excavation is making an important contribution to our understanding of Iron Age tribal communities.

4. **On 16th February** Dr Gill Wakley gave a talk about 'The Gunter Mansion' in Abergavenny. She is also an active member of the MAA committee, the Chair of Abergavenny Local History Society and is the Historical Research group lead for Plas Gunter Mansion. Her talk covered the Gunter family and their mansion. Dr Wakley also mentioned Father David Lewis and other Catholic priests who were supported by Thomas Gunter who he allowed illegal Catholic Masses to take place in the attic of his home in the 17th Century. During the time of the Popish Plot, Father David Lewis became the last Catholic martyr in Wales when he was hanged on 27th August 1679 at Usk. Dr Wakley provided information about the restoration project that was taking place. Boarded up for over two hundred years, the hidden chapel and fine ornate plaster ceiling were uncovered in 1907. Dr Wakley informed us about the present condition of Plas Gunter Mansion which is in a poor state of repair. Following a successful appeal, the Welsh Georgian Trust bought the building in 2017. It is now the

Plas Gunter Mansion Trust. In the same year, the Friends of Plas Gunter Mansion was set up and embarked on a campaign to bring Plas Gunter back to life.

It was at this point that I realised that we were not getting enough people to listen to the lectures and the programme was at risk unless we joined up with another society. People went to a lot of trouble to prepare their lectures and I knew from experience that it was always good to see a good number at the bottom of the screen. Therefore I decided to combine with another society, and chose The Friends of Newport Museum and Art Gallery, of which I was Chair and Professor Howell was President. The financial donors to the project agreed and the numbers then increased dramatically.

5. **On 23rd February** Emma Newrick**,** Transporter Bridge Client Project Manager, talked about 'The Newport Transporter Bridge'. It is one of only six operational transporter bridges left world-wide, from a total of twenty originally constructed. Sixty people joined zoom and it was much enjoyed. We lost contact with Emma for a few minutes just as Lord Tredegar and the Newport dignitaries appeared on the film extract which was taken in 1906. However, Emma fought technology to come back and finish the talk. Many people have said how much they enjoyed it and everyone loved the video of the opening of the bridge. We learned so much about the construction and the Transporter Bridge transformation project to be funded by the Welsh Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will enable the restoration of the bridge and construction of a new Visitor Centre.

6. **On 16th March** the MAA Patron, Professor Chris Williams**,** gave a talk on 'Prostitution in Nineteenth Century Newport'. This talk is published in this issue of the journal and so it is not necessary to describe its content. If you like to study footnotes, you will be rewarded by the vast number and variety of sources in Professor Williams's article, something Zoom talks cannot adequately convey.

7. **On 20th April** Richard Frame, a committee member of the MAA, gave a talk on 'The Auxiliers; Britain's Secret Army'. It is pleasing that this series of talks brings into focus research by local historians such as Richard Frame. The Auxiliers were a specialised group formed to act as a defensive army if Hitler's armies invaded Britain. Richard referred to Owen Sheers' book *Resistance* and the film that had indirectly increased awareness of their existence. The Auxiliers had been asked to stand down in 1944. Since the MAA's visit with Richard to the bunker in Wentwood many years ago, he had undertaken a lot more research. He had also collected many interesting illustrations not previously seen by the public. He talked about the formation of the Auxiliers' units and especially those formed in Monmouthshire. He mentioned particularly the one in Wentwood, the condition of which, like others in Monmouthshire, was deteriorating. Richard Frame has not published this information but hopes to do so soon.

8. **On 11th May 2021** Dr Peter Guest discussed 'Becoming Roman in Britain: a History of the Civitas Silurum'. The speaker's association with the MAA began when he was manager of the Roman Legionary Museum from 1995 to 1997. He then joined the faculty of Cardiff University where he lectured on topics including Britannia and the north western provinces, the Roman army and frontiers, and the Roman economy and coinage. His highly successful excavations in Caerleon have transformed our understanding of the Roman fortress. In 2019, Dr Guest set up Vianova to

provide 'high quality specialist services and solutions to the archaeological and historic environment communities'. In his talk, he reviewed his excavations in Caerleon with comparative insights from Caerwent. The result was a series of important revelations about both sites and the development of early medieval Wales.

9. **On 22nd June** Dr Oliver Davis, senior lecturer in archaeology and civic mission at Cardiff University, gave a lecture on 'Excavations at Caerau Hillfort, Cardiff: rethinking Iron Age hillforts and the Silures of south east Wales'. He has been involved in investigation of the site since 2011 and excavation has begun to produce important new insights into the Iron Age in the region. The site has also proved to be an excellent vehicle for community engagement. Dr. Davis is co-director of CAER Heritage, a major engagement and civic mission project at the university designed to engage local people including school children in their shared history and 'to encourage participation in arts and culture and to help challenge marginalisation'. He also discussed the theoretical camps of 'Hierarchists' and 'Levellers' amongst Iron Age scholars, arguing that the Caerau site did little to support the idea of hierarchical tribal structures amongst the Silures.

10. **On 27th July** Christabel Hutchings gave a lecture on 'The memorialisation of Mining Disasters in south-east Wales'. It was the least successful as for some reason people had problems signing in and so numbers were down. It began as research for a visit planned by Christabel to the 'Guardian' memorial at Six Bells but this became impossible due to Covid lockdowns. Christabel began her talk by discussing the dangers of deep shaft mining and the need for memorialisation and the memorials that were erected in various localities. She then looked in more detail at the Six Bells Mining Disaster of 1961 and described the creation of the 'Guardian' memorial by artist Sebastien Boyesen. She finished with her own views on this iconic memorial with the hope that soon we would be able to resume visits in person.

**Christabel Hutchings**
Previously Hon. Secretary. Currently Hon. Trustee with responsibility for digital communication relating to the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association and for tasks concerning the archives and library.

# NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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

***Arthur Edwards*** is a Canon emeritus of Newport Cathedral. He retired as area Dean of Newport and Vicar of Caerleon in 2012. He left London University in 1966 with an M.Phil. degree in history and he was ordained in the Church in Wales in 1968. His publications include *Archbishop Green* (Gomer Press, 1986) and *Thomas Thomas of Pontypool* (Apecs Press, Caerleon, 2009). After researching the religious and social history of nineteenth century Monmouthshire, he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Cardiff University in 2016.

***Tony Hopkins*** retired as County Archivist at Gwent Archives in 2019 and now works there part-time as a cataloguer; he has worked for the service since 1987. He was born in Neath and attended Neath Grammar School before going to Swansea University where he obtained a degree in English in 1976. He worked on the South Wales Coalfield Archive in the university before training as an archivist at Aberystwyth University. He later gained an MA in history from Cardiff University, where he taught for fifteen years as a part-time tutor in the University's Lifelong Learning Department. In recognition of this he was awarded an Honorary Research Fellowship there. He is co-editor of the medieval volume of *The Gwent County History* series and has been editor of *Gwent Local History* since 1997. He was joint editor of *Morgannwg*, the journal of the Glamorgan History Society, for a decade from 2010. This volume of *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* (vol. XXXVI) is his first as Hon. Editor.

***Christabel Hutchings*** has researched the history of education in the nineteenth century, for which she was awarded an M.Ed. by Cardiff University. Furthermore, she completed an MA in Celtic-Roman studies at the University of Wales, Newport; her dissertation was entitled 'Slavery and Status in Roman Britain'. In 2010, she was elected Honorary Secretary of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association. In addition, she is also a member of the following committees: the South Wales Record Society; the Gwent County History Association; the Friends of Newport Museum and Art Gallery and the Friends of National Museum Wales. She has published articles in both *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* and *Morgannwg* and edited two volumes for the South Wales Record Society. She has recently been created a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

***Jeremy Knight*** who was born in Caerleon, read archaeology at University College, Cardiff. For over thirty years, he was inspector of ancient monuments, whose wide area of responsibility included Monmouthshire. He has undertaken a major excavation at Montgomery Castle; written many guidebooks to monuments; and has published numerous articles. A major work, *The End of Antiquity,* was published in 2000 (2nd revised edit., 2007). He published *Civil War & Restoration inMonmouthshire* in 2005 and his book *South Wales from the Romans to the Normans – Christianity, Literacy & Lordship* was published in 2013. His most recent book, *Blaenavon: Iron Town to World Heritage Site,* was published by Logaston Press in 2016.

***Jeremy Morris*** was Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge from 2014 to 2021 and before that Dean of King's College, Cambridge. He is a specialist in modern religious history, including the Anglican tradition, the ecumenical movement, and arguments about secularization and has written several books on these subjects. He also wrote the chapter on religion in *The Gwent County History Vol 5*: *the Twentieth Century* (UWP 2013).

***Chris Williams*** is currently Professor of History and Head of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences at University College Cork, Ireland, an appointment he took up in 2017. He read Modern History at Balliol College, Oxford, graduating in 1985. He was awarded his doctorate from University College, Cardiff in 1991. In 1988 he was appointed to a lectureship in Nineteenth-Century British History at University of Wales College of Cardiff and taught there until 2001. From 2001 to 2004 he was Professor of Modern and Contemporary Wales at the University of Glamorgan and from 2005 to 2013 Professor of Welsh History at Swansea University. He returned to Cardiff University in 2013 as Professor of History and Head of the School of History, Archaeology and Religion. He has made a major contribution to the history of Wales and Britain with numerous publications. In 2012 his edition of the diaries of Richard Burton was published to widespread acclaim. He was co-editor of volumes 4 and 5 of the Gwent County History series.

***David H. Williams*** was born in Newport and educated at Bassaleg School and Trinity College, Cambridge. He has two main research interests, the study of seals and Cistercian studies. He is acknowledged as one of the foremost scholars in the latter field. David Williams accomplished this whilst serving as an Anglican priest in Wales (including in the diocese of Monmouth), Libya and Poland, from where he returned in 1997 to settle near Aberystwyth. He was honorary editor of *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* from 1990 to 2000, after which he became honorary assistant editor and as acting editor took volumes XXV–XXVI (2009–10) and vol. XXVII (2011) through the press. His book, *The Tudor Cistercians*, was published in 2014.

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