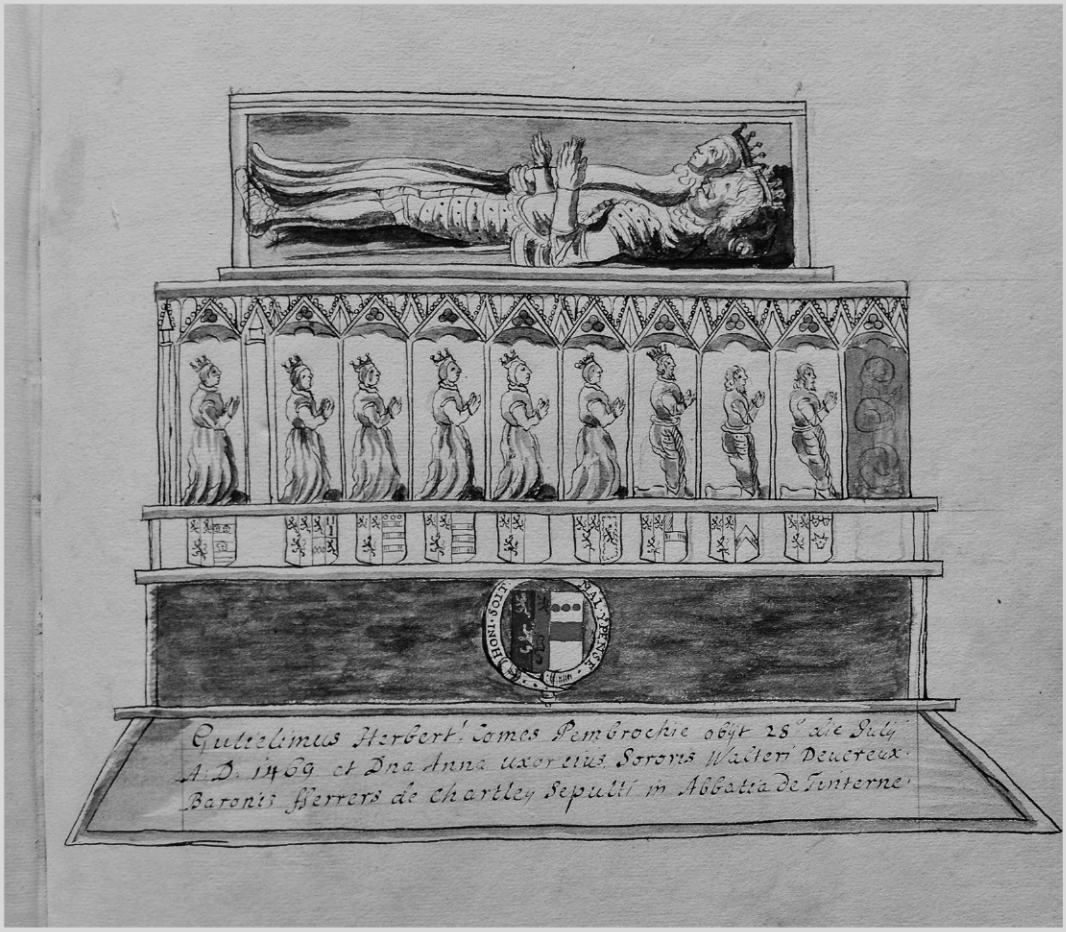
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Front cover: The tomb of William Herbert, first earl of Pembroke, and Anne Devereux, from the *Herbertorum Prosapia*: Cardiff Library MS 5.7 p. 145. Reproduced with permission of Cardiff Libraries. See this volume, 'The Lost Tombs of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and his son William Herbert, Earl of Huntingdon, in Tintern Abbey', by Maddy Gray.

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NEW LIGHT ON HILLFORTS IN THE LOWER WYE VALLEY

By Simon Maddison

Introduction

The rapidly expanding availability of Lidar data is opening up new opportunities for exploring previously unrecognised features in monuments such as hillforts, as well as setting them much more clearly in a landscape context. Lidar operates in a similar way to Radar, but uses light, and creates an elevation picture of the ground. Some of the light frequencies used penetrate foliage, and the data can be processed to remove this and create an image of the underlying terrain. Processing can also remove buildings, so that only the flat ground level is what remains.

Lidar is proving to be a very powerful tool for visualizing earthworks and other features on the ground in previously unseen detail. It complements aerial photography, but even for very subtle changes in elevation allows many more possibilities for display and visual enhancement. One of its biggest advantages is the way it exposes features hidden within woodland, grass, crops and scrub. One of the most dramatic examples of this advance is the recent discovery of previously unknown urban sites within the Amazon river basin (Prümers, Betancourt, Iriarte et al. 2022).

Processing and displaying this data is aided by modern GIS tools that enable the combination of Lidar data, aerial photography and digitised maps of different vintages.

The publication in 2022 of the hardcopy *Atlas of Hillforts* (Lock and Ralston), following the online web Atlas of Hillforts (Lock and Ralston 2017) is also making the study of hillforts significantly more accessible than in the past, with its comprehensive gazetteer for all of Britain and Ireland.

The Wye hillforts along the border in this area have been covered by Lidar from the English Department of the Environment at a horizontal resolution of 1 or 2m for some time, but this has very recently been augmented with 1m covering most of Wales; sites further from the border are now also included. It is this latter data that has been used for this study.

It seems a good opportunity to take advantage of these recent advances to have a look at the cluster of hillforts along the Wye in the vicinity of Chepstow in some detail, to see what we might be able to learn from this rich new source of data.

There is a remarkable concentration of six hillforts in this area, in the space of just a few kms, see Fig. 1, all quite close to Chepstow. These six sites form a natural spatial cluster based on a threshold spacing of 5km, see Fig. 2. This clustering technique is a useful way of identifying groupings, and is described in much more detail in chapter 8 of the *Atlas of Hillforts* (2022) and chapter 5 of *Archaeological Spatial Analysis: A Methodological Guide* (2020), for example. All but one of these are in close proximity to the Wye, and the one that is a little further away, Gaer Hill, has an impressive and commanding view all the way down the estuary to the Severn and across to the Cotswolds. There seems no doubt that they are in their own different ways intimately bound to the river.

Overview

The two figures below show this hillfort cluster on a conventional map, Fig. 1, and on a topographic map to show their relation to the local terrain and streams, Fig. 2. Both include neighbouring hillforts in Southeast Wales, coloured grey.

Each of these hillforts will now be discussed in detail, in turn. Where appropriate references to the relevant Historic Environment Record (HER) are included. The websites for these are included at the end.

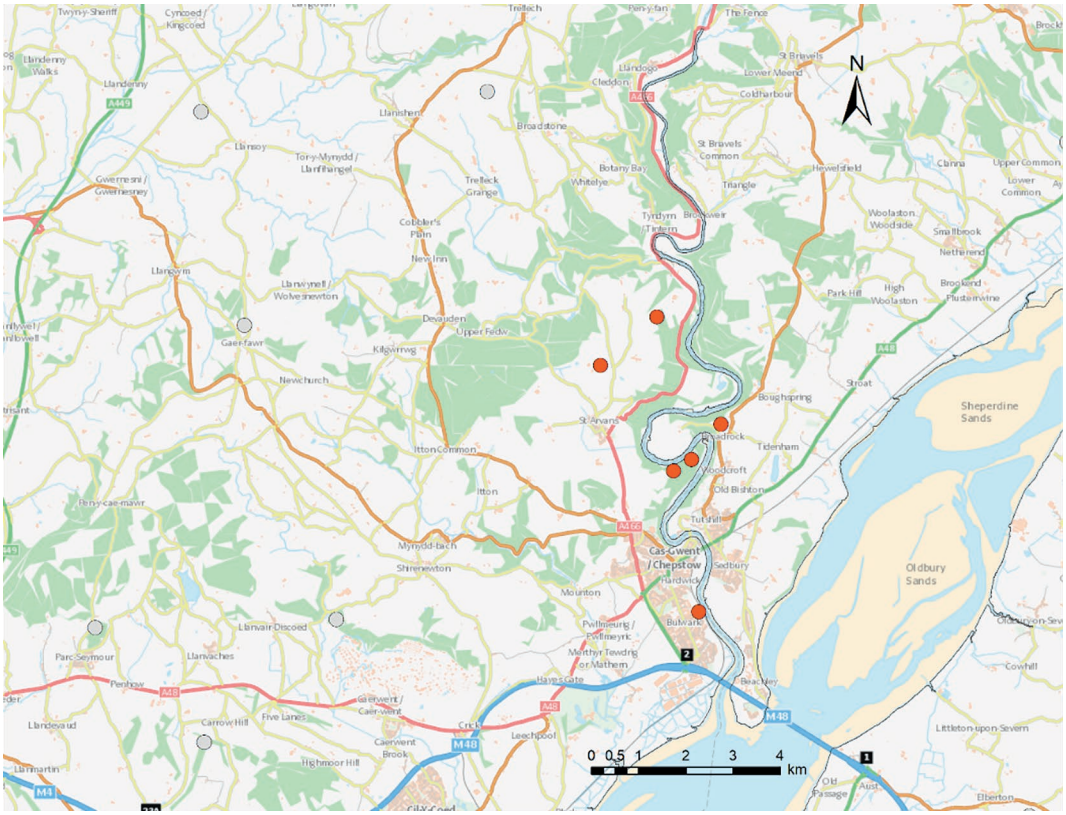


Fig. 1: The lower Wye hillfort cluster, shown in orange.

The Bulwarks

HER record: Glamorgan Gwent 01193g / Archwilio.

The Bulwarks in the eponymous part of Chepstow is a well-located hillfort right on the cliffs overlooking the Wye, with excellent views across to Beachley and beyond to the other side of the Severn. The site is now hemmed in by industrial buildings and is used as a recreational field. The eastern/ north-eastern side to the river is fenced in to protect the railway below. It is so overgrown that it is now not possible to see the railway or the river, and much of the vantage is lost. The south-eastern corner however does provide excellent views particularly when the foliage is low in winter, Fig. 4 & Fig. 5.

The ramparts are on the northern and western sides and are heavily grown over with trees and scrub. It is hard to see them and indeed it is difficult to recognise it as a hillfort on the ground. However, the Lidar image shows the site topography in reasonably good detail.

A number of features are worth noting, backed up by recent site visits following ash die back tree cutting, see Fig. 3.

The **east/ northeastern** side does not have any sign of a rampart. There is a high galvanised steel railway fence along this edge, and trees and shrubs growing vigorously on the steep slope

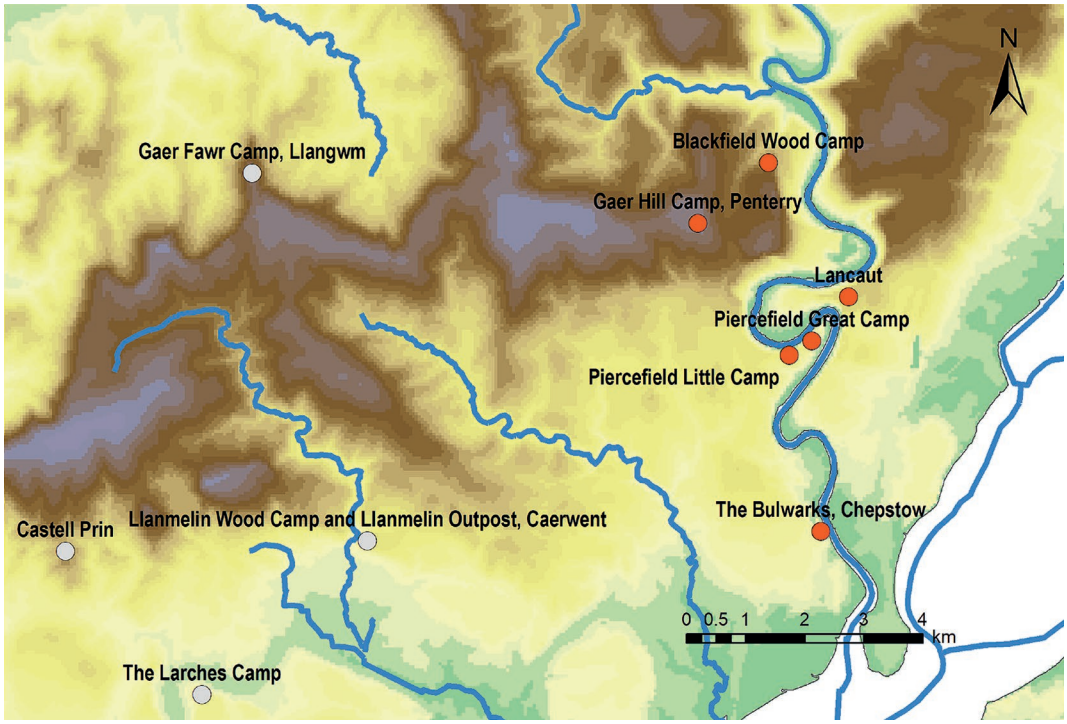


Fig. 2: Southeast Wales hillforts on a terrain model with rivers and larger streams.

down to the railway. It seems likely that there has been erosion along this edge, which may in part result from the construction of the railway in the mid-19th Century. Two substantial 'scallops' in the edge can be seen from the lidar image. The slight promontory in the middle might be an interesting location to look for evidence of a paling along what might be left of the original edge.

The **north/northwestern** curving bivallate ramparts are bounded very closely by an industrial laundry business, which has almost certainly encroached upon and mostly obliterated the outer ditch, Fig. 7. The inner rampart at this point is quite substantial being perhaps 3m high. This is faced by a ditch. There is then a berm perhaps 4m wide to a smaller outer rampart, almost like a counter scarp. This feature is hard to see on the ground due to foliage. The ramparts dwindle towards the river cliff. It is a popular spot for den building with old pallets and dumped furniture.

The **berm** is an interesting feature, as it is relatively narrow. This is unlike hillforts of the southwestern type, with very widely spaced ramparts which might have been used for livestock (Fox 1958). This rampart seems too narrow and the outer rampart too small. It could be an interesting area to investigate for possible defensive features such as ankle-breakers or chevaux-de-frise, such as those found at Castell Henlys for example, see Lock and Ralston (2022, pp 193–196).

Entrance: The outer rampart with inner berm continues westward to the northwest facing entrance, where it seems that the outer elements have been destroyed. There is now a small, tarmacked car parking area and entrance path with some adjacent grass where the ramparts and

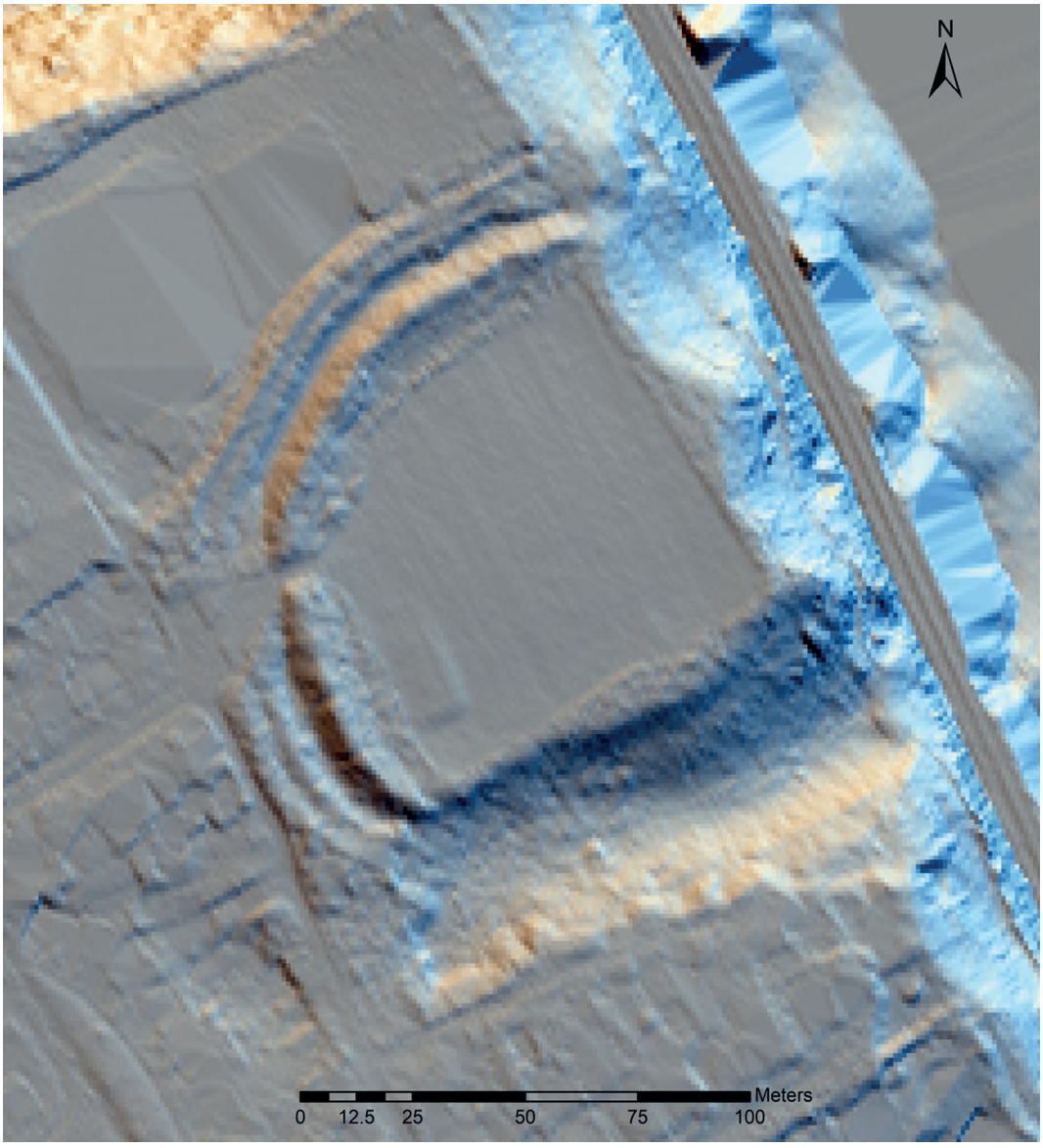


Fig. 3: The Bulwarks, Chepstow. Multi-directional hillshade lidar, 1m resolution.

outworks may have been. The assumption might be that this entranceway is original, and if so, it is of a very simple form with no in- or out-turn. There is a slight widening of the distance between the northern ramparts at this point which would be consistent with it being original. However, it is possible that it is a more recent cut through, based on its very simplicity. Geophysical survey might be able to identify traces of rampart, ditch, and entrance features on the grassy areas outside, but is unlikely to be of use where it has been tarmacked. Clearance of the scrub around the terminations on either side of the entrance might also help interpretation.



Fig. 4: View from the centre of the hillfort in the snow, looking southeast. To the left is the fenced boundary above the railway, and to the right the trees on the edge of the gully.
There are no indications of any ramparts along these two sides.



Fig. 5: View from the southeastern corner of the hillfort over the Wye to Beachley, covered in snow, and the Cotswolds in the far distance beyond the Severn. Activity on both rivers is readily monitored from this site.

The alternative is that there could have been an entrance along the riverside edge in the northwestern corner. There is a very slight turn in the rampart here as it approaches the cliff that supports this view. If so, it would be similar to Lancaut and Blackfield Wood, where the entrances are adjacent to a steep natural face.

The **western/ southwestern** outer rampart is still discernible along this side of the site, looking at the Lidar. On the ground it is completely obscured by brambles and is immediately adjacent to an unmade roadway that services the backs of the nearby houses. The southwestern corner of the site abuts a natural gully, similar to those found elsewhere along the coastal footpath back towards Chepstow, and which forms the south/ south-eastern side of the site.

The junction at this point is hard to work out and has probably suffered from much later landscaping and dumping. It is also hard to see from the ground, being so overgrown. Some clearance of scrub could help identify what happens to the ramparts and ditch at this point, and how they adjoin the gully.

The **south/ south-eastern** side of the site is bounded by the natural gully mentioned above. This has trees and scrub along the slope top and down into the valley and is also used to dump grass cuttings from the field. It seems likely that this edge is not much altered from the time of hillfort construction. There is absolutely no indication of a rampart along this edge. It seems possible therefore that there may have been a paling along it to help define the space and provide protection. A modest investigation along the edge might help establish this and would not need to be much more intrusive than removing the turf.



Fig. 6: South/ south-eastern flank of the hillfort looking west, gully to the left, showing signs of scarp accentuation.

A more subtle feature of this side of the site can be seen both on the lidar and on the ground, and that is the scarp of the slope may have been artificially accentuated in order to make it steeper, Fig. 6. This is a technique that has been used along stretches of Offa's Dyke, such as that upstream at Tidenham and is an economical way of creating an intimidating façade (Ray and Bapty (2016, pp 377–379)).

Within **the inner part** of the site, in the southwestern corner there is a rectangular level platform which is probably the site of a modern hut, possibly from war time, Fig. 3. There was a military camp close by in the First World War, built to house workers for the shipyard in Chepstow, and also prisoners of war.

Although the site is located in immediate proximity to the river, with splendid views right down to the Severn and across Beachley, there is no obvious access to the river or to a safe and practical landing site nearby. It seems therefore that its prime function may have been to do with the farmed hinterland, with its position giving the occupiers good understanding of traffic up and down the river and enabling warning in times of danger. In terms of features and these aspects, the site seems similar to Little Piercefield Camp.

The site has had minimal investigation and is undated. It also appears to have been the subject of intermittent night-hawking in recent years. The coverage of trees along the main ramparts and its use as a recreation and dog walking ground mean that most people probably do not even realise that they are within a hillfort. The recent cut back of ash trees along the north side exposed the ditch and berm in places, although scrub is growing back again quite rapidly. Some modest investigations as suggested above, with community engagement, might generate better understanding of the site, and encourage its ongoing care and conservation by the locality.



Fig. 7: The northern rampart (right) and ditch (centre), looking east with the berm covered in trees on the left. The outer rampart is hidden in vegetation, with the industrial estate far left in the background.

Great Piercefield Camp
HER record: 00772g; the two records relating to the additional rampart near the riverbank are: 08834g and 09920g / Archwilio.

Great Piercefield Camp is the large hillfort towards the end of the Piercefield peninsula, dominating a hairpin turn in the river Wye, Fig. 8. Immediately to the west along the riverbank is Little Piercefield Camp, described later.

The **southwestern** side of the hillfort is defined by a very ancient land slip and geological fault, also shown in Fig. 8. Indeed, the construction of the main rampart at this point utilises the natural topography created by these features. A natural gully runs northwest to southeast and has been exploited to both form and aid definition of the outer rampart (Fig. 15). The outermost ditch seems to extend a little way down slope to the north.

The main **northwestern** facet of the hillfort is the steep natural slope that goes down to the riverbank. It seems likely that this has eroded in places, particularly based on inspection of the northern rampart termination where it meets the slope. However, the fact that the outermost ditch at the western end goes a short way downslope suggests that this was not the case here.

The **entrance** to the hillfort comprises an impressive in-turned entrance, Fig. 9, with what may be some form of barbican or so-called guard chamber on its eastern side, butting up to the in-turn and the outer rampart. There are, however, modern shelters/ bothies around this part of the site which have probably been constructed from rampart stone, so it is possible that this might post-date the original construction. The entrance way slopes up steeply to the interior (Fig. 14).

For the first 70m or so along the **southeastern facing rampart** away from the entrance, there is a continuation of the outer ditch, but it finishes abruptly. From the lidar, the appearance of this ditch along the southern corner is rather different from the two major ditches fronting the hillfort to the southeast. They almost have the appearance of a sequence of quarry pits. There are two possible smaller extensions to this further northeast. The rampart also reduces in scale along this section, until it becomes what is essentially a low boulder wall and continues in this form (Fig. 17) until it curves north and northwest until it abuts the river cliff.

The combination of the **southwest facing ditches and ramparts** to the landward side of the peninsula with the natural gully southeast of the entrance form a formidable prospect to any approach from this direction, Fig. 10. However, the scale and reducing size of the remaining ramparts suggest that the overall intent is a display of power and control when approached from the landward side, as opposed to a defensive structure all the way around its perimeter. This will be returned to shortly.

There is a **separate and substantial section of rampart** to the east of the entrance way, running down to the river, but completely disconnected from the enclosure ramparts. This is a bank with outer ditch and small counterscarp bank (Fig. 13). This seems to have been entered twice into the HER, having been independently noted from Lidar in 2012 (HER Ref: 09920g), but earlier by Ken Murphy in 2005 as part of the Piercefield Walk survey project (HER Ref: 08834g). The latter has been located incorrectly which is perhaps why the second entry was made without appreciating that they were the same feature.

This outwork rampart, equivalent in size and scale to the main southwest facing rampart, is unexplained, and might be considered an unfinished extension or annex. However, seeing it when coming upstream along the Welsh riverbank, rounding the bulge of the natural landslip, it suddenly appears as a very formidable structure. This is partially captured in Fig. 11 and Fig. 12. Far from being an unfinished rampart, it is clearly designed to create a very strong impression on any approach up stream by river. This echoes the observation above that the aim of the ramparts on the southwest

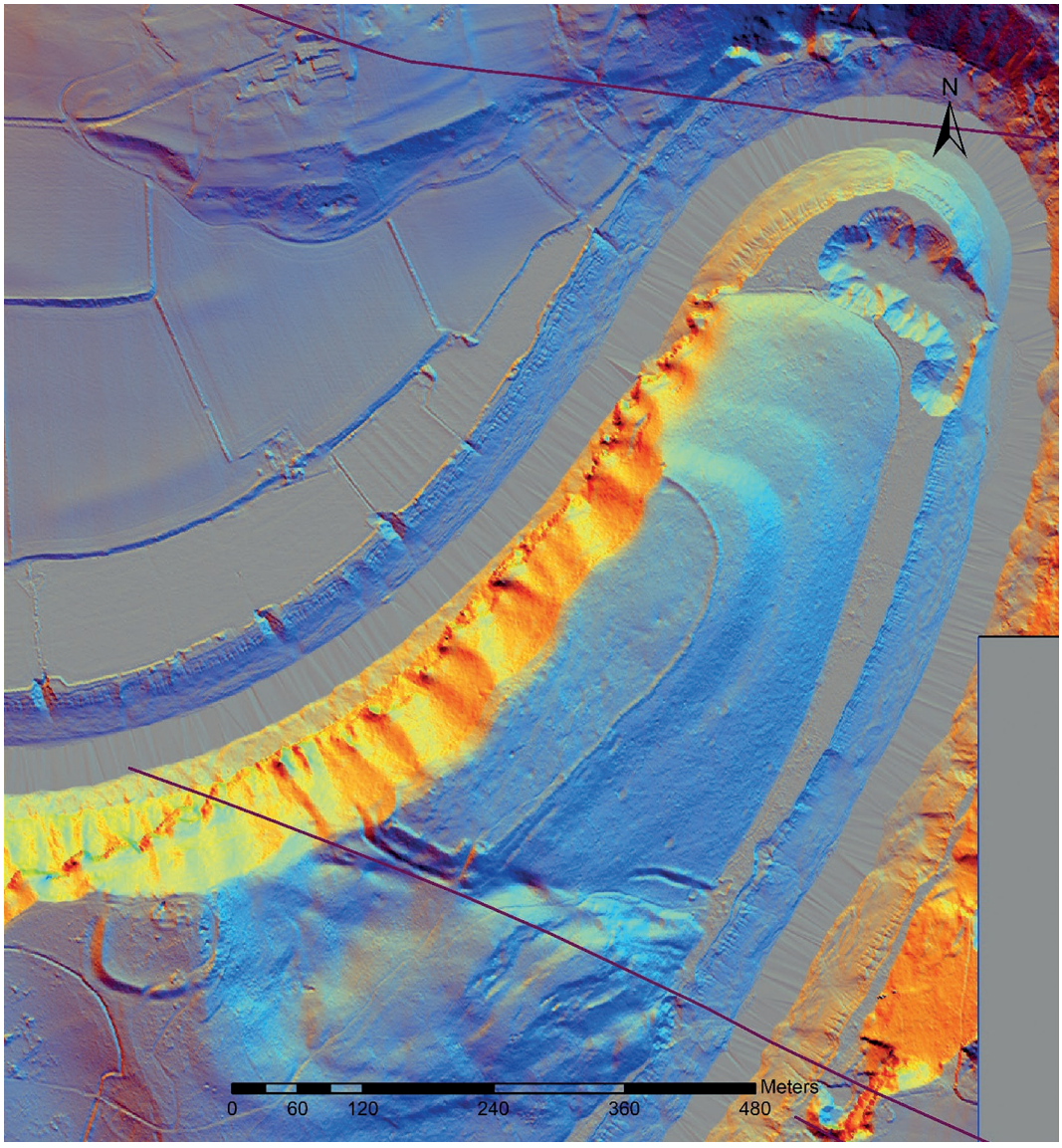


Fig. 8: The Piercefield peninsula, showing both hillforts. The southwestern edge of the main camp is bounded by an ancient land slip. A major geological fault can be seen running through marked in dark red. The block at bottom right is where the lidar scan finished.

is to create an impression of control and power, rather than being a comprehensive defence structure around the hillfort's perimeter.

The view from the southeast, once past this lower rampart, is rather different, Fig. 12, emphasizing the difference in impression created by the ramparts from the different directions. The rampart facing southeast can be seen to be much less impressive and significant, and mostly with no ditch. It is almost a delineation of space rather than a rampart.

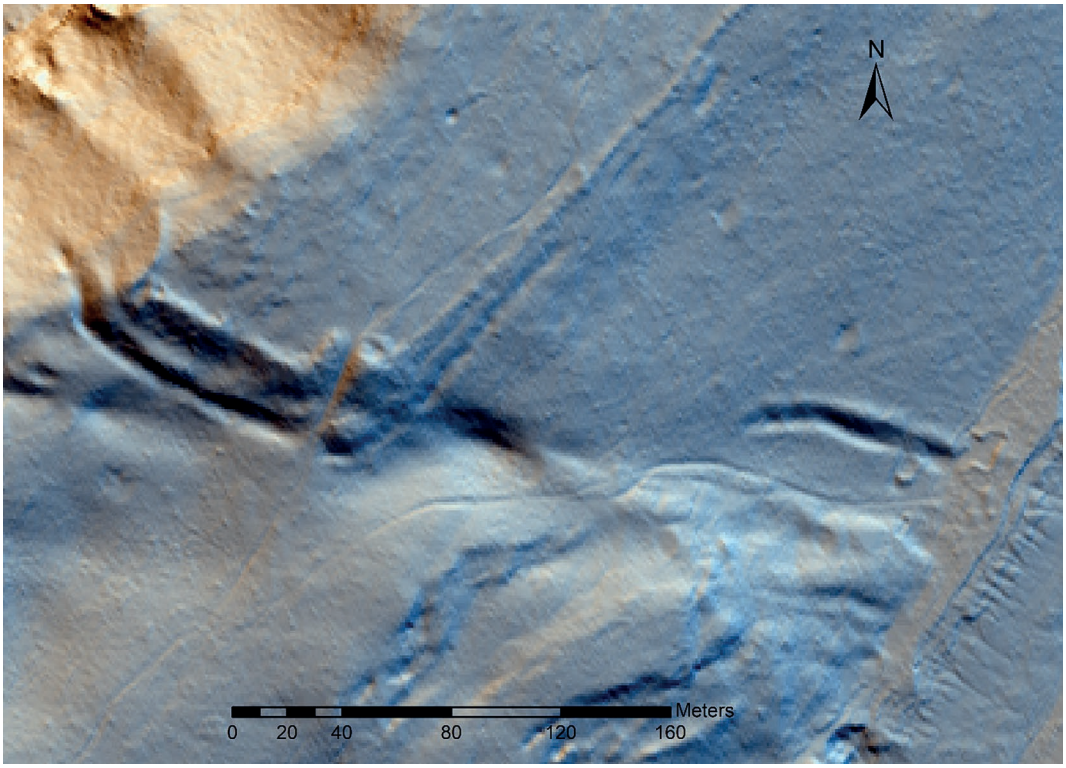


Fig. 9: Multidirectional hillshade lidar of Piercefield Camp main ramparts facing south/ southeast, with the riverside rampart to the right centre.

Other analysis of the lidar data suggests that there may be the remnants of roundhouse platforms within the camp, see Fig. 18. The pock marks could be the vestiges of structures. There are also a few similar marks outside the rampart to the southeast, which may be related.

The hillfort is undated and has had minimal investigation. The site has extensive tree cover which limits the views over the river; it can be a scramble to access, but is relatively free from scrub, so the ramparts can readily be seen. It is assumed that much of the tree cover would not have been there in the time of its use, allowing for strategic views both up and down the river, and for its formidable ramparts to be clearly seen from outside.

The key question is the role of this hillfort. It is quite distinct from the others in this cluster in terms of the scale of its ramparts and the nature of its construction. This may reflect both the date of its construction and its role within the landscape.

The arguments above suggest that it was perhaps intended as a gateway or control point for territory upriver, when being approached from the south, whether by land or river. This is based on the scale and orientation of its ramparts and the outwork by the river.

There is a water meadow along the riverbank, a little above the high tide mark, that extends from the downstream delimitation of the site, up to the end of the peninsula where it broadens out considerably to the north, see Fig. 8. At this point there is what seems to be a natural harbour created by the tidal flows and deposition of sediments, although this might be the result of more recent

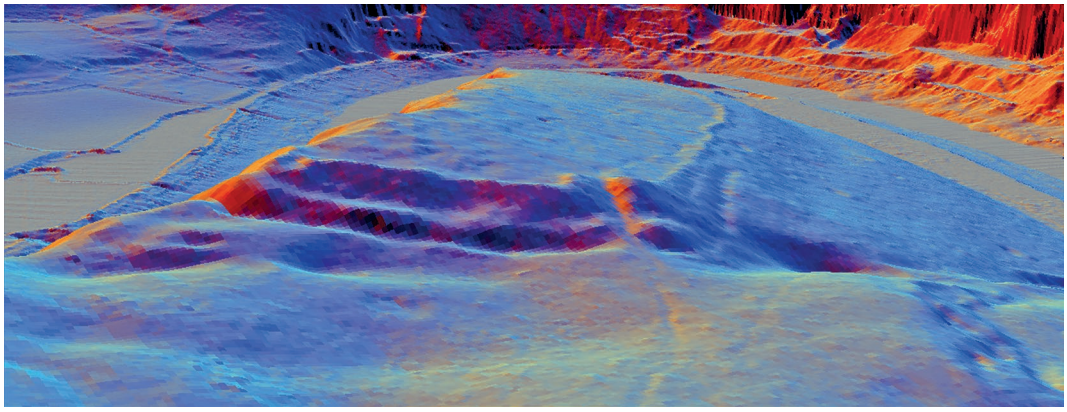


Fig. 10: Landward approach to the Piercefield camp; the outer riverside rampart to the right. GIS generated 3D model.

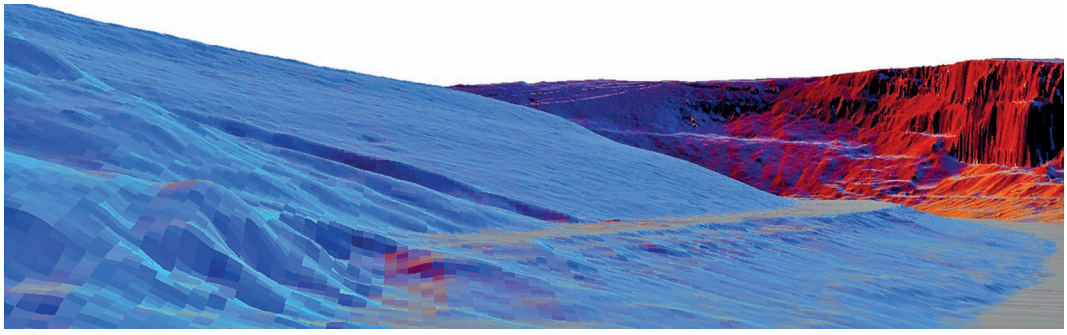


Fig. 11: The view of the separate rampart from the river approach going upstream, centre left, with the water meadow and riverbank in the foreground. The ancient landslip is to the left. GIS generated 3D model.

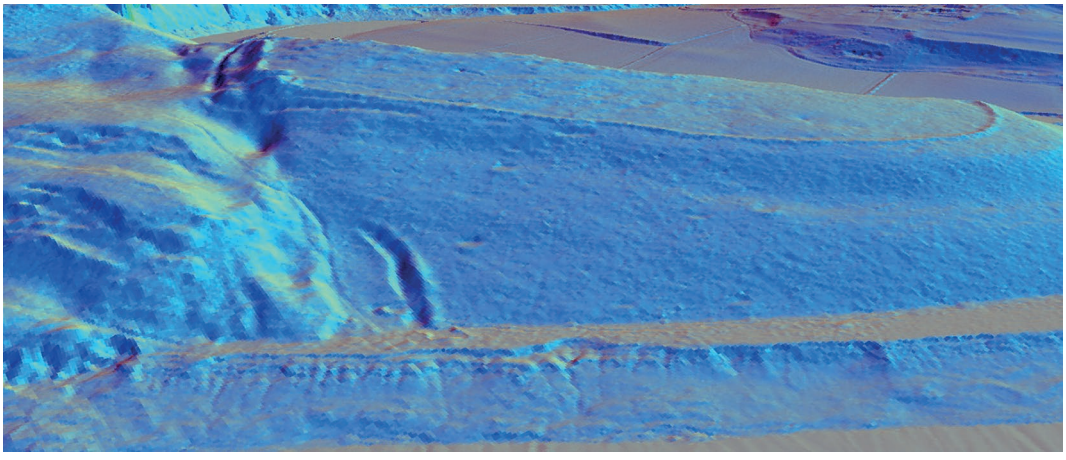


Fig. 12: View from the southeastern side.



Fig. 13: The outwork from the downstream side, looking down towards the river.



Fig. 14: Looking up the entrance way toward the interior.



Fig. 15: Southwestern face, outer ditch and outer bank looking northwest.



Fig. 16: Natural harbour at the north of the peninsula, looking downriver from the outer bank.



Fig. 17: Rampart towards the northeastern end. Reduced in scale although it does take advantage of the natural scarp.

quarrying or dredging, as elsewhere along the river upstream (Fig. 16). In either case this presents a suitable location for ships to beach, and possibly the trading and exchange of goods and exacting tolls. It could be that this site performed a trading function similar to that of Chepstow in the Middle Ages.

Although there are drainage ditches cut along the inside of the levels at this point, and what might be a beaching place, there is no obvious indication of when these might have been constructed. There is moreover no back entrance to the hillfort from the north, the site appears to have only a single entrance on the southwest corner. Also, from the lidar, there do not seem to be any obvious signs of activity to the north end of the peninsula, below the ramparts. This seems to be counter to the above argument for it being a trading location. Alternatively, perhaps the activity was located at the southern end, close to the outwork rampart running down to the river.

To investigate these questions, and the possibility of roundhouse platforms, the site warrants a careful and thorough ground survey, focusing on these particular areas. Conservation of the ramparts is also important, and the issue of removing rampart stones to build bothies within and on the ramparts should be addressed.

Little Piercefield Camp
HER record: 00773g / Archwilio.

Little Piercefield Camp is quite different from its large neighbour. It is quite small, squarish in form, but built right up against the cliffs above the Wye with commanding views over the river and the Lancaut peninsula, to the north and northeast, Fig. 19 & Fig. 20. It is located to the west side of the geological fault and landslip which bounds the western end of the larger hillfort on the peninsula, Fig. 8 & Fig. 19. This may simply be an exploitation of the natural topography.



Fig. 18: Sky View Factor lidar image of Piercefield Camp. Possible roundhouse platforms can be seen within the perimeter.

Examination of Fig. 19 shows it in relation to Piercefield House and the meadow to the south of the house. The 18th Century parkland ha-ha can be seen running quite close to it on its way towards the top of the cliffs. A closer view of the site is in Fig. 20.

There is a **single rampart and ditch**, with the hint of an external counter scarp bank that may be the result of ditch maintenance. The ramparts to the east are heavily covered in scrub and appear to be affected by 18th and 19th Century landscaping related to the Walks and the Grotto; they may also have been affected by farm activity, as there might have been a farm located within. There are the signs of later building within the hillfort boundary. The ramparts to the south and west are much better defined and in good condition.

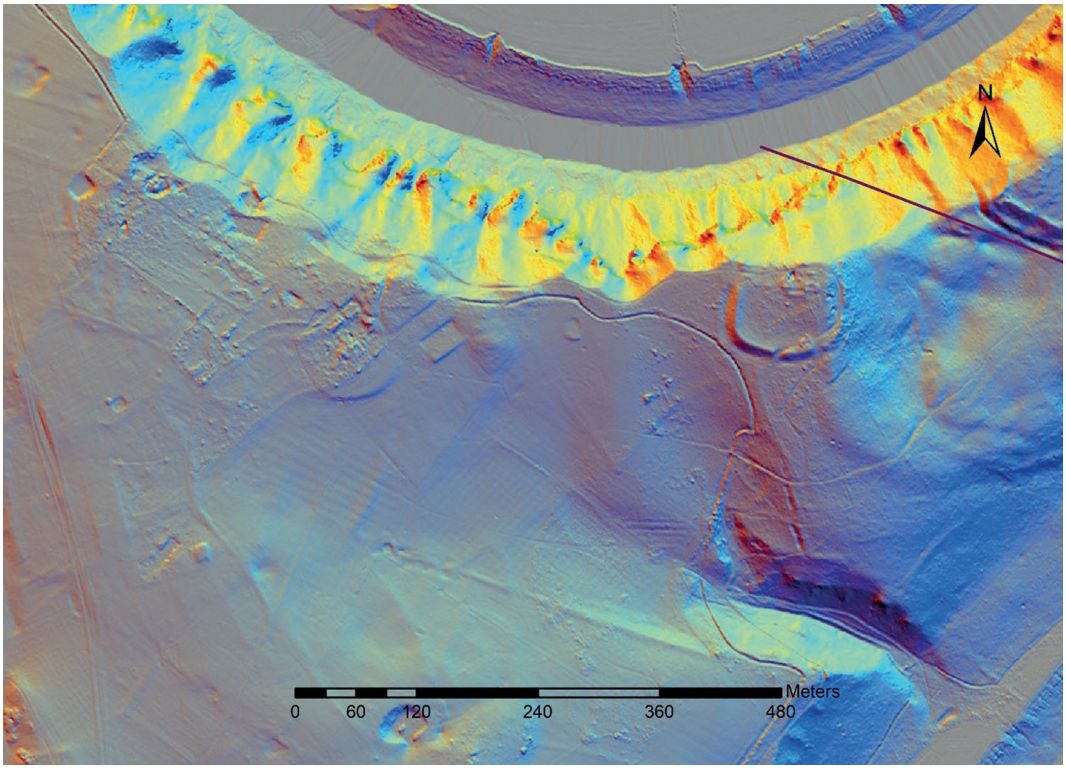


Fig. 19: Little Piercefield Camp and Piercefield House and meadow. The outer rampart of the Great Camp can be seen top right, and the geological fault.

The Piercefield Walks, from the 18th Century, run along the cliff top, and cross the hillfort ramparts on both sides along the cliff. If there was an original entrance at the western cliff end, it has been affected by landscaping, but the termination of the ditch and bank as seen in the lidar support the idea of an original entrance. If this were the case, it would be similar to Lancaut and Blackfield Wood with an entrance close to a steep bank or cliff. A ground survey and possibly some scrub clearance might help to better understand this. Interestingly, it is hard to realise that the hillfort is there when walking along the old walk. Following its periphery on the ramparts however, rewards with a clear perspective of its form.

There is an **entrance** to the south of the hillfort, which is very simple, but might either be an original or later entrance way. Whilst it is quite substantial, and there is the evidence below to consider, its configuration does not seem compelling as an original entrance design.

There is a noticeable causeway or trackway that runs from this entrance south westerly across the meadow. These can be seen in both Fig. 19 and more clearly in Fig. 21. It clearly predates the ha-ha, as well as other orthogonal features which may be old field boundaries. There is also evidence of ridge and furrow on the Piercefield meadow, which is later than both the possible field boundaries and the trackway. We can also presume that the ridge and furrow pre-date Piercefield's grander days as a fine house. It is possible then that this is an approach to the hillfort from the southwest. The

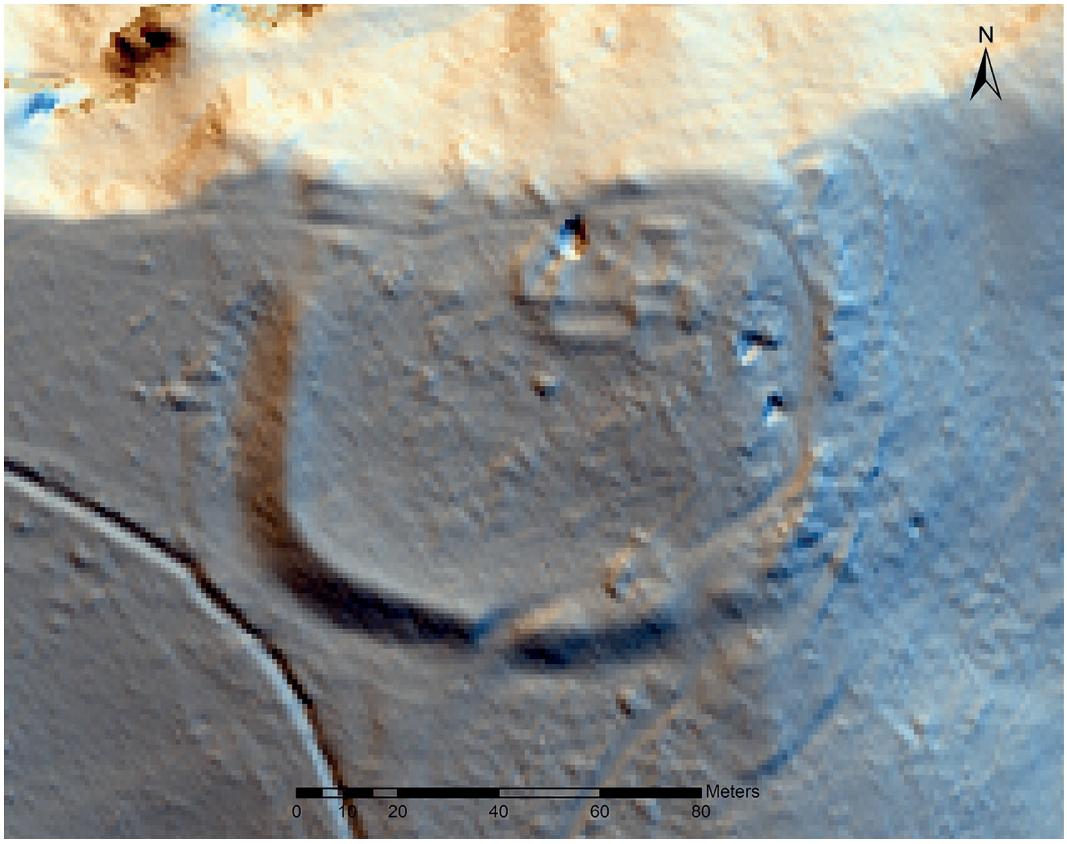


Fig. 20: Little Piercefield Camp, multi-directional hillshade. The ha-ha runs across the bottom left corner of the picture.

suggestion of a trackway running round the inner rampart going east north may be the result of farm activity connected with the later buildings within its interior.

As noted above, Little Piercefield Camp is quite different in scale and in construction from its bigger neighbour to the northeast on the peninsula. It is quite similar in some respects to the Bulwarks, in size, scale of construction and location on the cliff top. It seems hard to assign it the postulated role of Great Piercefield Camp, i.e., it being gatekeeper to territory and river to the north, and it does not have any ready access to the river and beaching facilities as does its neighbour.

In this respect it perhaps had a comparable role to the Bulwarks as providing control and refuge for farmed land to the south and east, with a good view of the river to track traffic and provide due warning in times of danger.

We have no dating evidence, but instinctively it feels as though the bigger camp is earlier through the scale and nature of its construction, reflecting bigger pretensions and ambitions than its smaller neighbour which had more modest functions in a later era. Only dating evidence would help with this supposition.



Fig. 21: Sky View Factor lidar model of the hillfort and the landscape including Piercefield House. This shows the ridge and furrow, and the old field boundaries and track very clearly.

Blackfield/ Blackcliffe Wood Camp

HER Record: 00748g; Soil sampling and geophysics have also been carried out on the site: E004589 and E004590 /Archwilio.

This hillfort is described as Blackfield Wood Camp in the Atlas, and Blackcliffe and Blackcliff Wood Camp in Archwilio. Fig. 22 shows the hillfort in its landscape context, at the end of a north facing promontory looking over the Wye valley and farmlands towards Tintern to the north. Notable are the vestiges of field boundaries in the land to the south, with ridge and furrow aligned with and in some cases overlaying them, as the promontory widens out. There is also a row of pits near the bottom in the eponymous Mine Pit Wood.

Fig. 23 shows the site in more detail. The northwestern and eastern sides of the site are well defined by the natural steep sloping scarps, and there is no indication of any rampart along these edges. It is possible that they may have been bounded by a paling. The **rampart** is a well-defined single rampart and ditch, with a small counter scarp bank, and is in good condition (Fig. 24). There is an in-turned **entrance** to the northeastern end which is probably original. The Wye Valley path runs over the eastern end of the rampart causing some erosion, but there is no indication of a second entrance. The site is wooded, but the banks are clearly visible.

Although there are modern paths that run along the northeastern scarp, and substantial worn trackways at the bottom of the valley to the north, these do not appear to link in with the hillfort entrance. There is a natural valley and ridge along the eastern scarp, which would have provided additional deterrence to any approach from that side.

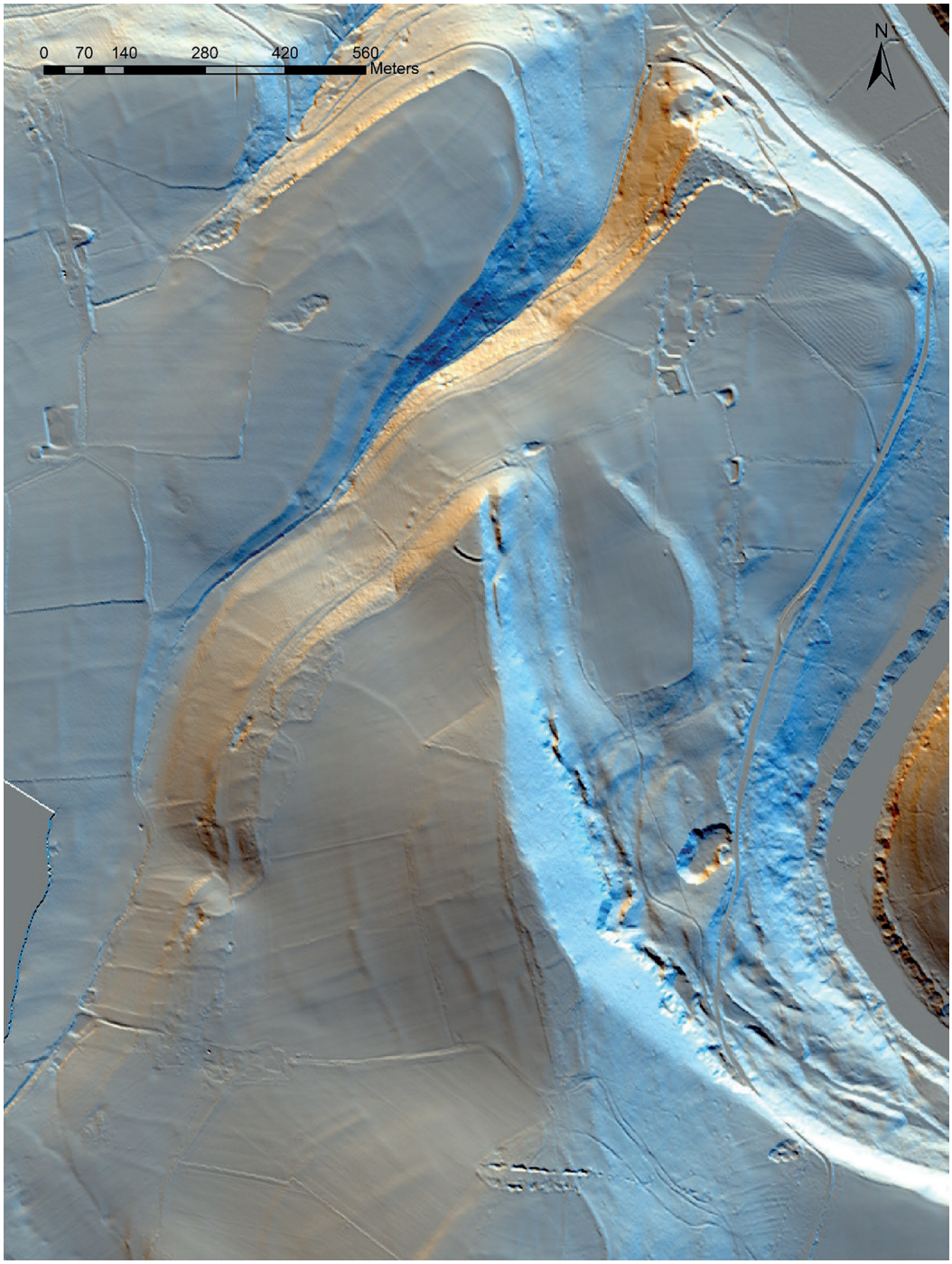


Fig. 22: Blackfield Wood camp context, multi-directional hillshade lidar. This hillfort is on the end of the promontory in the upper centre.

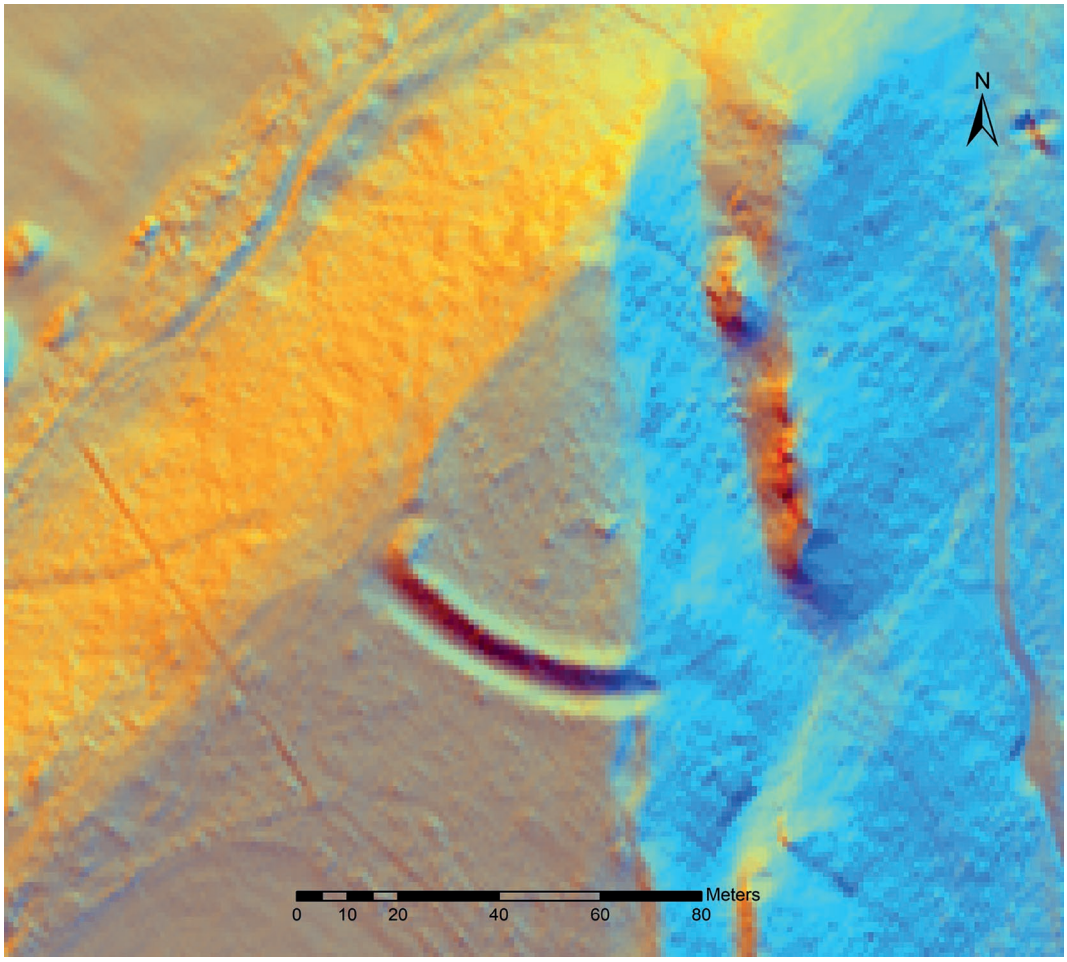


Fig. 23: Blackfield Wood Camp in closer detail. It is bounded on two sides by very steep slopes. The small valley and bank to the east are natural features, forming an additional imposing barrier. The Wye Valley walk comes up the eastern edge where it crosses the rampart.

The site is undated. Bristol University conducted soil sampling and magnetometry surveys of the site in the 1990s, with a view to suitability for excavation. These showed some concentrations of phosphates and carbon within the site, but otherwise little evidence of occupation. This is borne out by the lidar. There was no follow up from this investigation. The key would be to find some datable evidence, but it is unclear how this might be found other than some excavation of the ditch, perhaps near the entrance way.

The site bears a striking resemblance in form to the hillfort on the other side of the river and further south at Lancaut. It is much smaller, but in size and construction is similar to the Little Piercefield Camp. Perhaps its role is as postulated for that hillfort and the Bulwarks further south, in terms of its relationship with the farmland to the south along the widening promontory.



Fig. 24: Ditch and bank at Blackfield Wood Camp, looking west. Slight signs of a counter scarp bank on the left.

Lancaut (Spital Meend)
HER Record: Gloucestershire 23/Heritage Gateway.

Lancaut hillfort, in Gloucestershire, is in very close proximity to Piercefield, dominating the promontory above the Lancaut peninsula, Fig. 25 and Fig. 27. It is another hillfort on the lower Wye valley, and although in England, cannot be ignored in terms of the context of the hillforts in Wales on the other side of the river. Indeed, it is located almost opposite the Piercefield peninsula with its two hillforts and has commanding views across to it from a higher elevation.

The hillfort is triangular, defined by a double rampart and ditch with a small counter scarp to the east end of the promontory, Fig. 27, and bounded by steep cliffs on the other two sides, in a similar configuration to Blackfield Wood.

The **rampart** has been encroached by a modern house and garden and was probably incorporated into Offa's Dyke in the 8th Century. The location of the hillfort is high above the Wye with steep cliffs on either side, but unlike Piercefield to the south, there is the substantial fertile peninsula of Lancaut below, with its farm, ruined church and deserted medieval village (Fig. 26). The route to the peninsula goes via the road that runs through the site. There is no other access, other than via the river.

The **western tip** of the hillfort is separated by a small bank and ditch which was the subject of a very recent excavation in 2018 (*see below),* Fig. 29. The parish boundary runs across this bank, and it seems likely to be associated with the postulated later use of the site as a leper colony (*see below),*

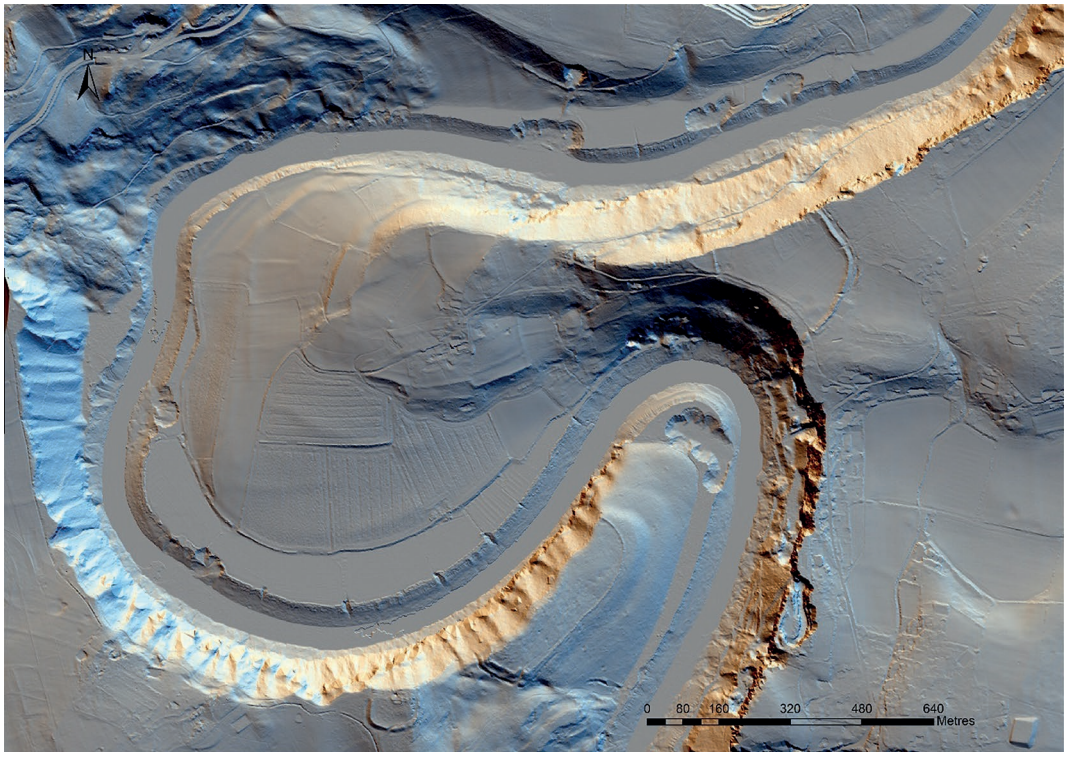


Fig. 25: Lancaut peninsula, to the north of the Piercefield peninsula. Three hillforts in very close proximity.

the presumed foundations of its buildings can be seen in the north eastern parts of the site. To the south signs of ploughing can be seen. The meadow to the northeast looks like rough unploughed pasture.

It looks as though there has been erosion along the northern edge, sloping down to the river, with consequent loss of features, judging by the proximity to the building foundations there. The southern edge looks as though there has been quarrying beneath the cliff top as well. There is certainly no sign of Offa's Dyke along either cliff edge outside the site, even though the rampart was probably part of it as noted above. This loss may have destroyed the Dyke approaches as well as evidence of an entrance or entrances near the original ends of the rampart.

There are two narrow entrance ways, which are certainly later. It is possible that the original **entrance** is to the southern end, where the modern road runs through. There is a hint of this being in-turned in form, although this could easily be the result of landscaping, especially given the impact to the rampart along its southern part. In this respect it would be similar to Blackfield Wood with its entrance along one edge of a steep slope. It is conceivable that there may have been one at the northern end of the bank, and completely lost. It is certainly possible that access is fossilised in the modern entrance and roadway.

The site has been extensively researched, as can be seen in the HER record in Heritage Gateway, which is briefly summarised as follows:



Fig. 26: The ruined church at Lancaut, with the deserted village beyond. View from the Piercefield peninsula.

Place name evidence, based on the alternative name of 'Spital Meend', suggests that it may have been a medieval hospital site, and other records name the western rampart as a 'plague mound', but there do not appear to be any field investigations to address these possibilities, nor other documentary evidence. There are what appear to be remains of buildings in the northeast corner but are not known to have been investigated.

Geophysical survey was conducted late in 2017 and early 2018, showing multiple ditches to be crossing the promontory, and possible much older features (pits), as well as traces of a field system. These have not been further investigated.

The **western bank** was excavated in 2018, see Fig. 28 & Fig. 29, and the ditch cut into the bedrock on its eastern face identified. A 1st century construction date was proposed based on pottery in the primary ditch fill. The bank was widened and metalled over, probably in the 14th Century based on pottery, and a monolith erected. An oral tradition suggests that the western part bounded by the modified bank was a graveyard associated with a leper colony and hospital.

Although this provides a lot of information about the site in medieval times, it does not inform as to its earlier role as a hillfort, although there is that hint of earlier prehistoric activity. Its position in relation to the Lancaut peninsula, in terms of controlling access and providing protection seems likely to be a major if not prime reason for its construction. Views from the site down the Wye are commanding, including the other side of the river, and without trees it is likely that there were good views down the slopes to the east to the Severn as well.

In form it is similar to Blackfield Wood, and in construction to the Bulwarks. The latter also has a double rampart although different in form. It is striking how all these hillforts make strategic use of steep natural slopes on two sides, except for one at Little Piercefield. They are all very different from Great Piercefield.

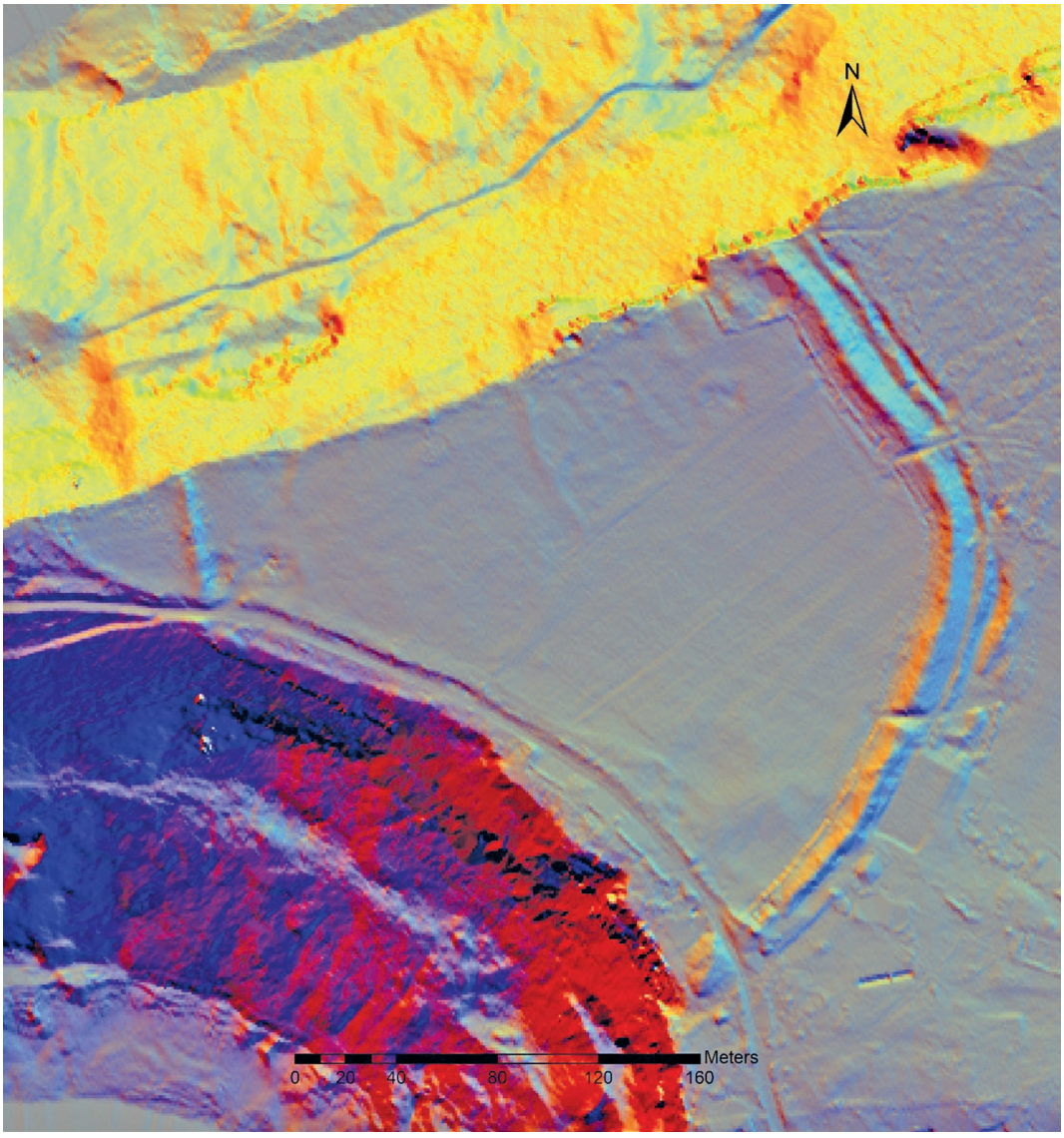


Fig. 27: Lancaut Hillfort.

In terms of investigation there is the potential for a substantial programme of excavation, in terms of its medieval role, with building foundations of a possible hospital, and the oral tradition of a graveyard at the western end. In terms of the hillfort ditch and rampart, some clearance of undergrowth at the rampart either side of the roadway, and perhaps some very limited excavation of the termination might shed light on whether or not they were original. Excavation in a section of ditch outside the main rampart might establish dating information.



Fig. 28: The Western rampart, looking north from the road. The excavation is in the background.





Fig. 29: Excavation of the western rampart, 2018/metalled surface on top of the rampart.

Gaer Hill Camp
HER Record: 00745g / Archwilio.

Gaer Hill Camp is situated high above the lower Wye and the Gwent Levels, with spectacular views over the estuary, Chepstow and its environs. Fig. 30. It can also be seen from a very long way away, in many directions, coming over the old Severn Bridge for example.

There are two radio masts sited within its periphery; these make the site easy to spot from afar. It is in immediate proximity to the farm, the development of which has resulted in destruction of significant parts of the site. See Fig. 31; beyond the boundaries of this image are signs of field systems and ridge and furrow on the sloping terrain to the Wye in the east.

The **outer rampart** is a double bank with ditch between, which extends some two thirds around the site, enclosing a wide area. The outer bank is a counter scarp but seems too big to be the result of ditch maintenance, Fig. 32 and Fig. 33 illustrate this. To the northwest it has been completely ploughed out, and to the west is encroached by the farmyard.

The **southern counter scarp** is fossilized in the field boundary, and the southeast has been reduced but is still visible. There is evidence of ploughing over a good part of the site, but there are the traces of a possible middle rampart in the southwestern quadrant, which has not previously been noted.

The **inner rampart**, which is quite clear to the east has been reduced on the other three sides, and is significantly different in form, being almost trapezoidal in shape. Being so different suggests perhaps that it is of a different and likely later era than the primary enclosure. These features are easier to see in the simple local relief model in Fig. 34.

This site is undated and little investigated. Whilst the form appears to be a straightforward enclosure, consistent with an Iron Age Hillfort, the inner rampart looks to be something quite different, based on its form. There is also a feature on its northwestern corner, which appears to be a long narrow rectangle joining to this inner rampart. The linearity of three sides makes it reminiscent of a much more recent military function.



Fig. 30: The view down the Wye estuary in the centre and over the Severn to the Cotswolds from Gaer Hill Camp.

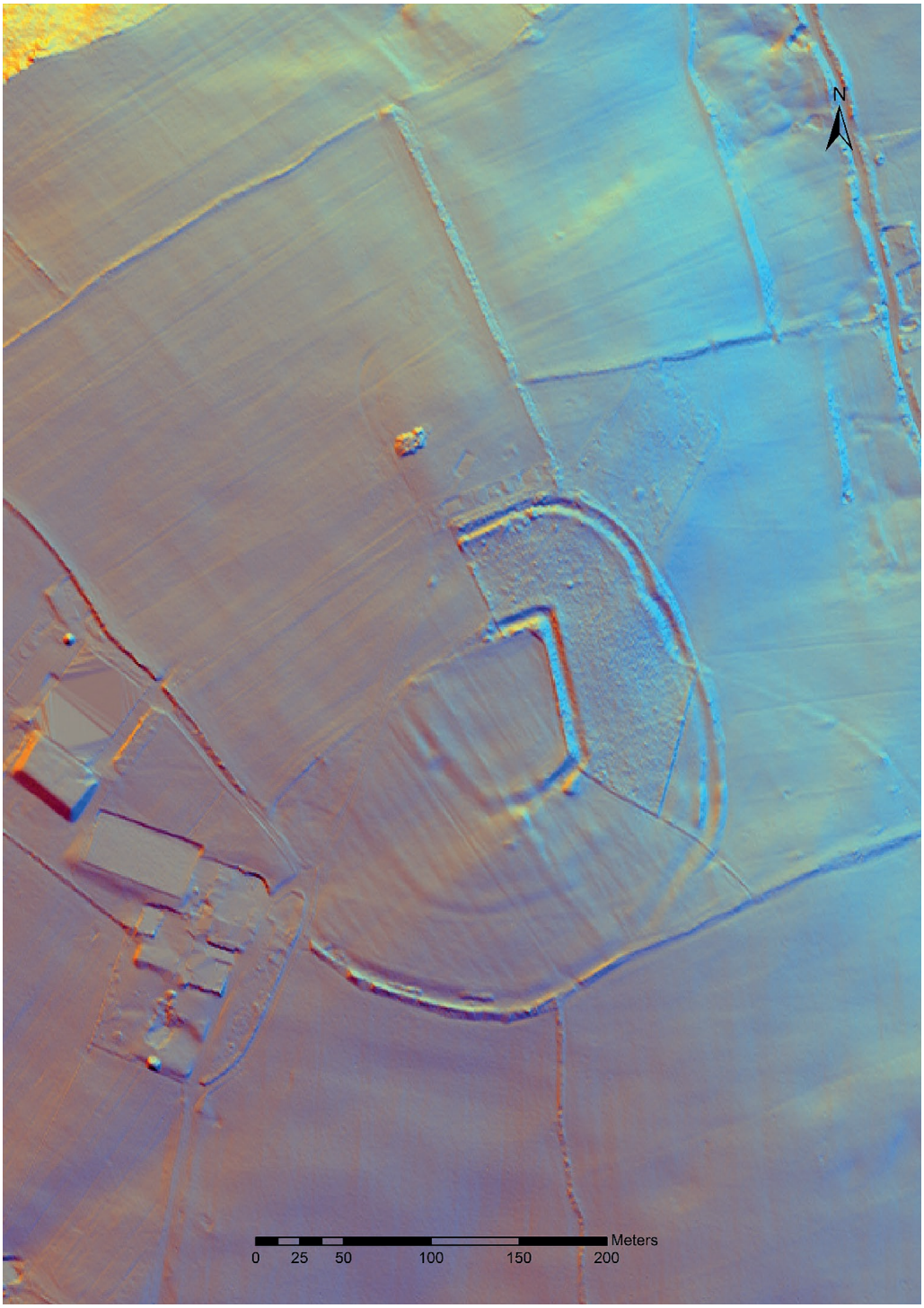


Fig. 31: Gaer Hill Camp.



Fig. 32: The outer double bank and ditch at the southeastern end, looking north.



Fig. 33: The outer double bank and ditch, to the southwest, with the outer bank fossilised in the field boundary, looking west. The inner bank has been reduced by ploughing.

The previously un-noted middle rampart in the southwestern quadrant is also a mystery. It appears only here and cannot be seen in the better preserved eastern half of the site at all. Given this, it may not be a rampart at all but represent a field boundary or paddock that extends from the northwestern corner of the inner rampart down to a smaller rectilinear feature, possibly a building, at the southern part of the inner enclosure.

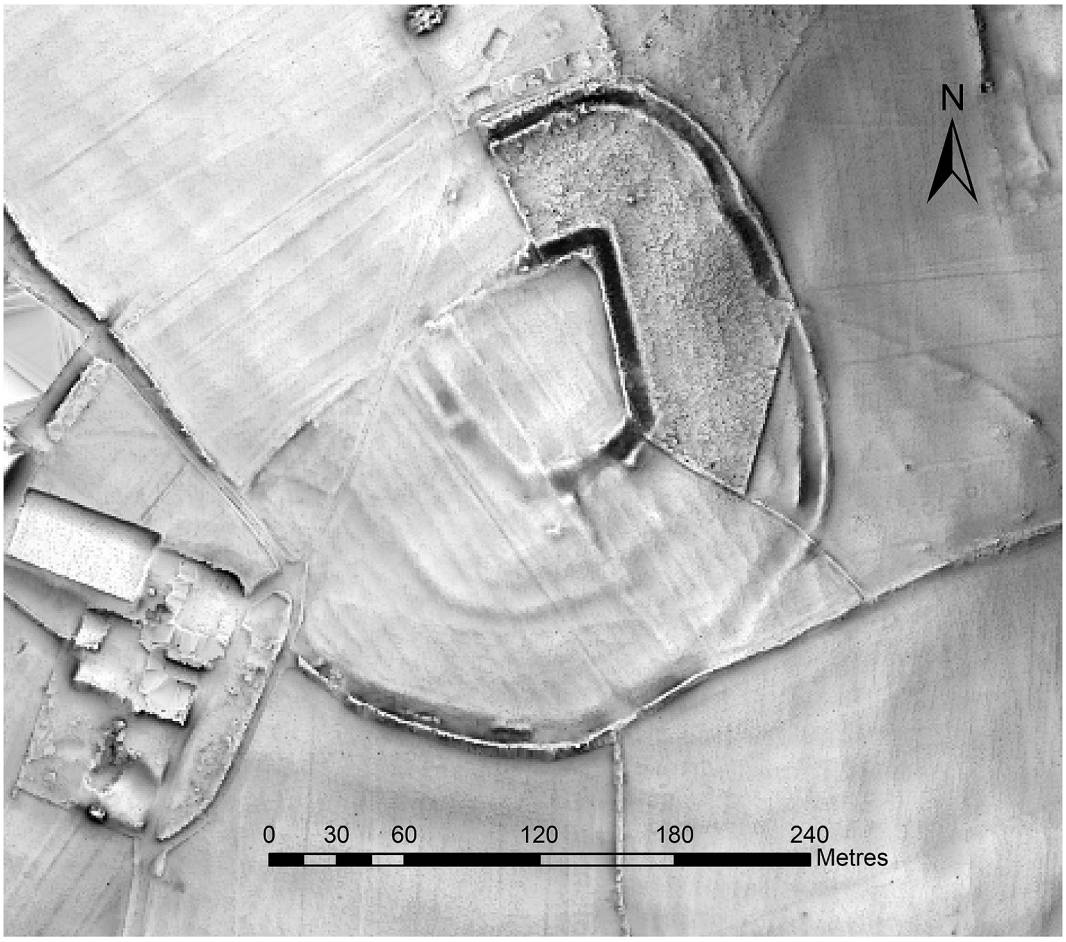


Fig. 34: Gaer Hill Camp – Sky View Factor lidar model in closer view.

It is hard to draw any conclusions, other than that the site is probably multi-period, the inner enclosure likely to be much later than the outer. There is also a description of the inner enclosure in the HER record that is hard to relate to the images; a detailed field walk and survey over the site should help to elicit a better understanding of these subtle earthworks. A comprehensive geophysical survey would also throw light on some of these questions, but it seems that would need to be augmented with excavations, perhaps along the line of the ploughed-out features in order to establish any evidence that might help with dating.

Discussion

There are significant differences in the design and scale of Piercefield Camp with its smaller neighbour, with Gaer Hill, Blackfield Wood, as well as the Bulwarks and Lancaut.

On this basis perhaps the larger Piercefield Camp is older than the others, which have been constructed later with different objectives. It is clearly designed to impress when approached from the peninsula, and its outwork rampart is designed to be seen and impress when coming up the

river. However, along the side of the rampart, the boundary is much more modest. Today the water meadows below the hillfort provide beaching opportunities, along with a (possibly) natural harbour. Perhaps it was originally constructed to act as an entrepot and trading point for traffic coming up the river to exchange goods coming down from the hinterland. However, there are no obvious signs of this from the lidar images, and there is no second entrance to the north, in which case its role may have purely been one of control.

It seems possible that Blackfield Wood and Lancaut are connected with control and protection of adjacent farmland. Their design is strikingly similar, situated on angular peninsulas with a single line of enclosure to isolate a triangular area. Both are in dominant positions, with views over the Wye. It seems highly likely that Lancaut was also to do with control of the Lancaut peninsula, from the landward side, and seems to have a long and complex history of use and occupation. Blackfield Wood sits at the end of a long wide ridge with many vestiges of ancient field boundaries but is much smaller and has no indication of occupation.

The Bulwarks and Little Piercefield are also very similar, being bounded on one side by the river. Although they have clear views over the river, neither has ready access to it, and perhaps their function was more to do with the agricultural hinterland immediately adjacent and that spreads away from them. The whole style and scale of the Little Piercefield camp is so different from its bigger neighbour, that it seems likely they were not in use at the same time. The larger site has a grandeur and antiquity to it, redolent of power and control.

Gaer Hill is different again. It seems possible that the sub-rectangular central enclosure is later, based on its form, possibly even of Romano-British date, particularly given the proximity of Roman period settlement nearby at Wyndcliffe, for example. If it is a bivallate enclosure with the area divided by a central rampart, it is much more like hillforts of the southwestern type, identified by Eileen Fox. In which case it is possible that the widely spaced ramparts provided space for sheltering and enclosing livestock.

None of the sites have seen much in the way of investigation, other than Lancaut. Lidar is a powerful and effective tool not only highlighting otherwise unobserved features of these sites, but also setting them within a landscape context, with the subtlest of other features now also visible. The lidar also assists in setting out possible approaches to investigation, such as those proposed here, to aid with their understanding, public acceptance and conservation.

Tools and data

The images have been generated using the GIS software ArcGIS (https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/about-arcgis). This takes the raw lidar data, in the form of a digital elevation model (DEM) to visualize it by applying artificial illumination, to create a hillshade image. The ArcScene package was used to create the 3D visualizations.

The GIS package can combine this data with other sources of digital data such as maps, and images generated by RVT below.

The software package RVT was used to generate the multi-directional hillshade images, where different colours of light illuminate the model from different directions (Kokalj, Zakšek, Oštir et al. 2019). This provides better visualisation of features than lighting from a single direction. This software also generates the Sky View Factor model. This accentuates the hillshade illumination of the terrain and works well for ramparts, ditches and other earthworks.

Lidar data was downloaded from two sources: DataMap Wales (https://datamap.gov.wales) which has recently published coverage at 1m resolution for most of Wales. At the time of writing this

data was raw DEM and needed processing. The second source for England is from DEFRA (https://environment.data.gov.uk).

Geological data was obtained from the British Geological Survey (*British Geological Survey*).

Maps were taken from Edina (*Digimap Resource Centre*) and the OS (*OS Open Data*). Rivers were also taken from the OS (*OS Open Rivers*). Note that only larger streams and rivers were selected from this very comprehensive dataset.

The historic environment record for England is at https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/ and that for Wales https://archwilio.org.uk/. The record number from these has been included where relevant.

All these data sources are used under the open government data licence version 3.0 (https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/#:~:text=The%20Keeper%20of%20the%20Public,of%20the%20Open%20Government%20Licence.).

All photographs are copyright the author. The author is very grateful to Ray Howell for his advice and encouragement in the preparation of this paper.

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THE LOST TOMBS OF WILLIAM HERBERT, EARL OF PEMBROKE, AND HIS SON WILLIAM HERBERT, EARL OF HUNTINGDON, IN TINTERN ABBEY

By Maddy Gray

Near the end of a fairly eventful life, Sir Thomas Herbert of Tintern (1606–82), diplomat, traveller and Government official, penned a history of his family, which he called the *Herbertorum Prosapia*.[1] It was to some extent a reworking of an earlier work on his family history, the *Origo Praeclara Herbertorum*, which he wrote mainly in 1633. The manuscript of the latter work made its way to the archives at Wilton House, where it was last seen in 1989: it seems to have been lost before the Wilton archives were moved to the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre.[2]

Not everything in the *Origo* made it into the *Prosapia*. Michael Brennan, who saw the *Origo* at Wilton in 1989, said that part of Herbert's account of his ancestor the fifteenth-century Earl of Pembroke included 'a three-quarter page illumination of him wearing full armour and standing next to Edward IV, who has his left hand on Pembroke's right shoulder'.[3] This drawing does not appear in the *Prosapia*. What the *Prosapia* does have is several drawings of what purport to be the tombs or monuments of Herbert's family and ancestors.

Sir Joseph Bradney printed two of these, the tombs of William Herbert, first earl of Pembroke of the first Herbert creation (c. 1423–1469) and his wife Anne Devereux, and the tomb of their son William Herbert earl of Huntingdon (1451–91) and his wife Mary Wydeville, both at Tintern Abbey.[4]

As recently as 2003, these drawings were being regarded as authentic.[5] However, recent scholarship has been more sceptical: Matthew Ward, for example, has suggested that they 'may be nothing more than the product of the illustrator's imagination'.[6] Some of the other drawings in the *Prosapia* are clearly fiction, while others are as far as we can see accurate, and others again, while imaginative, have some basis in fact. So how can we evaluate the drawings of the Herbert tombs at Tintern?

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1 The *Prosapia* is now Cardiff Library MS 5.7. On Sir Thomas Herbert, see the article by Ronald Fritze in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; see also Norman H. Mackenzie, 'Sir Thomas Herbert of Tintern: A Parliamentary "Royalist"', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 29 (1956) 32–86; Robert Davies, 'A Memoir of Sir Thomas Herbert, of Tinterne in the county of Monmouth, and of the city of York, baronet', *Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Journal* 1 (1870) 182–214, available online at https://archive.org/details/yorkshirearchol00socigoog/page/n250/mode/2up?q=Herbert&view=theater (accessed 12.01.23).

2 Margaret P. Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 282 n. 2; Jessica L. Malay, 'Constructing a Narrative of Time and Place: Anne Clifford's "Great Books of Record", *The Review of English Studies* New Series, Vol. 66, No. 277 (November 2015) 859–875, on p. 870.

3 Michael G. Brennan, 'Philip Sidney's Astrophel and Stella 75 and King Edward IV', *The Review of English Studies* Vol. 40, No. 159 (Aug. 1989) 386–392, on p. 392.

4 Sir Joseph Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire ... volume 2 part 2: The Hundred of Trelech* (London: Mitchell, Hughes and Clarke, 1913) plate facing p. 259.

5 Peter Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales: Medieval Vision* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003) 262–3 and fig. 413.

6 Matthew Ward, *The Livery Collar in Late Medieval England and Wales* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016) 169–70; see also his Ph D thesis, 'The livery collar: politics and identity in fifteenth-century England' (Nottingham Ph D 2014) 217–9, available online at https://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/id/eprint/28022 (accessed 20.01.23).

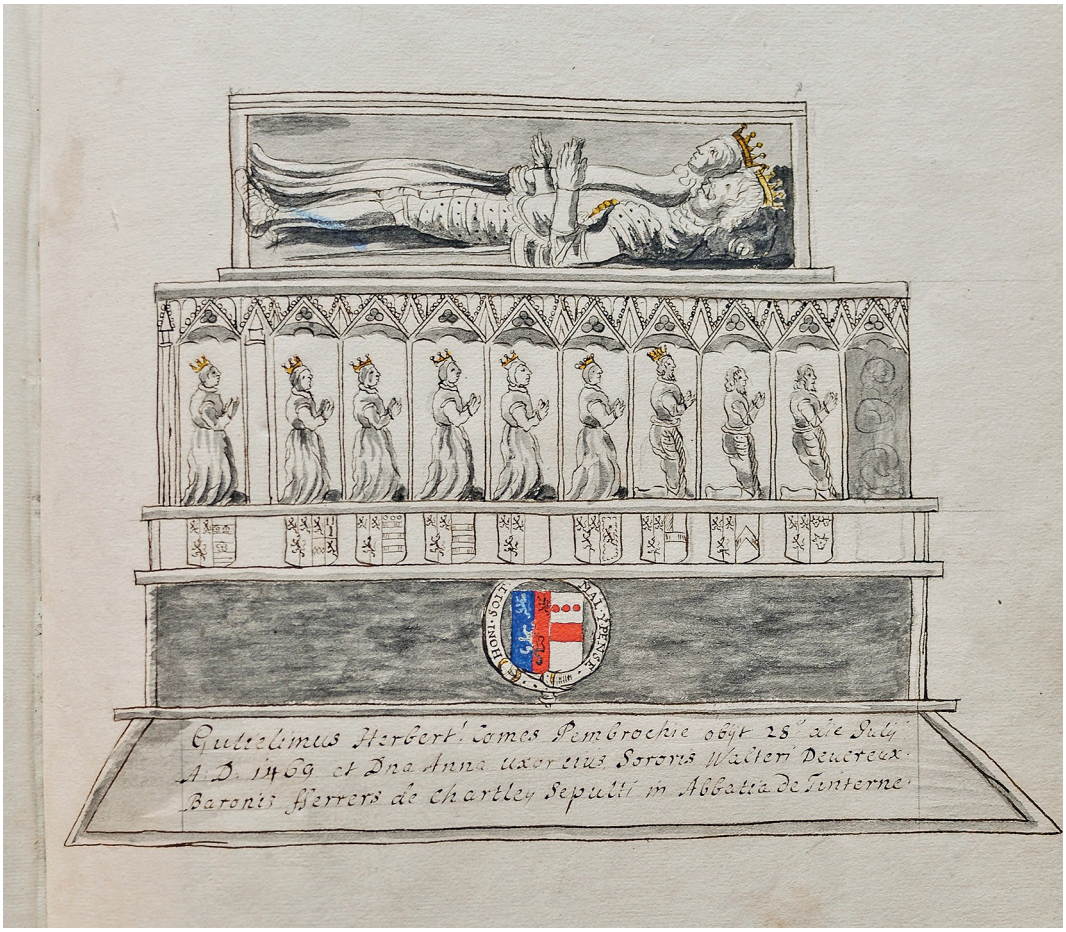


Fig. 1. The tomb of William Herbert, first earl of Pembroke, and Anne Devereux, from the *Herbertorum Prosapia*: Cardiff Library MS 5.7 p. 145. Reproduced with permission of Cardiff Libraries.

Sir Thomas Herbert: life and work

The *Origo Praeclara Herbertorum* and the *Herbertorum Prosapia* were not Herbert's only works, and recent scholarship has suggested that he was frequently guilty of what could politely be called embroidery. To evaluate the *Prosapia* and his other writings, we need a little of his background. What follows is based mainly on Fritze's article in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Herbert was born in York in 1606. His family was descended from Thomas Herbert, illegitimate son of Richard Herbert of Coldbrook.

The earlier Thomas had moved to Yorkshire in the service of Maud, daughter of William Herbert, earl of Pembroke, when she married Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland. Our Thomas studied at Cambridge, Oxford and the Inns of Court, though he does not seem to have taken any formal qualification. An ambitious young man, he secured an introduction to his distant cousin



Fig 2. The tomb of William Herbert, earl of Huntingdon, and Mary Wydeville, from the *Herbertorum Prosapia*: Cardiff Library MS 5.7 p. 151. Reproduced with permission of Cardiff Libraries.

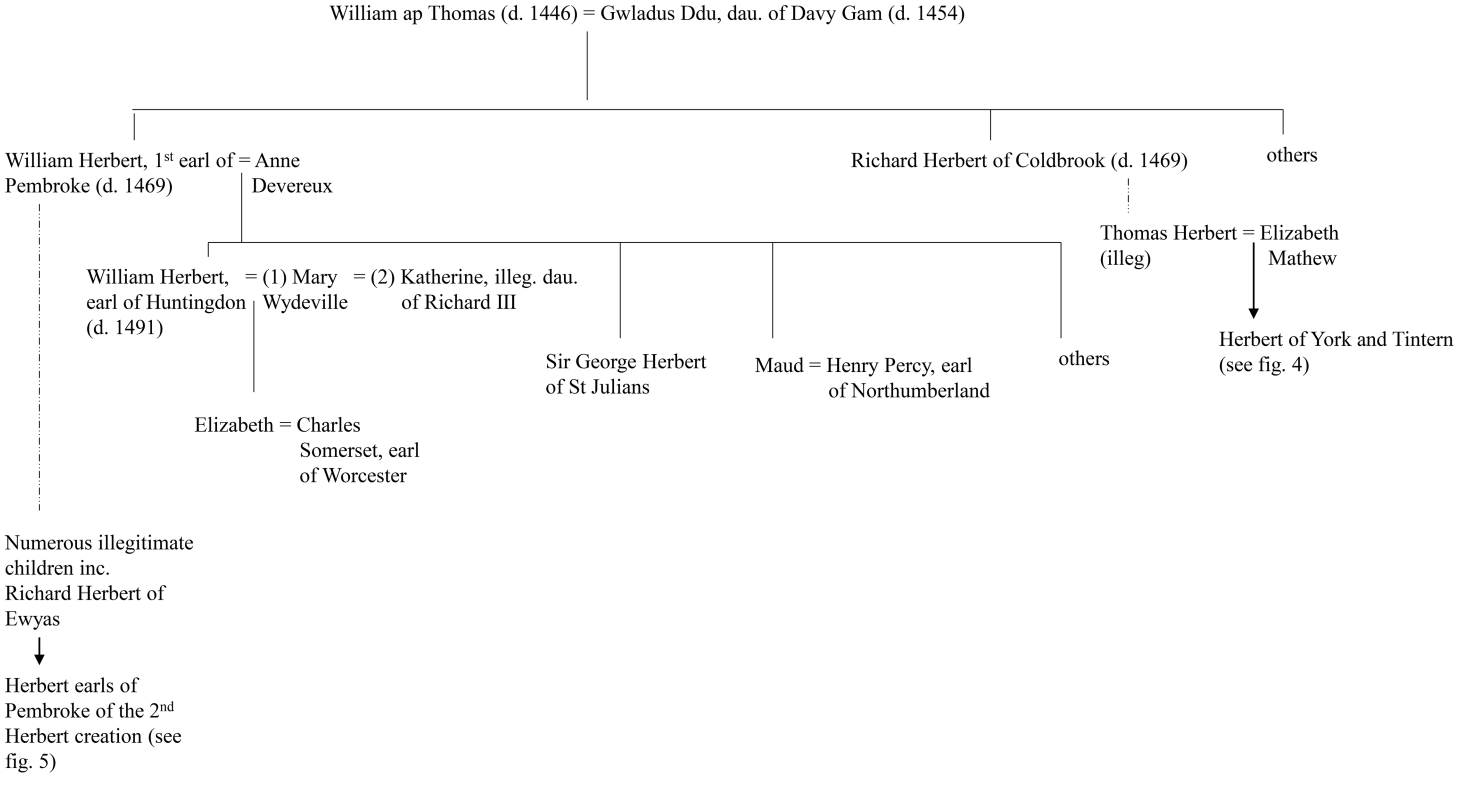


Fig. 3. The family of William Herbert, first earl of Pembroke of the first Herbert creation. Based on corrected version of the pedigree in Bradney, *Hundred of Raglan*, 12–13.

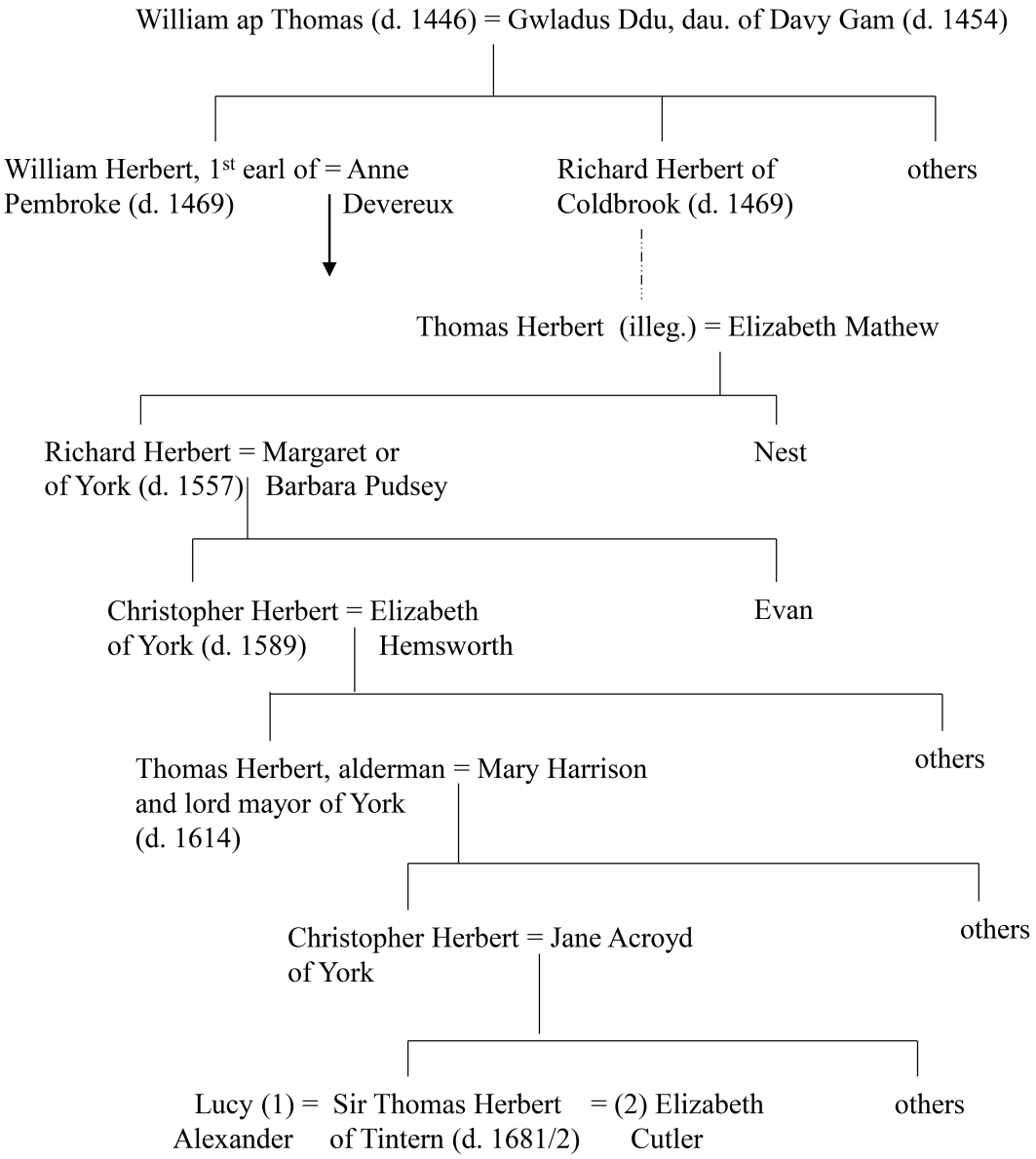


Fig. 4. The family of Sir Thomas Herbert of Tintern. Based on the pedigree in Bradney, *Hundred of Trelech*, 251.

William Herbert, third earl of Pembroke (1580–1630). Pembroke found him a place in Sir Dodmore Cotton's impending diplomatic mission to Shah Abbas of Persia. The mission was a disaster, but it enabled Thomas to write a rather imaginative account of his travels, *A description of the Persian monarchy now beinge: the orientall Indyes Iles and other parts of greater Asia and Africk*. He went on to expand this under the title *Some Yeares Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique*,

incorporating a lot of material about places he had not actually visited.[7] He lost his patron William, earl of Pembroke in 1630 but managed to secure an introduction to William's brother Philip, the fourth earl.

It was presumably as part of his attempts to ingratiate himself with the fourth earl that he wrote the *Origo Praeclara Herbertorum*: the opening page read

> We are nott Ignorant, (as well by the authoritie of History & credible Tradition, as records of Truth and Justyce) That your auncient and most honorable Familie of the *Herberts*, are equall in Antiquity and good report, with most Christian houses now being ...[8]

This was followed by what Norman H. MacKenzie described as a 'genealogical discourse on the various branches of the Herbert Pembroke family (from King Arthur onwards)'.[9]

In 1632, Herbert married Lucy Alexander, daughter of the courtier Sir Walter Alexander. For most of the 1630s, they lived with Lucy's parents in Petty France, Westminster. Robert Davies suggested (based on information from Anthony à Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses*) that Herbert may have spent some of this period in Wales.[10] Wood did indeed describe Herbert after his marriage 'setling in his native Countrey' but it was not until 1641 that he bought the estate of Tintern Parva, and it seems unlikely that he ever spent much time there.[11]

Thomas Herbert followed his patron the earl of Pembroke, who supported Parliament in the Civil War. In 1647 he was appointed as one of the attendants to the captive Charles I, a post he retained until the king's execution. After the Restoration, he wrote an account of this period in which he described himself as the king's valued servant. He published this as *Threnodia Carolina* in 1678. It was republished several times and much of it was incorporated into Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses*.[12] Like so much else of his writings, however, this has been questioned by modern scholarship.[13] While Davies suggested that Herbert spent the years of the Commonwealth in retirement at Tintern, Mackenzie makes a compelling case for identifying him with the Thomas Herbert who served as clerk to the commissioners in Ireland. His claims for his relationship with Charles I are best seen as an attempt to ingratiate himself with Charles II – which he did so successfully that in 1662 he was able to purchase a baronetcy. While he took the title of Baronet Herbert of Tintern, there is little evidence that he was closely involved with his estates there – which may explain some of the problems with his drawings of the tombs. In the light of recent criticism of his work, therefore, caution is needed in assessing the *Prosapia.*

William Herbert, father and son

We can be fairly confident that both William Herberts, father and son, were buried at Tintern. While there may be some doubt about the references to their tombs in the text of the *Prosapia*, Edward Herbert, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, mentioned the older William Herbert's tomb at Tintern in his

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7 For a detailed critique of his claims, see Mackenzie, 'Parliamentary Royalist' 33–5.

8 transcribed in Michael Brennan, 'The Literary Patronage of the Herbert Family, Earls of Pembroke, 1550–1640' (Oxford D. Phil. thesis, 1982) 320. I am grateful to Prof. Brennan for providing me with this reference, and for further information about the *Origo*.

9 Mackenzie, 'Parliamentary Royalist' 38 n. 1.

10 Davies, 'Memoir of Sir Thomas Herbert', 197–8.

11 Anthony à Wood. *Athenae Oxonienses* ... (London: printed for Tho. Bennet, 1692) vol 2, 515; for the deed of purchase, see Bradney, *Hundred of Trelech* 248–9.

12 vol 2, 517–28; see also under James Harrington, vol 2, 436–9.

13 Mackenzie, 'Parliamentary Royalist'.

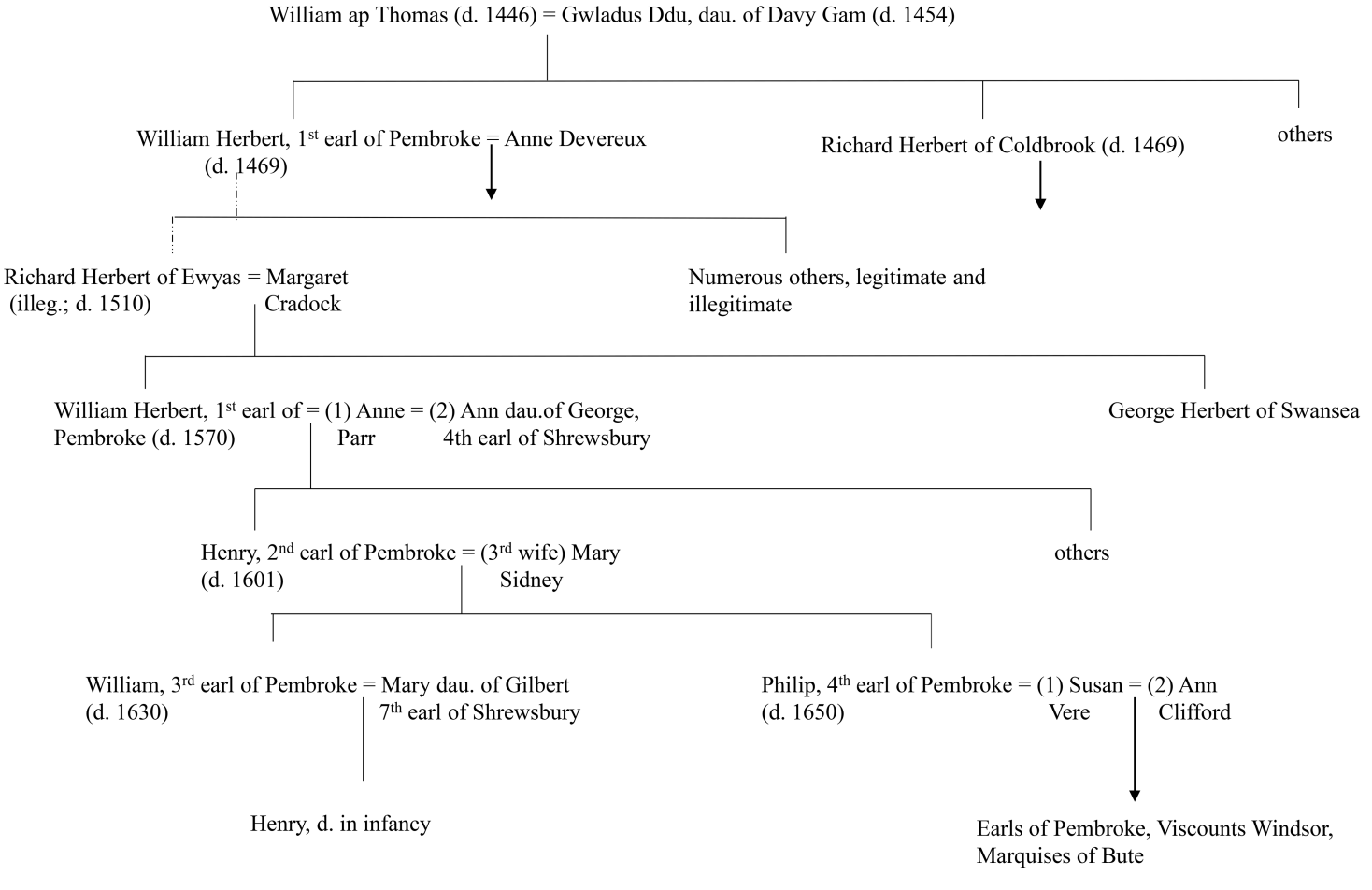


Fig 5. The family of William Herbert, first earl of Pembroke of the second Herbert creation. Based on the pedigree in Bradney, *Hundred of Newport*, 10–11.

autobiography, and the Lancaster Herald William Fellow recorded this and the tomb of his son William Herbert, earl of Huntingdon.[14] There are however, as we shall see, problems arising from both these references.

William's parents Gwladus Ddu and Sir William ap Thomas were buried in an elaborate alabaster tomb in the priory church in Abergavenny.[15] They may have planned to make Abergavenny their family mausoleum, as a statement of social intent. William had acquired Raglan Castle by a previous marriage and retained it by purchase. Raglan was not elevated to the status of a marcher lordship until 1465, twenty years after William's death. While burial in a monastic church was the norm for the earlier medieval aristocracy, by the fifteenth century an increasing number were opting for the parish church nearest to their principal residence, where an impressive tomb was more likely to stand out and to attract prayer. However, Abergavenny had been the mausoleum of the de Breos and Hasting lords of Abergavenny. Choosing to be buried there, and choosing a particularly elaborate alabaster tomb, made it clear that they were the new power in the region.

William ap Thomas used the traditional patronymic form of his name, but both his sons chose to adopt English-style surnames. Their choice of the surname Herbert seems to have derived from a dubious family tradition. Gwladus and William's second son, Richard Herbert of Coldbrook, and their illegitimate grandson Richard Herbert of Ewyas were both buried at Abergavenny, with splendid alabaster tombs. According to Coxe, the south chapel of the priory church became the burial place of the Herberts of Coldbrook until the death of the last male member of the family, Sir James Herbert, in 1709.[16] In the final version of his will, Gwladus and William's oldest son, William Herbert, earl of Pembroke (d. 1469), declared his wish to be buried at Abergavenny. He had however earlier planned a tomb at Tintern, and the abbey was to become an alternative family mausoleum.

The older William Herbert, who was created earl of Pembroke in 1461, was one of the leading supporters of the Yorkist dynasty. As Barry Lewis said in an article discussing Herbert's poetic patronage, '[i]t is remarkable that William Herbert has not been the subject of a biography'.[17] The nearest we have is D. H. Thomas's *The Herberts of Raglan and the Battle of Edgecote 1469*, which devotes several chapters to the older William Herbert.[18] He plays a leading role in the traditional histories of Wales and the Wars of the Roses,[19] and appears in several of Ralph Griffiths' works on the period: Ralph Griffiths has also written an admirable but brief account of him in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.[20]

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[14] *The autobiography of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury / with introduction, notes, appendices, and a continuation of the life by Sidney L. Lee* (London: J.C. Nimmo 1886) 16; Michael Powell Siddons (ed.), *Visitations by the Heralds in Wales* (Harleian Society Publications, n.s. 14, 1996) 38.

[15] On Gwladus and William and their tomb see M. Gray, 'The tomb of Gwladus Ddu and William ap Thomas in the Priory Church of St Mary, Abergavenny', *Monmouthshire Antiquary* 37 (2022) 35–50.

[16] William Coxe, *An Historical Tour of Monmouthshire ...* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1801), 1, 189.

[17] Barry Lewis, 'Poetry and Patronage in Late Medieval Wales: The Case of William Herbert of Raglan (d. 1469)', *Monmouthshire Antiquary* 30 (2014) 15–30, quote on p 18.

[18] Thomas, D.H., *The Herberts of Raglan and the Battle of Edgecote 1469* (Freezywater Publications, Enfield, 1994: largely a reprint of Thomas's MA dissertation 'The Herberts of Raglan as supporters of the House of York in the second half of the fifteenth century', University of Wales MA dissertation, 1967).

[19] see, for example, H. T. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge University Press, 1915; reprinted by Sutton, 1995).

[20] Griffiths, R.A., 'Herbert, William, first earl of Pembroke (c.1423–1469)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004): where not otherwise referenced, material in the following paragraphs is drawn from the ODNB.

In a poem composed in the early 1460s, Lewys Glyn Cothi described him as 'Unclo'r Cing Edwart', the king's master-lock. (This may have been a reference to the fetterlock which was one of the king's emblems.)[21] Alexander Brondarbit identifies him as one of the leading power-brokers of the early Yorkist state, along with men of the standing of Richard Neville, earl of Warwick, Lord Hastings, and John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester.[22]

The landed estate which William Herbert inherited from his father William ap Thomas was not that impressive. He seems to have inherited his father's administrative abilities, and it was as a senior office-holder on Crown and marcher estates that he first came to prominence. However, political power at that time came not so much from land or office-holding as from proximity to the king. D. H. Thomas suggests that William Herbert's personal closeness to Edward IV may have derived from their military service together in the campaigns up to and after the crucial battle of Mortimer's Cross. William was of course the more experienced military leader, having served in France in the late 1440s with Matthew Gough and Thomas Kyriel.[23] His parents were loyal supporters of the Lancastrian dynasty but by the mid-1450s he had clearly transferred his allegiance to the house of York. In 1456 he was one of the leaders of the Yorkist raiding party which recaptured Carmarthen Castle and imprisoned Edmund Tudor, then went on to capture Aberystwyth Castle. He made his peace with Henry VI in 1457 but after Henry's defeat and capture at Northampton in 1460 he became a reliable supporter of Edward.

William was regarded as one of the 'new men' in Edward's inner circle of advisers, and it was his relationship with the king that led to his acquisition of lands and titles rather than the reverse. By the mid-1460s he was virtually the uncrowned king of Wales: as well as his own holdings in Monmouthshire and his stewardship of the royal lordships of Usk, Caerleon and Trelech, he was (among much else) justiciar and chamberlain of Carmarthen and Cardigan and custodian of the Stafford lands in south Wales (the lordships of Brecon, Hay, Huntington and Newport). Following the defeat of Jasper Tudor and the Mowbrays he also acquired the lordships of Pembroke and Gower. He had already been made a knight of the Garter in 1462. In 1465 Raglan was made into a marcher lordship for him, and in 1468 he was created Earl of Pembroke. His power extended into north Wales: in 1463 he was made justiciar of Merioneth, and in 1467 this was extended to cover the whole principality of North Wales. An indication of his closeness to the king is that he lost none of his lands when Edward reversed many of Henry VI's generous grants of land by the Acts of Resumption in 1465 and 1467. Further, William was also able to protect family members and adherents from losses.[24] While he is known to have been present at some of the great court ceremonies, his duties in Wales kept him away from the crucial proximity to the king, but he was able to insert members of his family and affinity into the royal household. His kinsman Thomas

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21 For the text of the poem, see Johnston, Dafydd (ed.), *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi* (Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, Caerdydd, 1995) poem 112; for a translation and discussion, see Barry Lewis, 'Poetry and Patronage in Late Medieval Wales: The Case of William Herbert of Raglan (d. 1469)', *Monmouthshire Antiquary* 30 (2014) 15–30, on pp. 21–4.

22 Alexander Brondarbit, *Power-Brokers and the Yorkist State 1461–1485* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2020).

23 Thomas, *Herberts of Raglan* 23, 14.

24 Brondarbit, *Power-Brokers* 28, 31. A sign manual in William's name in 1467 protected 23 Welshmen from resumption including Thomas Herbert the elder and Thomas Herbert the younger (presumably relatives of William, though the relationship is not stated): TNA C49/65 no. 53.

Herbert the younger was made an esquire of the body in 1461 and John Dwnn of Cydweli was also one of his adherents.[25]

He had extended his power into Herefordshire with his marriage to Anne Devereux, daughter of Sir Walter Devereux of Bodenham, another leading Yorkist supporter. By 1466 he was able to betroth his eldest son (also William) to Mary Wydeville, the sister of Edward IV's queen: they were married early in 1467. However, his growing power and his dominance of the semi-independent Welsh march led to increasing tension between him and other powerful noblemen including Warwick 'the Kingmaker'. In 1469 he and his brother Richard raised a largely Welsh army to suppress Warwick's rebellion against Edward, but they were defeated at the battle of Edgcote on 24 July. A few days later, both brothers were executed on Warwick's orders.

William had apparently already made a will, shortly before setting off on his final campaign, though it does not appear to have been proved and the only record we have of it is what seems to be a rather garbled translation in the *Herbertorum Prosapia*.[26] Thomas Herbert claimed to have an attested copy of the will and offered 'the substance thereof' to his readers. Some credibility is given to this claim by the occasional mistranscriptions and the incoherencies of the translation and the fact that one of the place names was apparently illegible and has been left blank.

This earlier will is presumably the 'boke of my [?will] that is wretin with my hande' mentioned in William's second will, made the day of his execution.[27] His intentions for his burial are confused. The first will begins by saying that he wishes to be buried in Abergavenny, in a tomb larger than his parents', depicting his wife as well as himself, and situated in the arch between what he calls 'my father's chapple' and the high altar (this was the position in which his younger brother Richard was eventually buried). He left money to extend the chancel and side chapels of the priory church, to provide stained glass 'with the Stories of the passion of Christ and of the Nativity and the Saints of mine that be in my Clozett at Ragland' and to pay for perpetual prayer for his soul and those of his family. Rhianydd Biebrach suggests that this may have been an addition to a chantry founded by his parents, and that it was the Abergavenny chantry recorded in *Valor Ecclesiasticus* and the Chantry Certificates.[28] The first will continued with provision for work on the parish church at Raglan and more prayer for his soul at Raglan and Llandeilo Gresynni. However, it then went on to leave money for priests 'at my tomb at Tinterne ... till my entombe be builded there'. The will was then followed by a codicil said to have been dated 16 July 1469 in which he stated that he had intended to lie in the church at Abergavenny but he now wished to be buried at Tintern with his wife, and with their children depicted on their tomb. He then left more money for building his tomb and a chapel over it, and the new cloisters at Tintern. The parish of Llanfihangel Cwm-du was to be given to Abergavenny Priory to pay for two monks to pray for the souls of his family; the parish of Llangatwg near Crickhowell went to Tintern for the same purpose.

In the event, that will was superseded by a later one made on 27 July, the day of his execution. It is a terrifying and poignant document, confused and at times almost incoherent. He repeatedly begs his wife to do as she had promised and take a vow of widowhood: this would have protected her interests and those of their children. The will jumbles together in no logical order bequests to

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25 Brondarbit, *Power-Brokers* 51–3, 67–8 referencing *Calendar of the Patent Rolls ... 1461–7* (London: HMSO, 1897) p. 8.

26 Cardiff Library (hereafter CL) MS 5.7 pp. 55–8.

27 The probate copy is TNA PROB 11/5/305.

28 Rhianydd Biebrach, 'Commemoration and Culture: the monuments of Abergavenny Priory in context' in George Nash (ed.), *An Anatomy of a Priory Church: the archaeology, history and conservation of St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2015) 143–61, on pp. 152–3.

religious institutions in the region around the battlefield, gifts of clothing and plate to friends and associates, instructions for the care of his children and bequests for prayer for his soul 'and for alle there soules slayne in this feld'. While confirming the grant for rebuilding the cloister at Tintern, the will begins with clear instructions that he was to be buried at Abergavenny and that the rest of the money originally intended for Tintern was to go towards rebuilding the chancel at Abergavenny. The will also mentions (for the first time) 'my almeshows': this may have been something he had planned to be associated with the chantry at Abergavenny, or it may have been elsewhere. It was to have an endowment to provide for six poor men and a servant. No further reference to this almshouse has been found, and the bequest may simply not have taken effect.

In the event, William was buried at Tintern, though his younger brother Richard, who had also been executed after the battle, was buried at Abergavenny in the place which William had planned for himself. It is more than likely that William's tomb at Tintern was commissioned by his widow. She was executrix of the earlier will. While the final will did not actually name her as an executrix, much of its implementation was entrusted to her and the probate certificate describes her as executrix. D. H. Thomas cites several references in the Ministers' Accounts for her management of the estates after his death.[29] The poets also praised her abilities. Guto'r Glyn compared her to Esyllt daughter of Cynan Dindaethwy, who was traditionally said to have inherited the kingdom of Gwynedd from her father. According to Guto, '[U]nrhodd fu ar ganrhent/Gwraig wedi'i gŵr i gadw Gwent', 'a wife has been equally endowed, possessing a hundred rents, to maintain Gwent after her husband', and he describes her as 'ail Sibli', a second Sibyl.[30]

The younger William Herbert has generally been regarded as less able than his father.[31] He certainly took a much smaller part in national affairs. He was of course still young when his father died. Nevertheless, he had a leading part in Edward IV's victory procession into London after the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury in 1471. He was given a number of Crown offices in the following year, but most of his father's offices eventually went to others, and in 1479 he was forced to exchange the earldom of Pembroke (which Edward wanted for his own son) for the less prestigious earldom of Huntingdon. It has been suggested that his health was not good, or that he was simply not as competent as his father: but he had seen the penalties of fame in his own family and may eventually have decided to keep a lower profile. He seems to have negotiated the successive changes of regime in the 1480s without difficulty: he was comparatively close to Richard III, whose illegitimate daughter Katherine he married in 1484, but in 1485 he readily made his peace with Henry Tudor (with whom he had after all been brought up).

As with his father's first will, the younger William Herbert's will survives only in what is presumably a translation in the *Prosapia*.[32] He made this will on 21 July 1483. His first wife, Mary Wydeville, had died two years previously, and in his will he asked to be buried at Tintern 'in or

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29 '*Herberts of Raglan* 97.

30 http://www.gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/poem/?poem-selection=026 (accessed 22.01.23).

31 The following paragraphs are based on Ralph Griffiths' addendum to his biography of William Herbert senior in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and on Thomas, *Herberts of Raglan*. For a recent study of the family, see C. Steer, 'A Royal Grave in a Fifteenth-Century London Parish Church', in The Fifteenth Century. XIII: Exploring the Evidence: Commemoration, Administration and the Economy, ed. L. Clark (Woodbridge, 2014), 31–40, online at https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Exploring_the_Evidence/cREABQAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=%22A+Royal+Grave+in+a+Fifteenth-Century+London+Parish+Church%22&pg=PA31&printsec=frontcover
(accessed 19.01.23)

32 CL MS 5.7 p. 74

neare as may be to the same where my deare and best beloved wife resteth buried'. He repeated his father's bequest of the church of Llanfihangel Cwm-du to Tintern (suggesting it may not have been implemented before) and added to it the chapel of 'St Tryacke' or St Twrog, a chapel on a tidal island just south of Beachley Point (Glos) which he claimed as lord of the manor of Tidenham. He also left 6s 8d for every monk attending his annual obit and 40s towards the building of the cloister. There were further minor bequests to a number of churches and provision for the marriages of his sisters.

William junior had only one child by his first wife. Elizabeth Herbert married Charles Somerset (later Earl of Worcester) and took the Herbert estates to the Somerset family. He had no children by Richard III's illegitimate daughter Katherine. She died before 1487 (when William was described as a widower) and was buried at St James Garlickhythe, which was probably the parish church of the Herberts' London residence.[33]

The Herbertorum Prosapia*: an evaluation*

The manuscript of the *Prosapia* was acquired by Cardiff Library as part of the Phillips Collection in 1896. It was Charles Alban Buckler, the Surrey Extraordinary Herald, who identified it as the work of Thomas Herbert.[34] Herbert's brass in the church of St Crux, York, describes how he wrote a history of his family, based on archival sources, and *armorum, Sigillorum et Tumulorum Ectypis Graphice delineatis* ('graphically drew sketches of arms, seals and tombs'). The book seems to have been written (or at any rate completed) shortly before his death: there is a note on p. 170 describing the Somerset tomb in Windsor in which he says 'at this present time A: D: 1680 ...'. The manuscript in Cardiff is not however the original: the script could be late seventeenth century but could also be early eighteenth. Norman Mackenzie compared it carefully with Herbert's other manuscripts and concluded that it was not his writing.[35] The drawings of the tombs were presumably copied from Herbert's originals, which takes them one more remove away from what they purport to depict. It is however possible that it is a fair copy made under Herbert's supervision.

The earlier part of the *Prosapia*, like the *Origo*, is largely fiction, and Herbert's account of his own experiences during the Civil War and Commonwealth seems to have been carefully edited to suit changing political circumstances after the Restoration. It seems to be generally accepted, though, that the later parts of the family history are reasonably reliable. Even Matthew Ward, who considered the tomb drawings to be 'the product of the illustrator's imagination', recommended the manuscript as a source for the William Herberts, father and son.[36]

The same cannot unfortunately be said of the drawings of tombs and memorials. They begin with an entirely fictitious flat effigial slab of William Fitzherbert, Archbishop of York 1141–47 and 1153–4, later canonised as St William of York.[37] Attempts to link this Fitzherbert with the later Herberts involved some very imaginative genealogy. The effigy is completely anachronistic: it cannot even have been based on a retrospective depiction from his shrine. His sarcophagus had a plain coped lid, and reconstructions based on fragments of the four successive shrines which were built to house his relics have no evidence for an effigial slab or even the indent for a brass. The

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33 Steer, 'A Royal Grave'.

34 See his correspondence with John Ballinger, the Cardiff librarian, inserted into the beginning of the *Prosapia*.

35 'Parliamentary Royalist' 38–9.

36 *The Livery Collar* 148n., 169.

37 CL MS 5.7 p. 138.

shrines were in any case dismantled in the 1530s and 1540s and the fragments buried.[38] The drawing itself is full of inaccuracies: St William wears a rather strange rectangular chasuble, there is no separate pallium and he has a crozier rather than an archbishop's cross-staff.

Equally anachronistic are two other purported early tombs, those of 'Herbert son of Mathew son of Herbert' said to have died in 1244 and to have been buried at Margam,[39] and of Herbert fitz Herbert, chamberlain to Henry I, and his wife Lucy, daughter of Miles earl of Hereford, said to be at Llanthony Secunda in Gloucester.[40] The first Herbert is given an effigy with armour of several centuries later. While Lucy was indeed buried at Llanthony Secunda, which her father founded, and some attempt has been made to give her a medievalizing style of dress, her husband's armour and the double-decker style of the tomb come from a much later date.

The smoking gun as far as the tomb drawings are concerned is that on page 149. This purports to be the tomb of Richard Herbert, younger brother of the first Herbert Earl of Pembroke, who was like his brother executed after the battle of Edgcote but whose body did make it back to Abergavenny. However, his tomb survives and it is nothing like the drawing in the *Prosapia*.

The Abergavenny tomb has the effigies of Richard and his wife Margaret, sister of Sir Rhys ap Thomas of Dinefwr, on a tomb chest with shield-bearing angels and saints. The drawing in the *Prosapia* has Richard alone (though Margaret is mentioned in the caption under the drawing), lying slightly turned to his left side and with his right arm raised, bearing a shield, in seventeenth-century armour and on a plain tomb chest.

This is particularly puzzling as it was this Richard who was Thomas Herbert's ancestor. Surely, if he ever visited his Welsh estates, he would have gone to see the ancestral tomb? The totally fictitious representation of Richard's tomb could even cast doubt on Charles Alban Buckler's identification of Thomas Herbert as the author of the *Prosapia*. It is possible, though, that he did not visit Wales until the early 1660s, and that the Abergavenny tombs were still at that time in a damaged state following iconoclastic attacks during the Civil War.

However, some of the drawings in the *Prosapia* are reasonably accurate, and some at least of the minor inaccuracies could be the result of recopying. On page 163 is a drawing of the tomb of Henry Percy, 4th earl of Northumberland (d. 1489) in Beverley Minster. Herbert has drawn this as a tomb chest with an elaborate canopy. The tomb is still in Beverley Minster but has lost its canopy. The canopy is however shown in a drawing in the College of Arms which was made for William Dugdale in 1661, and Herbert's drawing is almost identical to Dugdale's.[41] The tomb on page 147 is that of William Herbert, first earl of Pembroke of the second Herbert creation, and his first wife Anne Parr (Katherine Parr's sister). They were buried in St Paul's Cathedral and their tomb was destroyed in the Great Fire of London, but the drawing in the *Prosapia* is very similar to that in Dugdale's *History of St Paul's Cathedral*, and the inscription is exactly as in Dugdale.[42] The tomb of Charles Somerset, earl of Worcester, and his first wife Elizabeth, daughter of William Herbert,

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38 Stuart Harrison, 'The shrines of St William of York reconstructed' in Sarah Brown, Sarah Rees Jones and Tim Ayers (eds), *York: Art, Architecture and Archaeology* (British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions XLII, Routledge, 2022) 1–25.

39 CL MS 5.7 p. 139

40 CL MS 5.7 p. 143

41 Rosemary Horrox (ed.), *Beverley Minster: an illustrated history* (Friends of Beverley Minster, 2000) 38, 150; the Dugdale drawing is fig. 15 on p 38. The original is in the College of Arms, MS RR 14.C f 89. There is another drawing of the tomb in the Bodleian Library, MS York.Top.C.14 f 258v: Horrox, *Beverley Minster* 105 n. 8.

42 William Dugdale, *The History of St Paul's Cathedral, London ...* (London: Tho. Warren, 1658) 88–9.



Fig. 6. The tomb of Richard Herbert of Coldbrook and Margaret ferch Thomas in St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny. Photo M. Gray.

earl of Huntingdon, can still be seen in the Beaufort Chapel in St George's Chapel, Windsor. The drawing of this, too, is quite accurate, though there are some minor inexactitudes in the armour. Finally, Herbert's drawing of the stained glass in Beverley Minster depicting Henry Percy with his wife Maud Herbert and their children (originally in the Percy chapel but now lost apart from the central shield) is very similar to the 1641 drawing by Dugdale now in the British Library, though Dugdale's drawing is of much higher quality.[43] It may be worth noting that while Dugdale represents the inscriptions on the window in what was presumably the original blackletter, Herbert's copyist has only transcribed the motto 'Esperance ma conforte', and it is in the same late 17th/early 18th century script as the rest of his text.

To add to the complications, there is at least one tomb where Herbert seems to have elaborated on what he had himself seen. On page 165 there is a drawing of a tomb in Beverley Minster which Thomas Herbert identifies as the tomb of Maud or Matilda, countess of Northumberland and daughter of William Herbert, first earl of Pembroke (she died. c. 1485). This elaborately cusped and

[43] BL MS Lansdowne 896, reproduced in Christopher Wilson (ed.), *Medieval Art and Architecture in the East Riding of Yorkshire* (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 1989), plate XVIA. For a discussion of the glass see David O'Connor, 'The Medieval Stained Glass of Beverley Minster' in Wilson, *East Riding* 62–90 on p 73 and p 79 no. 7b.



Fig. 7. The tomb of Richard Herbert of Coldbrook, according to the Prosapia: CL MS 5.7 p. 149.

pinnacled tomb is in fact in the Decorated style of the mid fourteenth century. Lindley has made a convincing case for identifying it as the tomb of Eleanor, wife of Henry, first Lord Percy.[44] It is worth remembering, though, that Dugdale also identified this tomb as Maud/Matilda: and Herbert worked closely with Dugdale on the *Monasticon* and other projects. The drawing of the canopy over the

[44] Phillip Lindley, *Tomb Destruction and Scholarship: Medieval Monuments in Early Modern England* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007), 167–98.

tomb is reasonably accurate. However, Herbert has added an effigy to the tomb which was almost certainly never there. Antiquarian evidence suggests that the slab at the top of the original tomb chest had an indent for a brass, and that this had been prised off by the time Dugdale drew the tomb in 1641. This, and the location of the tomb, led Lindley to suggest that the tomb had been designed as the housing for the Easter Sepulchre – something which would have been impossible if it had a three-dimensional effigy rather than a brass.

Given, then, that some of the drawings in the *Prosapia* are accurate, some are totally imaginary and some seem to be based on surviving originals but with imaginative additions, what are we to make of the drawings of the two Herbert tombs at Tintern? On the face of it, they look nothing like fifteenth-century tombs and could be written off as the product of Herbert's notoriously vivid imagination. The effigy figures on the tomb of William Herbert senior and Anne Devereux are of sixteenth- or even early seventeenth-century appearance, and the fact that they are both depicted wearing coronets is also unusual. The effigies of male aristocrats could be depicted with coronets (see for example the Fitzalan effigies in the church at Arundel, Sussex). Women very occasionally had full coronets (Beatrice, countess of Arundel is an example, but she was of royal Portuguese blood). More usually, what is described as 'coronets' on female effigies is really a decorative band outside or (less usually) inside the head-dress (see for example the effigies of Elizabeth, Lady Harrington, d. *c*. 1418, in Porlock, Somerset, and Benedicta Ludlow, wife of Sir Richard Vernon, d. 1444, at Tong, Shropshire).[45] The drawings of William Herbert junior and Mary Wydeville are less clear, but his armour looks far too modern, and they too both have full coronets. The text under the drawings cannot have derived from the actual tombs: it makes no reference to prayer for their souls, which was almost universal on medieval tomb inscriptions, and inscriptions are in any case unusual in alabaster tombs before the sixteenth century.

Sir Thomas Herbert cannot have seen the tombs in their original splendour. He himself said that at the Dissolution of the Monasteries they were 'defaced', and Lord Herbert of Cherbury in the mid seventeenth century described them as 'wholly defaced and ruined'.[46] If the tombs were alabaster, they would rapidly have decayed once exposed to the weather. Even freestone would have suffered in over a century of exposure. However, Herbert of Cherbury's description of them suggests that there was *something* still to be seen.

Furthermore, though the effigies in the two drawings are nothing like those on fifteenth-century tombs, the tomb chests are markedly different from the other drawings in the sequence. Most of the other effigy tombs (and all of those that can be shown to be completely fictitious apart from Archbishop William Fitzherbert's flat slab) are depicted with plain black tomb chests, the only decoration being heraldic shields. William and Anne lie on a chest with kneeling figures of their children along the side. The daughters wear coronets, as does the oldest son; two younger sons are bare headed. Beneath each figure is a shield with the Herbert arms, in some cases impaled with that of their spouses.

'Weeper' figures, sometimes with shields, are common on fifteenth-century tomb chests. However, they are almost invariably depicted standing. Only a few examples with kneeling figures are known, and all are later in the century. The closest analogy to the drawing in the *Prosapia* is the tomb of Humphrey Salwey (d. 1493) and his wife Joyce at Stanford-on Teme, Worcs. This has

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[45] I am immensely grateful to Challe Hudson for these references and for an extensive discussion of this rather arcane topic.

[46] CL MS 5.7 p. 75; Autobiography 16.



Fig. 8. Kneeling figures on tomb of Humphrey and Joyce Salwey at Stanford on Teme. Photo M. Gray.

kneeling figures of their sons on the tomb chest, each with a shield leaning against their knees, and a panel with the three kneeling figures of their daughters, again with a shield.[47]

This tomb must have been completed by the end of the fifteenth century: Joyce's date of death is left blank but reads 'obiit anno Domini millesimo CCCC....'. It is thus a quarter of a century later than William's date of death. We do however know that Anne Devereux survived him by some years and was still alive in 1486. If the tomb was commissioned by her towards the end of her life, or if it was actually commissioned by William junior after her death, it is possible that it might have had kneeling figures, and the drawing in the *Prosapia* might be accurate in that respect.

There are a few other examples of kneeling figures on late fifteenth-century tombs. At Swarkestone, Derbyshire, the incised slab to John Rolleston, died 1482, lies on a tomb-chest with a side panel showing two groups of kneeling figures flanked by angels. At Youlgreave, Derbs., the panel commemorating Robert and Joan Gilbert, the latter dying in 1492, has similar kneeling figures either side of a standing Virgin and Child.[48] The tomb chests of Thomas White (d. 1482) and his son John (d. 1507) in Tenby, Pembs., each have panels depicting their wives and children kneeling before the figures of saints. All these, though, are more like votive figures than weepers. The tomb of Sir John Savage (d. 1495) at Macclesfield, Chesh., has pairs of kneeling weepers supporting

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47 This tomb is no. 58 in C. B. Newham's *Country Church Monuments* (Particular Books, 2022). See also Arthur Gardner, *Alabaster Tombs of the Pre-Reformation Period in England* (Cambridge University Press, 1940) plate 65.

48 I am grateful to Jon Bayliss for pointing out the Swarkestone and Youlgreave tombs and for confirming that no other fifteenth-century chests with kneeling weeper figures survive: see his email, 26.04.2016. See also Jennifer S. Alexander, B. W. Hodgkinson and Sue A. Hadcock, 'The Gylbert monument in Youlgreave church: memorial or liturgical furnishing?', *Church Monuments* 21 (2006) 94–111.

shields, but these figures with their belted mantles and purses do not look like children of the family. At Millom in Cumbria, the tomb of Sir John Hudlestone (d. 1494) has standing angels with shields flanked by miniature kneeling figures, but again there is nothing to identify these as family members.

There are however some examples of brasses with kneeling children from earlier in the fifteenth century. The earliest, at Ashby St Leger, Northants, commemorating Thomas and Ellen Stokes, is dated 1416. Other early examples include John Cottesmore at Brightwell Baldwin, Oxon. (1439), Thomas Clarell at Lillingstone Lovell, Bucks. (1471) and John Ansty at Stow-cum-Quy, Cambs., also 1460.[49] Slightly later is the 1477 brass to the London skinner John Croke, his wife and family, in the church of All Hallows, Barking-by-the-Tower. The figures on the Stokes brass look more like votive figures, as they are depicted kneeling under a lost brass of the Trinity, but the others are more like the conventional depiction of kneeling weepers. Whether or not Anne Devereux ever saw these or similar tombs, she was well connected and would have been aware of the latest fashions in commemorative sculpture.

There is one other, much earlier example of kneeling figures on a tomb chest. The tombs of the Berkerolles family at St Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan date from the mid fourteenth century and both have kneeling figures on the tomb chests. The tombs have been subjected to a rather disastrous repainting but it is clear that some at least of the kneeling figures are integral to the actual tomb chests.

It is tempting to regard this as a complete outlier, an innovation that simply didn't go anywhere but had to be reinvented sometime later. There is, however, a connection between the Herbert family and St Athan. William Herbert senior owned the manor of West Orchard in St Athan: his father William ap Thomas had bought it. William Herbert specifically mentioned the manor in the first version of his will, leaving it to his son Watkin (that is, his second son Walter Herbert, later of Caldicot).[50] It seems, however, to have gone eventually to William Herbert junior, and passed with his daughter Elizabeth into the estate of the Somersets, earls of Worcester. It is not completely impossible, therefore, that a member of the family could have come to the manor on a tour of inspection, visited the church and been impressed by the idea of the kneeling weepers on the Berkerolles tombs. We do not give enough weight to the importance of fashion, personal choice and sheer happenstance in the development of tomb design.

The shields below the kneeling figures may also have some basis in fact. As well as describing the Herbert tombs, William Fellow's report mentions the arms of Powis, Cokesey and Lisle, the husbands of three of William Herbert's daughters.[51] It seems likely that he saw these arms on the tomb. The rough sketches of the armorial bearings on the shields in the Prosapia bear no relation to the more complicated quarterings described in Fellow's report. However, it seems likely that there were shields on the tomb, and that they were painted with armorial bearings.

It is possible, therefore, though perhaps unlikely, that the sketch of William Herbert senior's tomb in the *Prosapia* is copied from or based on an authentic drawing. It is perhaps more likely that, on a brief visit to his Welsh estates, Thomas Herbert could have spoken to someone who had seen the tomb before it completely decayed, or (even more likely) had heard local traditions describing it.

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[49] I am grateful to Sally Badham for these references. See also Malcolm Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Memorials II* (London: Phillips & Page, 1977) plates 170 and 171, John Croke, his wife and family, 1477, and the sons of John Ansty, 1460.

[50] CL MS 5.7 p. 56.

[51] Siddons, *Visitations by the Heralds in Wales* 37.



Fig. 9. detail of kneeling figures on the Salwey tomb. Photo M. Gray.

The identification of the tomb as that of William and Anne was presumably based on local tradition. The tomb might indeed have had kneeling figures on the side: the idea of kneeling figures had to start somewhere, and there is no reason to suppose that the Salwey tomb was the first. Alternatively, Thomas might have interpreted a description of the tomb as having their children along one side in the light of tombs with kneeling children with which he was more familiar. Finally, it is of course possible that Thomas was simply recreating the figures based on William Herbert's request in his will that his children be depicted on his tomb.

The same might also be true of the tomb of William Herbert junior and Mary Wydeville. The identification of the tomb must have been based on local information. While their effigies are drawn on a plain tomb chest, the whole tomb is surrounded by railings. None of Herbert's other drawings include railings, so one could legitimately assume that he was drawing what he believed to be fact. The railings could have been a post-Dissolution addition, but there are plenty of other examples of late medieval tombs with railings.[52] Herbert may have based his drawing on local tradition, but it is also possible that he actually saw the overgrown remains of the tomb inside their railings and attempted to recapture what he thought the tomb would have looked like.

There is one final puzzle, and a couple of intriguing side-issues. Our main (and presumably most reliable) source for the tombs of the two William Herberts is the 1531 visitation report of

[52] Jane Geddes, *Medieval Decorative Ironwork in England* (Society of Antiquaries of London, 1999) 240–56.



Fig. 10. Kneeling figures on the mid fourteenth century Berkerolles tomb at at St Athan. Photo M. Gray.

William Fellow, the Lancaster Herald.[53] This describes William senior and Anne Devereux's tomb as lying 'in ye quiere before ye high aulter' and names their three sons and six daughters. However, turning to William junior's tomb, Fellow says 'on the northe syde of the sayde tombe lyeth buryed Sir William Harbert Erle of Huntingdon, and his brother Sir George Harbert, bothe in one Tombe.' This George was William's youngest brother, Sir George Herbert of St Julians. Fellow saw the tombs while the abbey was still in being, and he was presumably capable of distinguishing the effigy of a woman from that of a man. If we are correct in suggesting that Sir Thomas Herbert saw something which he identified as the remains of William earl of Huntingdon's tomb, it would presumably have been fragmented and overgrown. It is possible, therefore, that he assumed the other figure was that of Mary Wydeville, knowing from William's will that she was buried at Tintern and that he wished to be buried with or near her.

Does anything survive of these tombs? In his *Alabaster Tombs of the Pre-Reformation Period in England*, Arthur Gardner made the intriguing suggestion that 'the tombs at Abergavenny are a

[53] Siddons, *Visitations by the Heralds in Wales* 38.

collection from various places, one of which is said to be Tintern Abbey'.[54] Unfortunately, he gives no reference for this: it does not appear to come from the work of Octavius Morgan, who was the main proponent of the idea that the Herbert tomb chests at Abergavenny were assembled from fragments, some of them of an altar reredos.[55] This theory has been convincingly challenged by Phillip Lindley among others, and in the absence of any evidence we can probably set Gardner's claim aside.[56]

There is however one even more bizarre possibility. In about 1660, some labourers digging in a quarry at a place they called Porth Shini Kran, between Caerleon and Christchurch, found a skeleton in an anthropomorphic lead coffin inside a stone sarcophagus and an alabaster carving of St Michael.[57] These, it seemed, were all that remained of a tomb chest and its associated burial: but what were they doing in this unidentified quarry? The combination of stone coffin and anthropomorphic lead coffin suggests a late medieval date. One suggestion (and it is highly speculative) is that the coffins and the tomb chest were being moved from a monastic site after the Dissolution (or possibly during another phase of iconoclastic activity) and that some accident had forced whoever was transporting them to hide their cargo in the quarry. The only local family of sufficient status to have afforded such a tomb chest were the Herberts of St Julians. The coffins and the skeleton have vanished, but the alabaster carving was given to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, where it is still exhibited. Is this all that remains of the tomb of George and William Herbert?

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54 Arthur Gardner, *Alabaster Tombs of the Pre-Reformation Period in England* (Cambridge University Press, 1940), 14.

55 Octavius Morgan, *Some Account of the Ancient Monuments in the Priory Church, Abergavenny* (Newport: Monmouthshire and Caerleon Antiquarian Association, 1872, available online at https://ia902608.us.archive.org/9/items/someaccountofanc00morguoft/someaccountofanc00morguoft.pdf, accessed 29.01.23)

56 Phillip Lindley, *Tomb Destruction and Scholarship* (Donington, Shaun Tyas, 2007) 200–07; see also M. Gray, 'The Tomb of Gwladus Ddu and William ap Thomas in the Priory Church of St Mary, Abergavenny', *Monmouthshire Antiquary* 37 (2022) 35–50, on pp. 42–3.

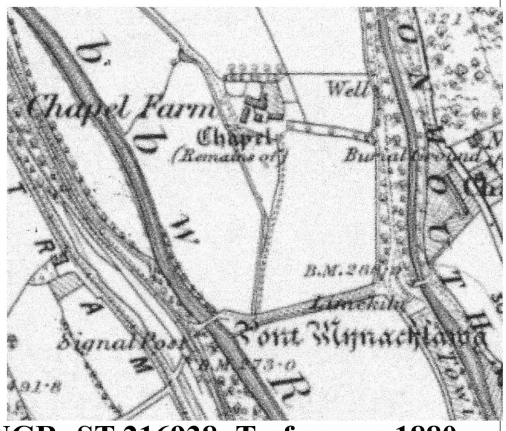
57 for details see M. Gray, '"For the Farther Satisfaction of the Curious": How an Alabaster Carving from Caerleon Reached the Ashmolean Museum', *Monmouthshire Antiquary* 30 (2014) 31–8.

ANCIENT BUT DESERTED CHURCHES OF MEDIEVAL GWENT: SOME OF THE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

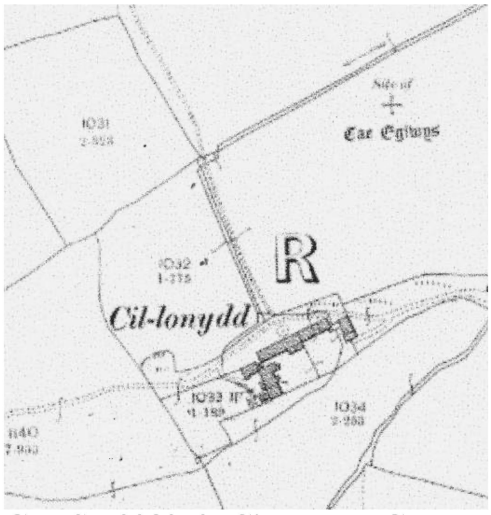
By David H. Williams

In the Millennium Issue of our Journal (Volume XVI of 2000), I published in sections my map of 'The Church in Medieval Gwent.' Afterwards, in 2002, I was able to have the whole map printed as a separate entity. Writing a review of the map the following year, Professor Maddy Gray suggested that the notes which accompanied the first version of the map 'could be expanded and made available as a booklet.' That is the purpose of this present essay. In 2002 also, in our journal, George McHardy published his fine account of the drawings and paintings of a number of our former churches, in the collection 'Gwentiana', held by the Society of Antiquaries of London. I accompany this article with a few images of deserted churches in the main previously unpublished.

Abercarn/Newbridge



NGR: ST 216938: Tref-carn c.1880
(Ordnance Survey; Plate: *Monm. Antiq.* XVII (2011) cover)



NGR: ST 228972: Cil-lonydd Grange

Both these former granges of Llantarnam abbey had remains of their chapels until recent times, and at Chapel Farm of burials, and at Cil-lonyydd of a substantial barn.
[Williams, *Atlas of Cistercian Lands in Wales*, Cardiff, 1990, p. 476. For Cil-lonydd, see also: *Archaeology in Wales* 38, 1998, pp. 126–128].

Abergavenny), St John the Evangelist: NGR: SO 329214
(Close of 5th Century): Founded by Ynyr, King of Gwent (Bradney, J. A., *History of Monmouthshire* 2 (Hundred of Abergavenny), London: Mitchell, Hughes & Clarke, 1906, p. 172.
(1114/1141): Founded by Brian fitzCount, Lord of Abergavenny: *Liber Controversarium Sancti Vincentii Cenomanennsis*, ed. A. Chédeville, Paris: 1968, p. 123 [59]. [I am very grateful to Mr Bruce Copleston-Crowe for drawing my attention to this work].

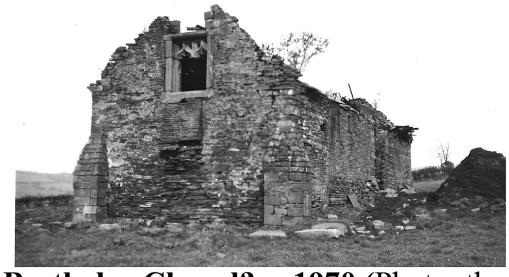
(1763): 'Now gone so much to decay that no part of it is standing besides the Tower and the Nave, in which last the Free School is kept, and in which Divine Service is performed in Welsh weekly on Friday Morning' (NLW, LL/QA/2).
The tower yet remains, and possible other vestiges, the site by St John's Street, now being a masonic lodge.
(Abergavenny had a chantry in 1548, with Richard ap Howell Gwillim as priest, but presumably in St Mary's church, Hobson Matthews, *Cardiff Records* **2**, Cardiff, 1900).

Aberystruth (St Peter, Blaina): NGR: ?SO 199080
The medieval church of St Peter [Plate: *Monm. Antiq.* XVII (2002) p. 50] was replaced after its demolition after about 1966. Coxe (*An Historical Tour in Monmouthshire*, 1801, p. 247) noted it as 'a handsome gothic building with a square tower'. Note the place-name *Llandafal* at NGR: SO 194039. A will of 1776 tells of 'a place called Dyffryn Eglwys'. Testators of 1631 and 1675 desired burial in the church.

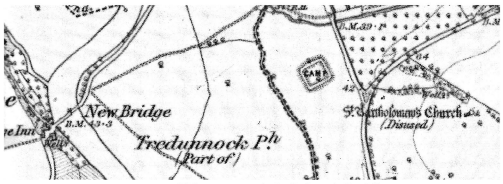
Bedwellty (St Sannan): NGR: SO 166003
Coxe (1801) wrote of the church 'as being whitewashed, with an embattled tower built with brown rubble'. Much later it was subject to major reconstruction.

Bertholey Chapel, ? St Cadog: NGR: SO 298141
(1244): Agreement between Llanthony Secunda and Master William of Christchurch, re a chantry chapel sited in the parish with a resident clerk. (TNA, C 115/77, f. 289r).
(n.d.) Llantrissent and 'Brethelly' Chapel had been the gift of Gilbert Marshal, Earl of Pembroke (TNA, C 115/77, ff. 286d-287d).
(1745): An incumbent inducted (E.T. Davies, *Ecclesiastical History of Monmouthshire*, Risca, 1953, p. 94).
(1763): 'In a ruinous condition, and unfit to have service performed' (NLW, LL/QA/2).
'Bertholey' may stem from the Welsh 'berth' = 'beautiful', and not from St Bartholomew.
(1953): 'A cow-house': (Davies, p. 94).

Bettws Chapel (Llantilio Pertholey): NGR: SO 297193
Coxe 1801 told of it being 'a small gothic chapel now in ruins'. It was rebuilt in 1829. In 1626 William Llewellin desired to be buried here.



Bertholey Chapel? c. 1970 (Photo: the author)



The Site c.1880 (OS)

Blaenafon, Capel Newydd: NGR: SO 269076



The church foundations (Courtesy Blaenavon Civic Society).

(1763): 'Served by Mr Edwards, Curate of Aberystruth' (NLW, LL/QA/2).
This church, lying in the parish of Llanover and probably pre-Reformation, held its last service in 1861, and later some of the stone was used in the building of St Paul's church, Blaenavon.

Caerleon Church:
(1502): had a Chapel of the Holy Cross and a Chapel of the BVM (Gwent Archives, D43/5500, Kemys Deed)

Caerleon/Christchurch: SS Julius, Aaron and Alban
The early ordnance survey maps suggest two chapels, one at Penrhos (NGR: ST 341917), another at Mount St Alban's (ST 3661917). A charter of around 1113 refers to a 'church of Julius and Aaron by Caerleon'; a further charter of 1143 adds also the name of Alban. A. Seaman of Christchurch University, Canterbury, who has researched this topic thoroughly (*Monmouthshire Antiquary* XXXIV, pp. 3–16), both from documentary evidence and by personal excavation, doubts that 'separate churches dedicated to the martyrs existed at or near Caerleon' and favours the Mount St Alban's site. He suggests that a single church so dedicated existed by the ninth century until the late fifteenth. William Coxe (*Historical Tour through Monmouthshire*, Part 1 (London, 1800), p. 95), tells of burials unearthed in 1785 by 'the Chapelyard' at the Mount St Alban's location. We note also the later manor house chapel of St Julius, which in 1800, Coxe saw at St Julian's converted into a barn (NGR: ST 325899; Coxe, Part 1, op. cit. p. 103).

Caerwent:
(1337): had 'the chapels of Llanfair (Discoed), Dynan (Dinham) and St Nyueyn (Crick) annexed' (*Cal. Patent R*. 1337, 394).

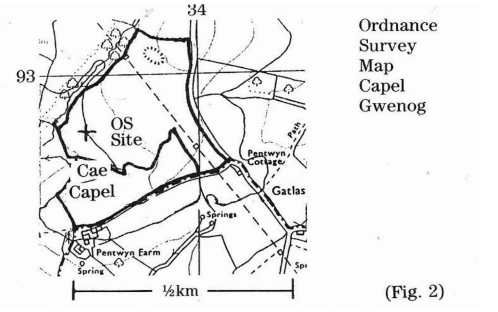
Caldicot, St David: Dewstow: NGR: ST 467889
(in 1149–83): Bishop Nicholas of Llandaff confirms the grant to Llanthony by Gloucester of the Chapel of St David of Caldicot by the patron, Hugh the Little. (TNA, C 115/77. F. 282d).
(Und.): 12 acres of land went with the chapel of St David in Caldicot (TNA, C115/77, f. 13d).
(c.1379): services held in chapel of Dewstow (TNA, C 115/78, f. 6d).

(1393): perhaps following the institution of Thomas Montfort as Vicar of Caldicot, weekday services (if not all) had been 'totally withdrawn', and Archdeacon of Llandaff commanded their resumal (TNA, C 115/78, f.173d).
NLW, Maps/Man/12, shows the boundary of the Manor of Dewstow.

Capel Gwenog: NGR: ST 337928. (See *Monm. Antiq*.V, Pt. 3, 95–97).
(1538): (Chantry Certificate: *Cardiff Records* 2, p. 203:
(1553): Grant by William, Earl of Pembroke, to Roger Williams of Usk of; 'a chapel called Capel Gwenog, with lands pertaining'). Appears to be still a going concern. Lands were lately in tenure of John Hugh and Thomas Williams, rent maintained the stipend, but in this grant no provision to continue that (NLW, Llangibby Castle Deed C 885).



Capel Curig, c.1880 (OS)



Capel Gwenog, c.1870 (OS)

Catsash, St Curig's Chapel: NGR: SO 371908
(1536): 'A house, formerly a chapel … adjoining the house of Morgan ap Ynon, which is a common alehouse by the highway at Catsash'. Demise of 'the old chapel' in 1536, it to be "sufficiently repaired with walls, windows, and timber works in the roof"; prayers were said there for Sir Thomas Morgan, the grantor's father, and Bradney illustrates a window (4, Part 2, pp. 205–206).

Clytha: Capel Aeddan (SO 373094)
The foundations and vestiges of stonework of this perhaps twelfth-century St Aythan's chapel, are clearly visible.

Chepstow: NGR: ST 532948
(1361): St Davids chantry chapel by Striguil bridge (Bradney 4, Part 1, p. 8).
Coxe (1801) noted the chapel of St Anne in Bridge St., near the bridge, and also noted possible remnants of two chapels close to the Beaufort Arms.

Christchurch, by the river Usk. NGR: ST342903
(1575): 'The free chapel in Christchurch, closely adjacent to the footbridge of the town of Caerleon' (TNA, C 66/1125, m. 17).

Crick, ? St Neveyn's Chapel: NGR: ST490903 (See also Caerwent supra).
(in 1149–83): Margery de Bohun built a chapel 'in the cemetery of Caerwent' according to the great chartulary of Llanthony Priory, but the text simply refers to 'capella de cric', and she had Crick (then in the parish of Caerwent) as a major residence. (TNA, C 115/77, f. 289r). Extant late-seventeenth-early eighteenth-century wills make no mention of the chapel, inhabitants being buried mostly at Caerwent.

Cwmcarfan: NGR: SO 477075
(28 Mar 1477). Will of Johann vergh Jankyn ap Hova, late wife of Philip Robert of Cwmcarfan, refers to 'the chapel of St Winefride of Cwmcarfan', 'wishes to be buried there' and makes a bequest 'to the service of the altar there'. (NLW, Badm. D. I, 1686).

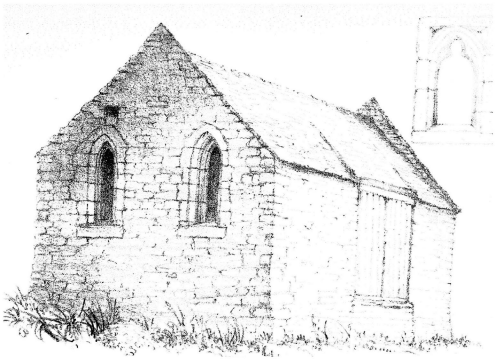
Dinham Church: ? St Michael's: NGR: ST 479921
(1543): an entity (Gwent Archives D43/5820, Kemys Deed).
(1590): Church in use (*Monm. Antiq.* XIX, p. 200).
(c.1835): Parish held with Llanfair Discoed, possibly no services now held at Dinham (NLW, Ll. Ch 229).
(1840): Still called a 'parish' (NLW, LL/CC/C(g) 2776).
Kelly's *Directory* (1895); tells of 'the font being used as a pump trough in the farm-yard'; Bradney illustrates the 'Bishop's Stone', perhaps a gravestone, and a chapel window, telling of the chapel being a cow-house. [Bradney 4, Part 2, p. 177]. The *Castles Wales* website refers to the chapel location. Font and Stone are noted on the six-inch Ordnance Survey map.

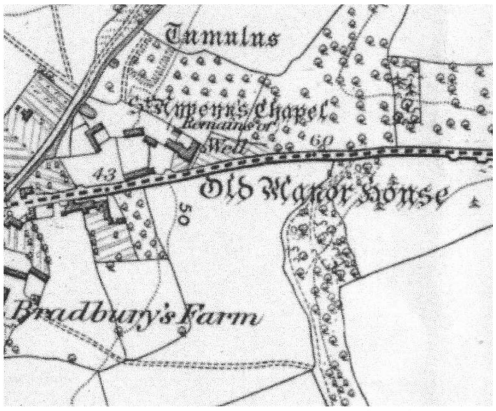
Goetre: NGR: SO 327059
Coxe (1801) noted an early gothic church without a tower. It was replaced in 1845.

Henrhiw in Kemeys: St John the Baptist: NGR: ST 396915
This church is referred to, under that dedication, in 1535 and 1618 (when an institution: Davies, op. cit. p. 94). Bradney gives its full dedication as St John the Baptist in the Wilderness (Bradney 3, Part 2, p. 181). There are no remains.

Howick: NGR: ST 502955
Bradney tells that Howick 'is an hamlet to which no church apparently belonged', but this is not so for a will of 1625 refers to 'the rectory and tithes of Howick' (Bradney 4, Part 2, p. 173), and the parish bounds are well known (TNA, OS 27/3384, of 1878). The long-disappeared church may have been dedicated to St John or St Guriud.

Crick Church (Thomas Wakeman)





Crick Church c.1880 (OS)

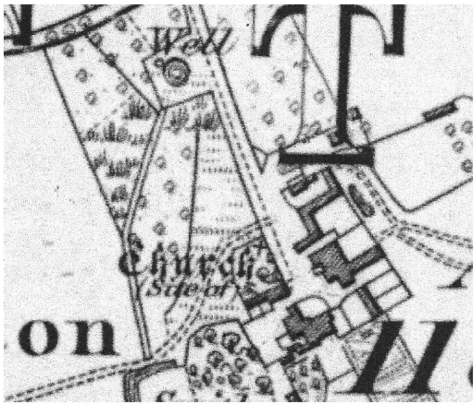


(above): **Remains of Dinham Church, and the Bishop's Stone and Font c.1880** (OS).

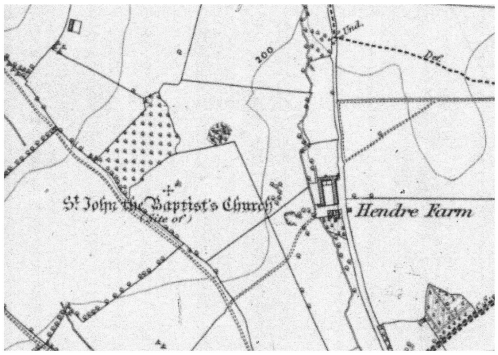
(right): **The 'Bishop's Stone', now in Caerwent church**
(Bradney 4.pt 2 p.177).



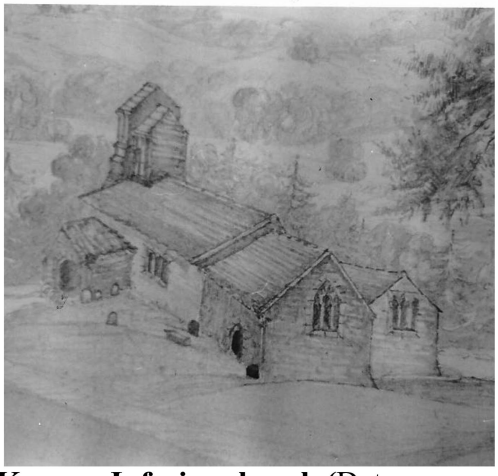
Ifton: St James: NGR: ST 465879
Nothing remains of Ifton church, which had ceased to function by 1851 (TNA, HO 129/576/5). A testator of 1527 was buried in its cemetery, and left the church 6s as well as 3s 4d., for tithes unpaid (Bradney 4, Part 1, p. 127). In 1668 Edmund Jones wished to be buried in the churchyard, and left 2s 6d., for the repair of the church; in 1677 Abell Evans wished to be buried at Llanfaches, and in 1701 Henry Walter at Caldicot.



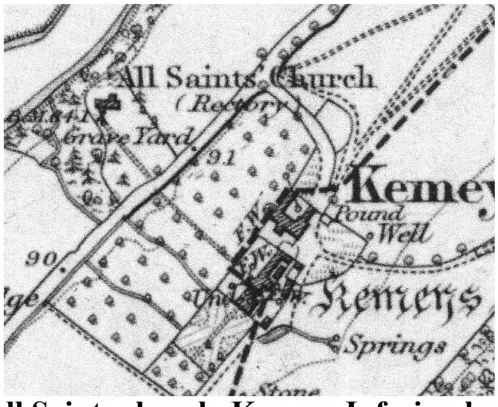
Ifton Church c.1880 (OS)



Henrhiw church site, c.1880 (OS).



Kemeys Inferior church (Date unknown) (Courtesy Society of Antiquaries)



All Saints church, Kemeys Inferior, by the River Usk c.1880 (OS).

Llandevenny: ST 411869
No church exists, but Bradney points to a house called the Chapel (Vol. 4, Part 2, p. 227).

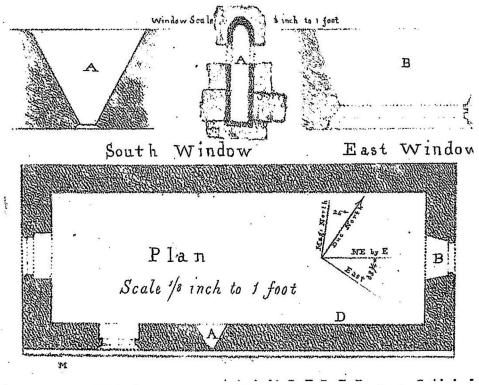
Llanhilleth: St Illtyd (NGR: SO 218019)
Closed in 1957, Coxe (1801) noted it as being ‘ancient gothic without tower or belfry’.

Llanbedr: St Peter: NGR: ST 389907



Llanbedr church, c.1880 (OS)

Llanbedr Church, 1858



(Thomas Wakeman: Courtesy of the National Library of Wales, Castell Gorfod Amryw 21)

(1727): 'The parish or chapelry of Lanbedder otherwise St Peter's'. (NLW, WCC 1936 Deposit, No. 313). (1765): 'the parish or chapelry of Lanbedder otherwise St Peter's in the lordship of Bishton' (NLW, W.C.C. 1934 Deposit, 4th Group, Deeds 317).

Llancynfarch: St Cynfarch Oer (St Kingsmark): NR: ST 524940

Llancynfarch church finds mention in the sixth-century *Book of Llandaff*, and in an early-twelfth century papal bull. The Augustinian priory of St John the Baptist founded close by before 1270, when termed 'the priory of St Kinmark's', was referred to in 1355 as being 'near St Kynemark', which must identify this chapel site. (*Monm. Antiq.* XIX, 2003, pp. 57–58; Bradney 4, Part 1, p. 42).
(1332): Bishop of Llandaff complains to Bishop of Bath and Wells regarding Thomas Gurney and Philip Hywel who caused violence to the church of St Kenmarton (*Reg. Ralph of Shrewsbury* I, 120 (No. 485).
(1535). St Kynemark valued at £3-19-4 to the bishopric of Llandaff.
(1642): a baptism at St Kinmark's (Bradney 4: Pt. 1, p. 42).

Llancynfarch c.1880 (OS)

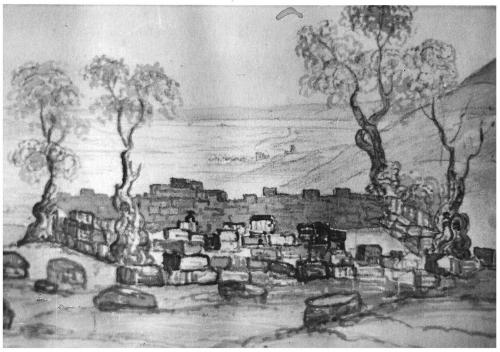




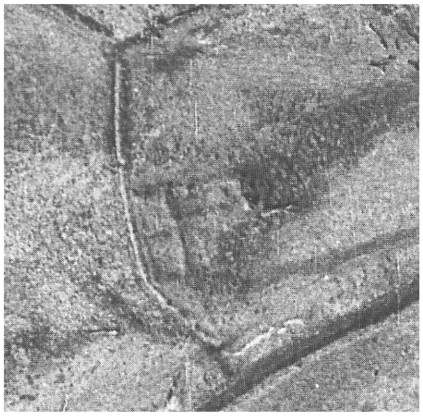
Llanfair Cilgoed, 1845
(Courtesy Society of Antiquaries)

Llanfair Cilgoed: SO 391193: 'The Church of Saint Mary at the Cell in the Wood'.
A Celtic cell granted around 1235 by Hubert de Burgh, lord of the Three Castles, to Abbey Dore as a chantry chapel, still has walls standing and cared for, with evidence of former fishponds, a large barn, and cultivation terracing in the grounds. Clearly used for worship as late as 1570, when a former monk of Dore, John Didbroke, aged seventy-three, was the chaplain, and there was still 'the cloister's chamber' at the grange (*Monm. Antiq.* Jones, *Monmouthshire Wills*, Cardiff, 1997, p. 89 (No. 28). The chapel was used for recusant worship, notably by the Croft family who lived nearby, and as a family burial place. In 1679 the chapel was partly demolished by government order.
(1334): William Braynde of Weobley, ordained to the title of Dore abbey's chantry in Grosmont (Cantilupe Society, *Register of Charles Bothe, Bishop of Hereford*, p. 360).
(1763): 'In ruins, which is much regretted' (NLW, LL/QA/2).
For a plan of the site and chapel, see that by the late R.E. Kay, in Williams, *Atlas of Cistercian Lands in Wales*, Cardiff, 1990, p. 118, Fig. 36b.

Llanfihangel-iuxta-Llantarnam: Llanderfel: St Dervel: NGR: ST 264953
A pilgrimage cell of Llantarnam for those seeking healing, sited around 970 feet above sea-level. Featuring in medieval Welsh poetry, Thomas Cromwell's pamphleteer described pilgrims going there as: 'gaddyng, with few clothes on our backes, but an image of waxe, for the lame and the blynde'. In September 1538 it was sent to London to be burnt, and that December the Crown demised 'the chapel and oblation or relic of St Dervall' to Henry Kemeys. The monks kept a tavern house for the pilgrims, and did they also have a chapel at St Dial's? (ST 285953: Bradney 3, Part 2, p. 243).
(1763): 'We have an old account of a chapel in ruins called Landerval' (NLW, LL/QA/2).
For a detailed plan, see Williams, *Atlas of Cistercian Lands*, op. cit. pp. 139–140, Nos. 60a and 60b. (The author is much indebted to the late Mr R.E. Kay for his plans).



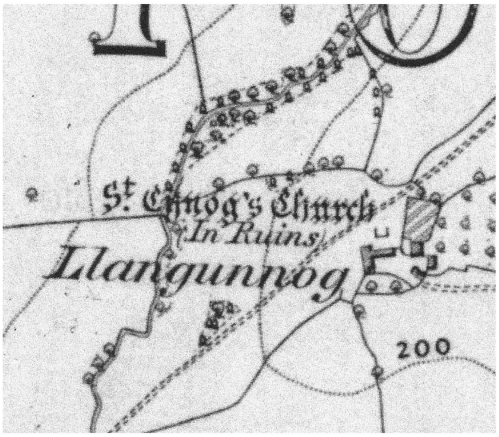
Llanderfel Chapel, 1845
(Courtesy Society of Antiquaries)



Llanderfel Aerial View
(Formerly copyright British Coal; by permission The National Archives)

Llanfihangel Llechryd: NGR: ? ST 437962
The site of this former church, dating from the tenth century, is by no means certain, though Bradney postulates a site partly based on its position, 'on the stony ford' (Vol. 4, Part 2, p. 157).

Llangynog: NGR: SO 455014
Dating from at least the tenth century, this church was probably dedicated to Cynog, a nephew of Brychan, of nearby Cwrt-y-brychan. Substantial remains existed in about 1850, but no longer. There were known burials here as late as 1763. (For a full description: *Monm. Antiq.* 5, Part 3, pp. 95–96, where a sketch from around 1850).
(1707): Chapter of Llandaff had lands in Llangynog (NLW, W.C.C. 1934 Deposit, 4th Group, Deed 414).



Llangynog Church, c.1880 (OS).



Chancel Arch (Bradney 2, Part 2, 1913).

Llangoven: Court St Lawrence: SO 451058
From its Welsh name, *Llanlawrence,* Bradney suggests an ancient church stood here (Bradney, 2, Part 2, p. 200).

Llanisien:
(1585): 'a chapel and about 100 acres of land' there, perhaps belonging to Llangynfarch (St Kynemark's) Priory (NLW, Badminton Deeds I, 52). Was this sited at Llanfair (SO 467041)?

Llanthomas: NGR: SO 468069
The 'parish of Llanthomas' first finds mention in a deed of 1414, and 'a chapel called Llanthomas chapel adjoining the Llymmon brook' in a perambulation of 1679. A baptism took place at Llanthomas in 1687. Its approximate site is denoted by the 'Chapel Orchard' at Great Llan-thomas noted on the tithe map of the early 1840s (*Monm. Antiq.* XV-XVI, 2009–2010, pp. 53–55).

Manmoel: NGR: SO c.186034
(1349): Richard ab Eynon, Vicar of 'Mammail' (J.H. Parry, *Register John de Trillek* (Hereford, 1910), p. 510).
'The church had disappeared by the sixteenth century' (Prof. Madeleine Gray, in *Landscape History* 21, 1999). She tells in *Monm. Antiq.* XIV, 1998, pp. 14–15 of the Celtic origins of the church. She also mentions the place-name, Llandanglws [NGR: ST 236891] as indicating another Celtic foundation, and that Basaleg priory owned a church of St Istan. In this region one notes the place-name of Capel-celyn [ST 201810].

Mathern:
(1604): A close called 'Highway Close, otherwise the Old Church'. (Gwent Archives D501/593).
Bishop's Palace Chapel: NGR: ST523908
A marriage there in 1697.

Merthyr Geryn Grange:
(1254): 'Robert, vicar of Merthyrgerin' (Davies, op. Cit. p. 97).
Davies, op. cit. p. 94: notes in 1953 'the now ruined church', a grange chapel of Tintern abbey.
Peter Webster, in a splendid article 'Merthyr Geryn: A Grange of Tintern Abbey Reconsidered', *Monm. Antiq.* XX, 2004, pp. 31–144, tells of the mentions around 1140 and 1240 of 'Merthyr-gerain with its church', and plots (Fig. 1, p. 140), 'where bones were found' in his excavation, presumably burials indicating the proximity of the former chapel, and perhaps its graveyard.

Newcastle, St Thomas: NGR: SO 448173
Essentially a castle chapel; there are no remains.
(1515). A 'Chapel Way' (Gwent Archives, D583/101; *Monm. Antiq.* XV-XVI, 2009–2010, p.51).

Newport, Free Chapel of St Lawrence:
(1548): John Verney, stipendiary priest (J.H. Matthews, *Records of the County Borough of Cardiff*; Cardiff, 1903, II, 307).

Newport, St Nicholas:
(1361): Gosynstrete lay in St Nicholas parish, and Fabian was chaplain of the church (Gwent Archives, D43/5491 Kemeys Deed).

Penallt: St Dennis [?NGR: SO 536098]
A 'Capel St Denys' was noted here in 1594; might it have served those using the Redbrook ferry? (Bradney 2, Part 2, p. 160).

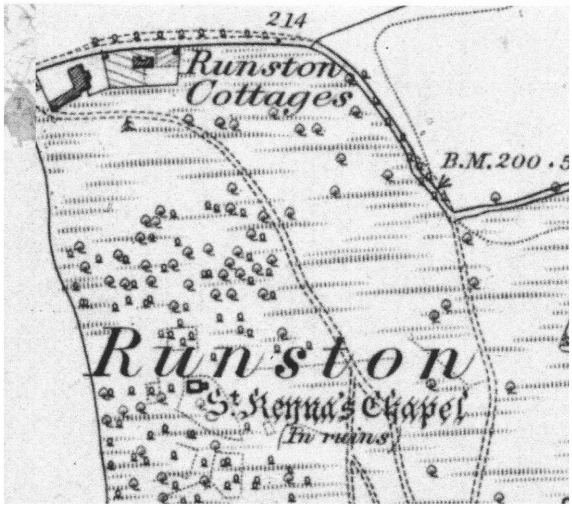
Pen-carn [NGR: ST 281836]
A reputed chapel here would have been a perquisite of Glastonbury abbey.

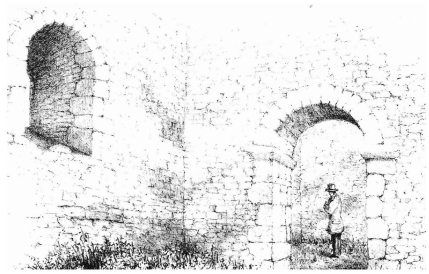
Pencoed Castle *(in parish of Llanmartin:* NGR: ST 406894*)*
(1614); A bequest of £10 per year was made for a chaplain ministering in the castle chapel (William Coxe, *Historical Tour through Monmouthshire*, Part 1, London, 1800, p. 33). A much-restored ground floor room contains a piscina, indicating the former chapel (J. Newman, ed., *Gwent/Monmouthshire*, London, 2000, p.327).

Porton: NGR: ST 389926?
(1245): Bishop of Llandaff gives patronage of the church to Goldliff Priory (Bradney).
(1349): Crown presents Robert Arnay as Vicar of 'Portereveton'; but for the Hundred Years War patronage would have been exercised by the alien priory of Goldcliff (*Cal. Patent Rolls* 1349, p. 433).
(1354-): Richard de Runston is vicar *(Cal. Patent Rolls* 1354, p. 43).
(Bradney 4, Part 2, pp. 275–276): 'The site of the church does not seem to be known'.
Sited by the Bristol Channel did it disappear with coastal erosion, and how did it fare in the great flood of 1607?

Pwll-meurig: A property to the east bears the name of St Theudric (**ST 529923**)

Runston: NGR: ST 495916
This church first finds mention in 1245, and its antiquity is evidenced by a Norman entrance arch on the south side. Bradney tells us that the nave measured 33 ft x 19 ft. 6 inches, and the chancel, 16 x 18 ft. It served a now deserted village, and in the sixteenth century came under the ministrations of the rector of Mathern. In 1626 Walter Beale desired to be buried there, as did John Peerce in 1633, and in 1645 Samuel Jones left the church money in his will, but by 1711 the building was 'void and down' (Bradney 4, Part 1, p. 83). Wakeman found a few gravestones in the former churchyard.



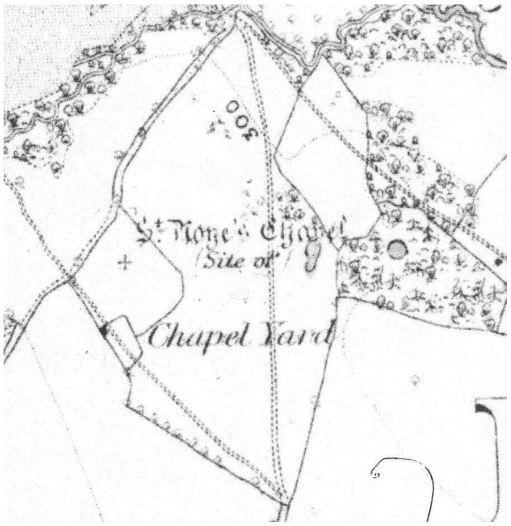


(above) **Inside Runston church** (Wakeman, *Ecclesiastical Remains*, 1858, courtesy British Library; mid-19th C.)

(left); OS c.1880.

St Lawrence:
(1626): Bishop of Llandaff recites terms of a lease of 1545: 'one parcel of land in the homage of St Laurence, commonly called Dene, the head westward abutting upon the Churchyard of St Lawrence and the head eastward abutting upon Hendfoil (? Howdfoil), and three acres and an half of land called Reding situate on the south part of the aforesaid dene as it lies there … also one garden or parcel of meadow lying on the south part of the Church or Chapell of St Lawrence otherwise called the Churchyard of St Lawrence … St Lawrence next St Kinmarke …' (NLW, W.C.C. 1934 Deposit, Group 3, Deed 111).
(1799): valuation of Hamlet of St Lawrence – 17 oak trees, 1 ash tree, 1 young ash and 5 lime trees. 4½ cords of wood with bark, all valued at £33 6s 9d (NLW, LL. Ch. 3627).
Coxe (1801) told of visible foundations of the chapel at the west end of a field called Upper Dean.
(1848): survey of Llandaff Chapter chancels in Archdeaconry of Monmouth makes no mention of St Lawrence (NLW, LL. Ch. 1967).
(1854): Lease by Chapter of Llandaff of the rectorial tithes 'of the chapelry of St Lawrence with 8 acres of land and wood lying beside the said chapel (NLW, LL. Ch. 255).
(1859): Some timber destined for repair of house and premises at Crick (NLW, LL. Ch. 1860).
(1861): Similar to Ch. 255. (NLW, LL. Ch. 256).
(The first reference with mention of 'next St Kinmarke', may mean, contrary to what I have written above, that there were two chapels, and St Lawrence at the present hamlet of that name.)

Skenfrith (Ynysgynwraidd); St Noye's Chapel, Blackbrook: SO 432206



OS c.1880.



St Noye's Chapel, RCAHMW 90/CS/0521 (6050330); (Crown Copyright, reproduced with permission of The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments Wales with delegated authority from the Keeper of Public Records).

A chantry chapel of Abbey Dore, Herefordshire from 1360. It was located near a now deserted medieval village and stood on a raised rectangular platform. Last heard of in 1591, a fragment of a possible 15th-century cross came from the site (A.P.A.C. Ltd.).
(1763): 'The Chapel of Llanoye now in ruin' (NLW, LL/QA/2).

Ysgyryd Fawr/the Great Skirrid: St Michael's Chapel: NGR: SO 331183
Foundations exist, at almost 1600 feet high, of this late medieval pilgrimage chapel. In 1676 a papal indulgence was granted to pilgrims visiting on Michaelmas Day (29th September) and its Eve, giving alms towards the repair of the now ruinous chapel. Several times a year a hundred people might gather here.

Sudbrook (Holy Trinity): NGR: ST 506873
The nave walls date from the twelfth century; the chancel from the fourteenth; the porch from the late fifteenth/early sixteenth century. Dedication to the Holy Trinity was a feature in Britain from the mid-twelfth century. In 1638 a bequest of 2s. was made to the church, and a wedding was held here in 1674, but by 1720 the church was 'now fallen down'. Coastal erosion played its part: Camden's *Britannia* (1695) mentioned, 'Sudbrook church, called Trinity Church, standeth so near the sea, that it hath spoiled it of half the Church-yard'. Lawson Lowe, writing in 1886, told that 'a few years ago

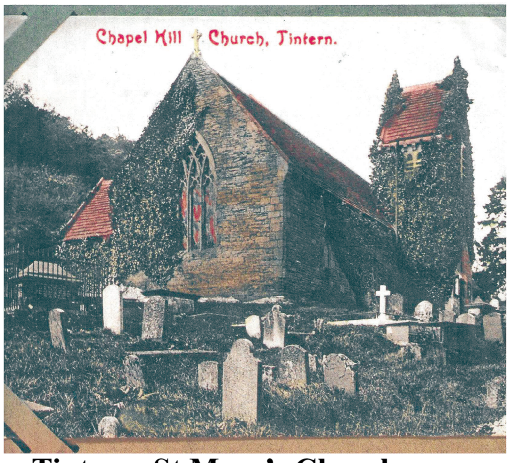
it was not uncommon to find fragments of coffins and human remains lying upon the beach'. He also told that 'the church was only saved because at the time of the construction in 1873–1876 of the Severn Tunnel, debris from the tunnel was dumped around the south-east corner of the Iron Age camp'.
(1569): John Williams, rector, 'was resident, and keepeth hospitality'.
(1885): Members of the Cambrian Archaeological Society visited the church.
For a full description see: *Monm. Antiq.* III, Part 1, pp. 21–28.



Sudbrook c.1880 (OS).



Sudbrook church, c. 1870 (Copyright: Courtesy of the University of Manchester: EAF/4/2/3/314).JCC

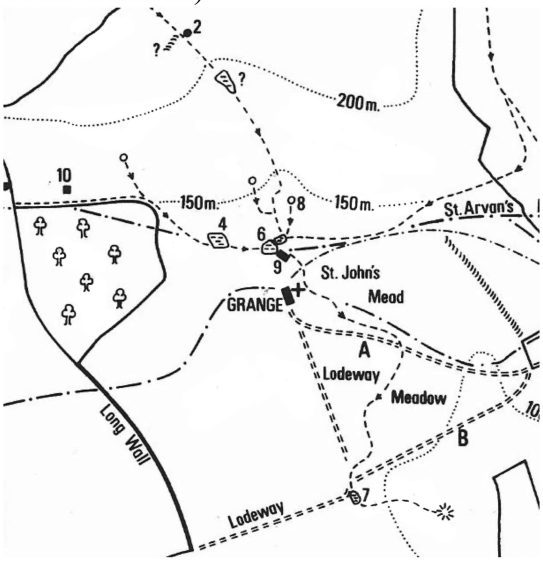


Tintern: St Mary's Church, Chapel Hill, Lambeth Palace Library: Clarke 3/32

Llanandras: Tintern
Latterly called St Mary's, but formerly perhaps St Andrew's, this church built in 1866 replaced a medieval edifice. It closed in 1972 and was subject to a destructive fire in 1977. At the abbey itself the former St Anne's gatehouse chapel is now converted into a private house.

The Granges of Tintern

Rogerstone Grange: St John's Chapel (ST 506966) (The author, with the late Colin Williams)





Woolaston Grange Chapel (ST 610995)
(Photo: Dr Cyril Hart)

Every medieval Cistercian grange had an oratory; Tintern's chapel at Merthyrgeryn grange has been noted. Its chapel at Trellech Grange (ST 531999) is now the local parish church. The map *(top left*) shows the supposed site of St John's chapel at its Rogerstone Grange. A former chapel at its Estavarney Grange (SO 353031) is shown by its Welsh name: 'Capel-coed-y-mynach' (Bradney 2, Part 2, p. 257). A building at its Porthcaseg vill may have been a chapel (Bradney 4, Part 1, p. 44).

Treowen: NGR: SO 46111
(1563): chapel in the manor-house.

COMMON FIELDS AND DISAPPEARING HEDGES IN UNDY

By Anne Dunton

Introduction

The village of Undy is one of the long-established settlements on the inland fringe of the Caldicot Levels between Chepstow and Newport. From the historic nucleated centre near the church, on the first area of raised land beyond the fen margin, the ground rises to the north on a low undulating ridge of carboniferous limestone; this is a long block parish extending from the higher ground and its escarpment south across the Levels (known historically as the Moors), to the coast. It is not unique in this respect, as the well-drained slopes provided suitable land for arable farming, while the heavier clays of the Levels were good for pasture and meadow, essential for a mixed farming regime. (The neighbouring parishes of Magor and Llandevenny, and Caldicot, are among others here with similar topography.) With easy access from the railway and M4 motorway, the population of Undy has increased from about 1,000 in 1977, to 6,000 in 2019 (with the adjacent parish, Magor). In May 2022 Magor and Undy were jointly designated to become a town.

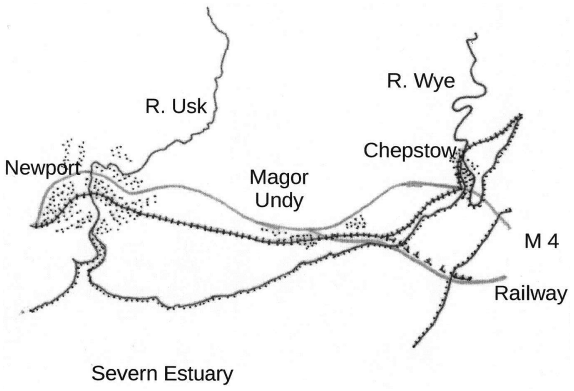


Fig. 1: Location of Undy, Monmouthshire.

Like several other villages in south-east Gwent, Undy had common meadow and arable fields which survived, at least in part, until the Tithe Award of 1842.[1] Enclosure only took effect here in 1854. On the Levels, water courses (reens), rather than hedges, define field boundaries, although trees, especially willows, can frequently be seen alongside reens. Here the landscape retains much of its historic character. It was well suited to pasture and meadow. However, the arable fields further north needed barriers to prevent animals straying onto growing crops. Boundaries which remain today may be marked by post and wire fences, hedges, standard trees from outgrown hedges, or a mixture. In the past 'hedges' might have been quick hedges (living lines of shrubs), or dead hedges, (barriers of posts and brushwood). It is not possible to determine precisely what the term 'fence'

[1] Tithe maps and the maps of the Court of Sewers in the nineteenth century both show bundles of strips in common arable and meadow fields in several parishes.

means in historic documents: it covered a variety of methods for enclosing an area.[2] However, some eighteenth-century maps for Undy indicate boundaries with symbolically drawn hedges. Sub-divisions of arable fields can be traced on Tithe and Enclosure maps and early OS maps: in the 1990s it was still possible to find vestigial hedges along footpaths within new housing developments, apparently following early field boundaries. Knollbury, to the north of the village, may have been open common or common woodland, along with two other formerly open fields.[3] Common-y-coed, at the northern end of the parish, as the name describes, was formerly common wood-pasture at the highest point in Undy, about 76m above sea-level.

Since housing development on the upland was likely to destroy many historic hedges, a survey of 109 accessible hedges was undertaken in 1997. These included lane, footpath and internal field hedges. It was possible to access some hedges on private land thanks to the kind cooperation of the landowners. (Two fields were developed for housing during this time.) The survey procedure followed guidelines in the Department of the Environment/Welsh Office/MAFF C*onsultation Paper on the Protection of Important Hedgerows*: i.e. woody species were counted over a length of thirty metres for each 100m of hedge.[4] Lengths were chosen at random, unless the whole was less than 30 m., when the total length was counted. The MAFF historical features which were relevant were: a) ecclesiastical parish boundaries; b) the boundary of the monastic grange at Merthyr Geryn; c) certain boundaries forming an integral part of pre-enclosure field systems.

Description of the state of the hedges refers to the time of the survey, and not to the present, (2023). Much has changed over the past twenty years as development here continues.

Ecology

Hedgerows can be important both for their ecology and as a tool for historical research, but are threatened by developments in industry, housing and farming. They need to be maintained, and, where they have not been grubbed out, barbed wire fences have become a simpler option for hard-pressed farmers.

In the 1970s, Dr Max Hooper, working in the east of England, suggested a formula that hedges could be approximately dated by counting the number of woody species in a sample length of thirty yards.[5] This stated that the age of a hedge was approximately equal to (110 x number of species) + thirty years, but warned that this might vary by as much as 200 years on either side. However, this somewhat over-simplified formula has subsequently been re-examined in different landscape areas.[6] Hedges sampled in the counties of Shropshire and Devon, both similar in some ways to the ancient landscape of Gwent, showed considerable variation in results. Geology and soil type favour certain species: some woody species colonise more slowly than others.[7] Two problems which can affect sampling are that rare species may be missed in the sample length, or that non-woody varieties such as honeysuckle or bramble may obscure shrubs.

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2 Enclosure awards might typically state that plots should be 'inclosed and fenced round with ditches and quickset hedges with proper posts and rails'.

3 Sylvester, Dorothy, 'Common fields of the coastlands of Gwent', *Agricultural History Review Volume 6 No 1 (*British Agricultural History Society, 1958), p.15.

4 Dept. of the Environment /Welsh Office/MAFF *Protection of Important Hedgerows. Joint consultation paper*, 1996.

5 Pollard, E., Hooper, M.D. and Moore, N.W., *Hedges* (Collins New Naturalist Series, London, 1974), pp. 78–85.

6 Barnes, G. and Williamson, T., *Hedgerow History, Ecology, History & Landscape Character* (Windgather Press, Macclesfield, 2006).

7 Rackham, Oliver, *The History of the Countryside*, (Dent, London, 1986), p. 203.

Historical overview

North-south roads from the hills of Wentwood to the coast are quite possibly prehistoric trackways in origin. Bronze Age and Iron Age people used the foreshore near Chapel Tump. A raised causeway still links Undy to Chapel Tump.[8] An Iron Age hill fort sits to the north at Coed-y-Mynydd. There is evidence of a Roman presence, both inland (near West End Farm and Elm Farm) and at the coast.[9] Finds include pottery, coins, brooches, a steel-yard weight, and a Roman sarcophagus. The latter was unearthed by builders in 1996 during the development of Undy Great Field for housing. In the same area metal-detectorists found a small pre-Conquest metal bell and a piece of a bronze mount, possibly from a harness or belt.[10] A charter in the *Book of Llandaf* mentions 'the road leading to Merthyr Geryn'.[11] (Although these charters were collected in the twelfth century the presumed date for this is c. 900 AD.) Geryn may be identified with Gern/Gurn, as in Gern Hill, near Knollbury, to which a track runs from Llanfihangel Rogiet. Also, in the *Book of Llandaf* 'Villa Junuhic', identified with Undy by Wendy Davies, was granted to Llandaf with some land by King Edwin of Gwent c.1015. This fragmentary evidence suggests settlement here before the Norman Conquest.

The Normans introduced feudalism and the manorial system. From manorial surveys of the seventeenth century, we find that it was not uncommon for parishes on the Levels to contain several intermingled manors. In 1613 the Court of the Manor of Caldicot and Newton recorded 'there is three lordshipps more intermingled with the said lordshipp of Caldicott, viz. the lordship of West End, of the priory of Caldecott, and of Dewstowe.' This was also the case in Redwick and Christchurch.[12] At least two significant manors were established within the present boundaries of Undy parish, 'intermingled', and not corresponding to parochial boundaries. (The absence of a single manorial lord may account for the fragmented and irregular appearance of common fields here as late as the nineteenth century.) The parish, some three and a half miles long, provided well-drained and fertile arable fields, pasture, common meadows to provide a hay-crop for winter fodder, and woodland.[13] The common arable fields of Undy, as elsewhere in this area of Monmouthshire, contained strips, divided into furlongs. Land holdings were scattered within the field or fields, thus ensuring some degree of fairness of distribution. There is now no visible evidence in Undy of ridge-and-furrow which might indicate medieval ploughing, nor do any of the strips on later maps appear to have the distinctive reversed 'S' of such ploughing. Before the modern period, the continued fertility of arable fields depended on manuring by cattle or sheep. Animals would be brought onto the land after the harvest or when the field was lying fallow.

In Britain, population increase in the twelfth century put pressure on resources, and areas were drained or cleared of woodland to bring new fields and pasture into cultivation. Tintern Abbey had grange farms at Merthyr Geryn (in Magor, but on the boundary of Undy), and on the Levels at Grange Farm. Famine in the years 1314–18, followed by outbreaks of plague in 1348–9 and 1361–2, caused a dramatic fall in population. Some lords abandoned direct exploitation of their manorial estates, which were now loss-making, in favour of renting out land, enabling enterprising freemen to acquire property.

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8 In 1624 William Rosser left 6 shillings for the repair of the 'Causey below Undy Crosse.' National Library of Wales wills index.

9 <https://archwilio.org.uk/her/chi1/arch.html?county=Monmouthshire&lang=eng> [accessed 3/04/2022].

10 Dr Jeremy Davies, (pers. comm.).

11 Davies, Wendy, *An early Welsh microcosm, Studies in the Llandaf Charters* (London, 1978).

12 Bradney, Sir J., *A History of Monmouthshire, Vol. 4*. pp. 111, 238 and 291.

13 Court of Sewers map for Undy, which only covers the Levels, shows strips in Common Mead and West Mead. G[went] A[rchives], D1365.1.

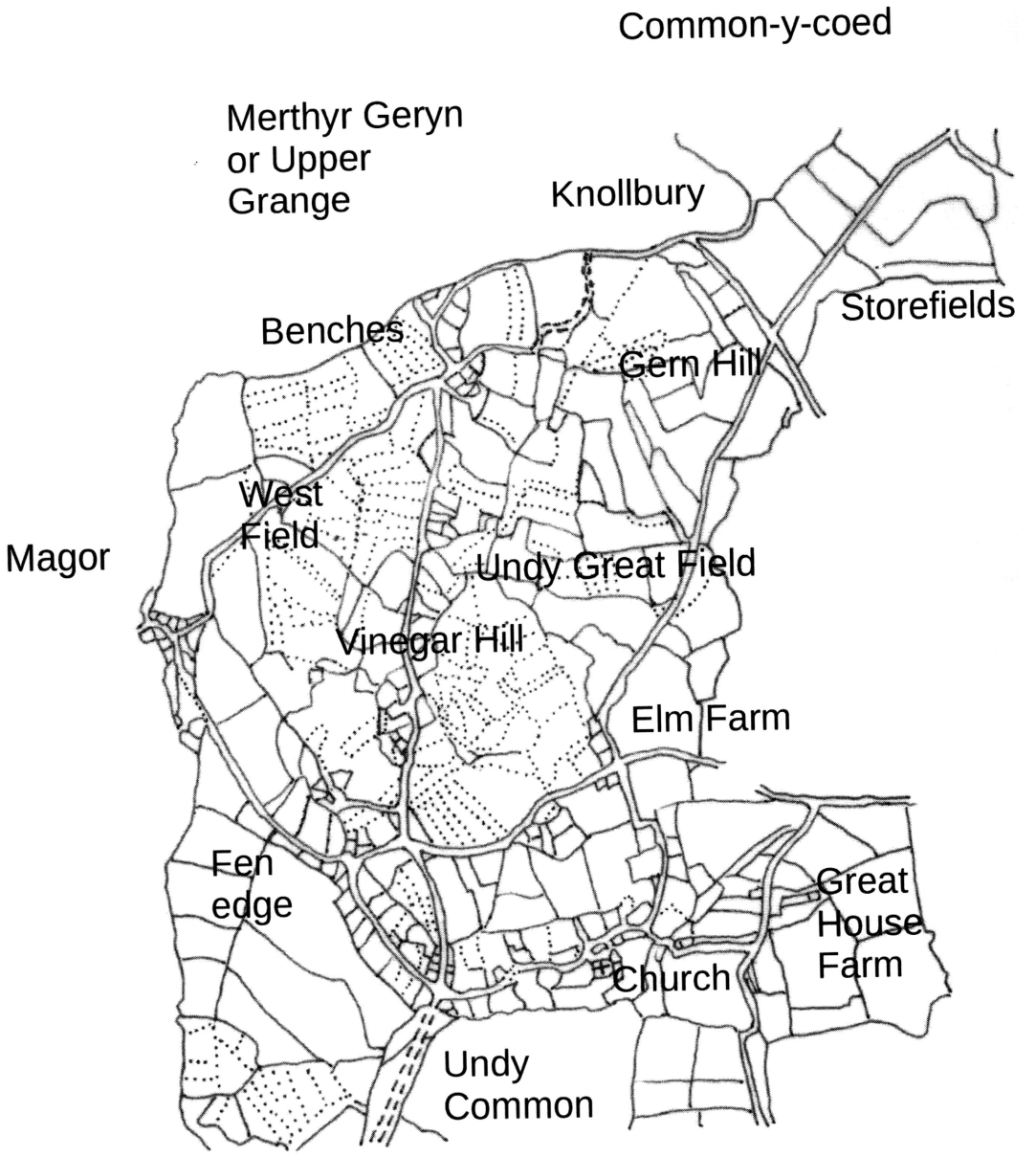


Fig. 2: Field names and locations in the text.

The dissolution of the monasteries brought about a transfer of land. Often, however, economic control had already been delegated to lay tenants. For example, the earl of Worcester was the steward of Tintern Abbey. Local gentry families such as the Morgans of Tredegar and Lewis of St Pierre were among those who acquired land in various parishes, and thus enlarged their estates. The manor of Undy was held in the sixteenth century by Thomas Lewis of the Van in Glamorgan. In 1661,

Richard Masson held the lease of a house and lands from Anne, Lady Beauchamp, the wife of Sir Edward Lewis of the Van. In 1662 and1663 two wills of Philip Morgan, (it is unclear if this is the same person or father and son), also mention a house and lands leased from her. This is Great House, still standing on the east of the village, close to the Levels. William Cowles held Storefields in the north-east of the parish from the same family in 1670. Elizabeth Jenkins' will of 1712 states that her husband had purchased a lease from Edward Lewis.

Land was actually farmed by tenants, who continued to use traditional practices. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century wills and inventories indicate a mixed farming regime. A sample of forty-one wills and inventories dated between 1624 and 1759 contained relevant information.[14] Unsurprisingly the crops mentioned are still those that had been grown throughout the medieval period: wheat, barley, peas and beans, with oats in smaller quantities. These were the typical staples of a subsistence farming economy, which was in transition to one able to trade a surplus. Plough oxen were found in about half of the wills, working most often as two or three yokes. Cattle, horses, pigs and poultry are mentioned frequently: the average number of cows, and cows with calves was nine. This seems quite a modest number. Perishable products (butter and cheese) occur less often, although these had been part of the trade to Bristol from the late medieval period. One inventory, though, lists 200 cheeses, worth £2 10s 00d.[15] The number of beasts and steers kept is usually fewer than ten, although in 1745 George Lewis had forty-three.[16] He also had relatively large numbers of cows with calves, and pigs. Unusually there is no mention of crops in his will. Although the Gwent Levels came to be known for their beef and dairy cattle, some farmers kept sheep: in 1628 along with his forty-six sheep and lambs John Howell left twenty-seven lbs of wool.[17] Lewis Thomas' will of 1631 mentions fifty-eight sheep and lambs, and also 'two peeces of new clothe'.[18] Was he also a weaver or tailor? Richard Rowland in 1705 had a flock of seventy sheep, and left a spinning wheel, fourteen lbs. of wool and five and a half yards of cloth.[19] No inventory consulted mentions a loom, however. Flax, and a flax wheel, and 'flax turne' are mentioned in two wills.[20] John Love (will and inventory, 1679) left twenty-eight sheep and nineteen lambs, and in the same year William Cowles left 'ewes and lames and wethers fowerscore.'[21] Acreages mentioned range from nine and a half of wheat to a farundel (a fourth of an acre) of barley. We must consider that the season when the will or inventory was drawn up determined whether crops were then being grown or were in the barn, and also whether animals might have been killed before winter. As for hedging tools, one will specifically mentions 'one hedg bill, one hatchet', although these implements must have been in common use.[22]

By the mid-eighteenth century the Gwent Levels had become very prosperous, sustaining beef cattle, and dairy farming.[23] Both major manors existed in Undy until the nineteenth century, by which time the dukes of Beaufort and the Morgans of Tredegar had been important landowners here

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14 N[ational] L[ibrary] of W[ales], www.library.wales/discover/library-resources/wills Llandaff Probate Records for all Will references below.

15 Thomas Giles LL1741–123.

16 George Lewis LL 1745–107.

17 John Howell LL1628–56.

18 Lewis Thomas LL1631–66.

19 Richard Rowland LL1705–166.

20 John Borne LL 1629–50; Thomas Coules LL1724–175.

21 John Love LL1679–188; William Coules LL1679–187.

22 Roger Lewis LL1673–132.

23 Rippon, S., *Gwent Levels: The evolution of a wetland landscape*, (Council for British Archaeology, York, 1996). 104.

for several centuries, as elsewhere in the country. However, for centuries there was no resident lord, and the division of common arable fields into small parcels continued. Other landowners here in the eighteenth century included Mark Wood, Nathaniel Wells, Charles Lewis and Capel Hanbury, all of whom held land, and lived, elsewhere.[24] During this period progressive landlords commissioned estate maps, but here such maps as survive show how individual owners' fields usually continued to be small and dispersed. The surveyors did not attempt to show the whole of the parish, but only the landowner's property: sometimes the names of owners of adjacent fields are given without delineating boundaries.

Enclosure in this part of Gwent happened much later than in other parts of the county. In 1794 John Fox mentions 'amazingly productive marsh lands' (i.e. on the Levels). Although he recommended 'the inclosing of commons or waste lands', there seems to have been little impetus in Undy to do so.[25] There were still unenclosed parcels in Undy's common arable and meadow fields until the Enclosure Award of 1854. When part of the estate of the dukes of Beaufort was auctioned in 1848, six years before the Award, an accompanying map shows small parcels, some clearly the relic of medieval strips, dispersed across what had been Undy Great Field. This contrasts with the fairly large regular fields on the Levels, which had been created much later. Even after 1854 it can be seen that the common fields were not completely altered. The Enclosure Award reflects the pattern of dispersed ownership. Eighteen owners were re-allocated land, creating thirty-six new fields of varying sizes and shapes. These replaced 104 Tithe fields. One man bought, rather than exchanged, a reconfigured field near to the main road. [26] The award required that 'Good and sufficient fences for inclosing the several allotments...shall be made where necessary', with the fences to be made and maintained by the owner. Even so, much land within these fields retained the older field divisions.

Common fields

'Copies of Surveys in several Manors' (compiled when John Morgan was Lord of the Manor, and dated 1711) includes a description of the state of the Manor of Undy, with manorial customs, and copies of several leases dating back to the previous century.[27] These leases describe the position of fields and parcels, with reference to the adjacent plots, roads and properties. A Court Leet presentments book has an entry relating to Undy from 21 May 1776 stating that the 'inhabitants are intitled to free pasture on the several commons.'[28] A survey of the estates of Mark Wood in Undy dating from 1751 names five common arable fields: Undy Great Field, Garne Hill, West Field, Cayae Pothe and Bloody Ditch.[29] However Benches Field, (where open strips are shown on all of the eighteenth-century plans and the Tithe map), is omitted, and may at that time have been considered part of West Field. Where documents mention commons, it is not always clear whether these are arable, meadow or pasture, on the Levels or on the upland area of Undy. The Tithe map (1842) shows six common arable fields, small parts of which were already enclosed. Undy Common and Bridewell Common were on the fringe of settlement at the back-fen edge, and almost certainly damp

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24 By marriage Capel Hanbury owned the Gnoll estate in Neath. Mark Wood acquired land across the county and in Glamorgan. He attempted to become MP for Monmouth. He owned the Piercefield estate.

25 Fox, J., *General View of the Agriculture of the county of Monmouthshire,* (Board of Agriculture, London, 1794). 27.

26 GA, D. 1767.12; Q/INCAW/8 Enclosure award and map, Undy.

27 GA, D. 668.25, Copies of Surveys in several Manors.

28 GA, D. 668.23 Court Leet book.

29 NLW, Lockwood Vol. I, Plans of Estates in the county of Monmouth belonging to Mark Wood Esq.

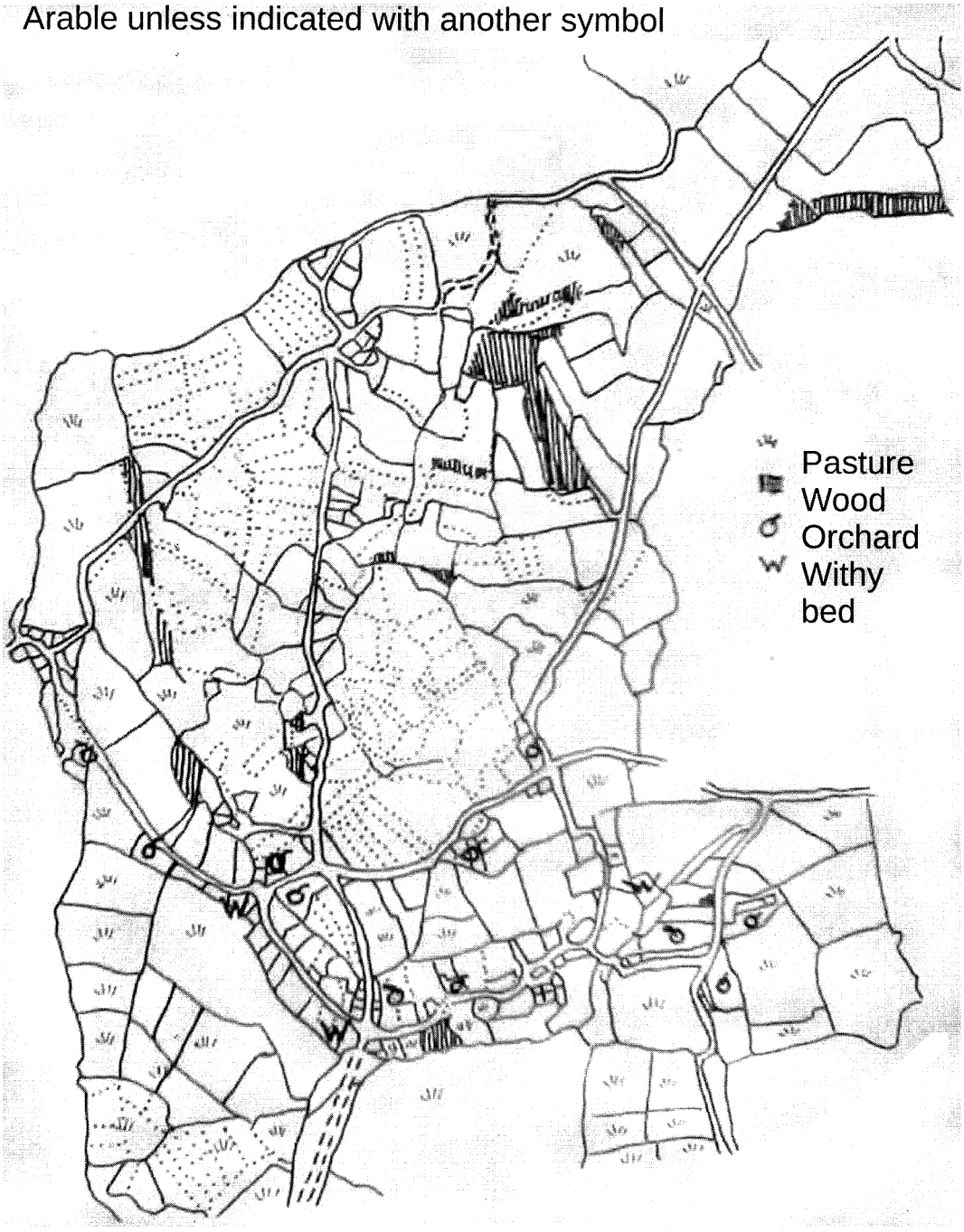


Fig.3: Undy Great Field tithe land use.

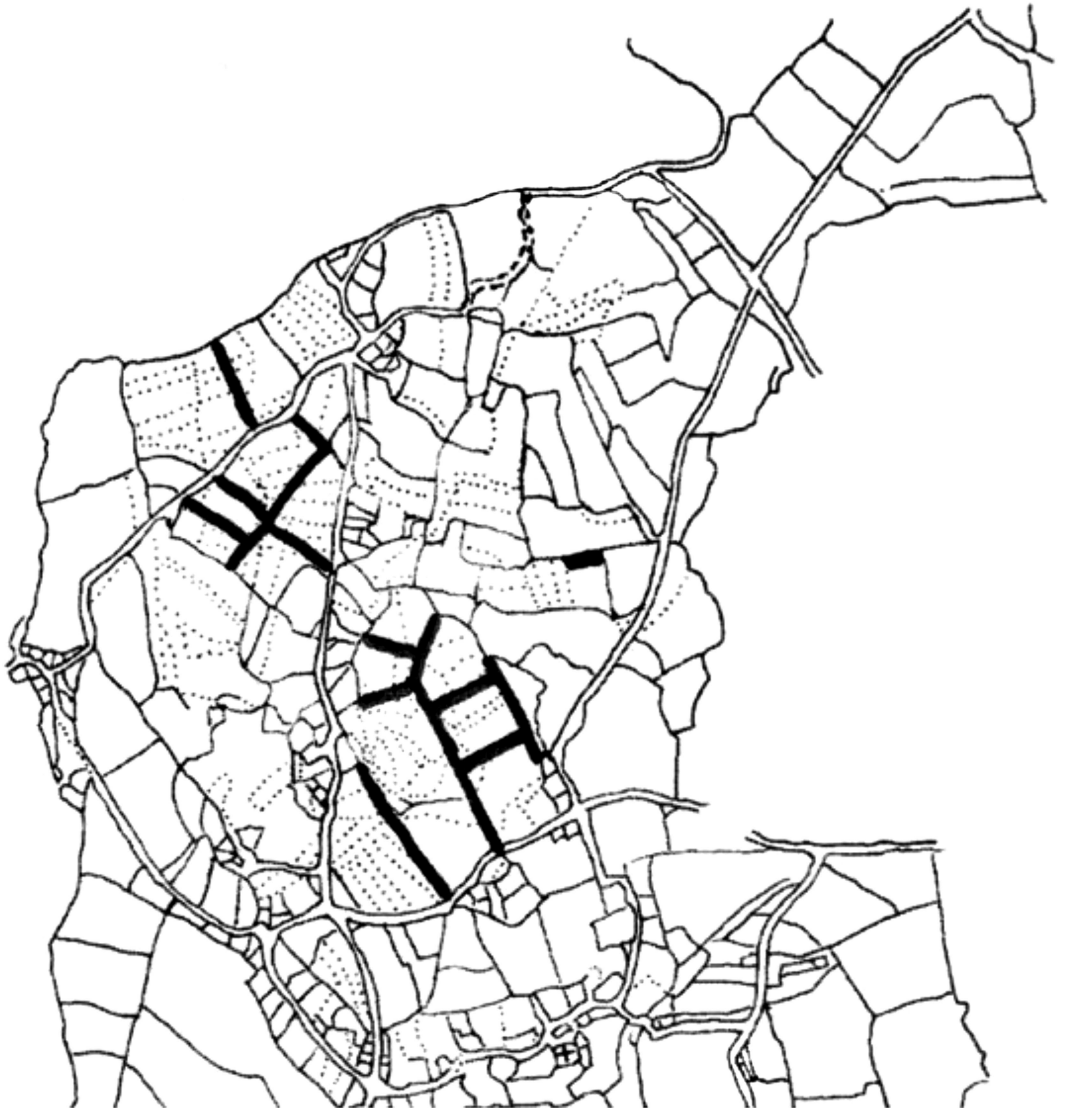


Fig.4: Enclosure hedges.

and rushy for most of the year. This could explain their survival until the nineteenth century, as being least desirable for improvement. Here the Tithe map shows two withy beds.

Undy Great Field

Undy Great Field is the nearest of the common fields to the church and village street, and so possibly the first to be created. It is also the largest and occupies a slope rising north from close to the present main road between Magor and Caldicot. In the past it may have extended slightly further south towards the fen edge, as some field boundaries apparently continue over the present road to

Caldicot. The first documentary evidence is found in a Porthcaseg court roll.[30] This mentions the 'campo de Wondy' where Roger Crolle, a tenant of Tintern Abbey was granted one acre in 1331. The monks had held plots of manorialised arable land here for at least sixty years, close to their grange at Merthyr Geryn.[31] (twelve acres of arable in 1269 and nineteen acres of arable in 1291.[32]) Evidence for strips and small parcels over the whole field comes from the Tithe map. In the centre of the field these are very oddly shaped, and if there had originally been a coherent system it seems to have broken down. Does this reflect a much older form of land division, or are the irregularly shaped parcels dependent on soil and geology? A seventeenth century lease mentions 'the stony lands'. (There were several small quarries and lime kilns here in the nineteenth century, lime being burnt to use as fertiliser.) What we see here does not seem to present a coherent pattern, such as we might find in the English Midlands. More regular rectangular strips in the south-west of the field appear to continue west across Vinegar Hill. A plan of 1758 shows that at that time some strips also extended south.[33] The present Magor to Caldicot road, constructed between 1758 and 1842, cuts across part of the field, and Vinegar Hill apparently also changed course before the eighteenth century, to run slightly west, thus dividing some parcels in two.

In 1674, Francis Lewis leased '5 acres in Undy Great Field and 3 farundels (quarter-acre strips, probably unfenced) in the same field abutting to Harvest Wood land.'[34] By the seventeenth century some enclosure had apparently taken place here. The eighteenth-century plans referred to still showed a largely open field, with some small, enclosed areas. In 1706, John Morgan leased to William Jones of Undy 'several parcels containing one acre.'[35] In 1809, John Proctor of St Pierre leased from Mark Wood 'seven pieces or parcels of arable land in Undy common Field', amounting to about seven acres.[36] There is apparently no general consolidation into larger holdings.

However, the manorial courts of the late-eighteenth century describe a lack of maintenance of the old system.[37] Gates and fences are mentioned in or around Undy Great Field. Court Leet records mention tenants presented (i.e. fined) in 1778 for not putting 'a new gate on Great Field', and 'keeping an open fence joining Great Field'. Charles Morgan, the Lord of the Manor, was thrice presented at courts between 1776 and 1781 as the Pound was in poor repair. We read 'All corn fields within this Manor to be sufficiently fenced to be kept in good order' and 'during such time as there shall be corn in the same, and such fences not to be taken or carried away.' The implication is that animals were able to wander into arable fields when pastured nearby or being moved within the parish. The wording though suggests that these may have been temporary hurdle fences, rather than hedges. These might have been more useful for dividing open parcels. In 1811, James Williams was required to put a gate at the 'Top of the Great Field under penalty of Five pounds.' This is a substantial fine and suggests frustration that the problem of straying animals continued. (Some pasture fields are shown here on the Tithe map.) The Enclosure award of 1854 reorganised some parts of the field which were still divided into strips. This also revised the course of some footpaths. When surveyed in 1998, only three of the enclosure fields remained.

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30 NLW Badminton ms. 1644, See Cowley,,F..G., *The Monastic Order in South Wales 1066–1349* (University of Wales Press, 1977) p. 254, n 115.
31 NLW Badminton ms. 1640.
32 *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* (London, Record Commission, 1802); See Cowley, F.G. p.256, n.127.
33 GA, D 1111.11 Exact plan of lands of Capel Hanbury.
34 GA, D 668.25.
35 NLW, Tredegar 87/652 Rental.
36 Unpublished deeds relating to Great House Farm, Undy, in private hands.
37 GA, D668.23 Undy Court Leet book.

From early nineteenth-century courts we find two men accused of encroachment here, 'seventeen acres more or less.'[38] This may be compared with recurring references to encroachments on pasture commons at about the same period.

The Upper fields: Benches and Little Benches Fields, and West Field

These names were not used consistently. The fields lie north-west of the village, where there is a steep drop down to Mill (or St Brides) Brook in Magor parish. This is fairly level ground, about 46m. above sea-level, with the parish boundary to the north, and the road to Knollbury Common to the south. Formerly the boundary between Undy and the grange of Tintern Abbey at Merthyr Geryn, Benches was described in 1291 as containing two and a half carucates of arable land. A lane from Undy to the grange site can be seen along the eastern edge of Little Benches Field on nineteenth century maps. In the fourteenth century the abbey grange employed occasional workers on their demesne (presumably from the nearby villages of Magor and Undy). As many as 124 hired labourers are recorded hoeing corn on one particular day towards the end of the fourteenth century; from this we may infer that it was a well-used path, still surviving as a footpath along the edge of the field.[39]

The name Benches is found on a lease of 1573: 'One acre above the benches and called long acre'; elsewhere in the same document, 'one acre in the little field of Wndy between the royal way leading from Wndy to the upper filde, and the benches.'[40] The same document indicates the presence of strips: '2 farendells in West Field abutting on Kings Acre on the East.'

'Plans of Estates belonging to Mark Wood Esq.', surveyed by Meredith Jones in 1751 shows part of Lower Benches.[41] It is described as '3 a(cres). alongside the lane to Merthyr Geryn.' The lane (now a field hedge and the surviving footpath mentioned above) is shown edged with trees, and the opposite edge of the plot is hedged.

West Field is described as the 'general common field' in Meredith Jones' survey. One unfenced strip is shown, together with three small fenced or hedged areas belonging to Wood. This appears to already show the process of enclosure in the eighteenth century. Mrs Ann Nicholl is required to put a gate on West Field, and Charles Morgan to put a gate on Benches Field in a Court Leet record of 1776. The Presentment book of the manor of Undy of 1711 does not include Benches in a list of the common fields of that Manor, although parts of the field are both shown and named on contemporary estate maps. The layout of strips here is somewhat irregular, but it is possible to trace over-road hedge connections from the Tithe map, suggesting an earlier, larger fossilised field layout. Enclosure created five fields in 1854, and, although part of the area has now been built on, two hedges here appear to date from that period, although now very fragmentary.

The Tithe map shows separate strips in both fields, but in 1854 the Enclosure award divided Benches field into two, creating one new hedge, and Little Benches became a single field. A field boundary adjoining Beeches Farm appears to date from this Act but is no longer a continuous hedge.

In this area the only datable enclosure hedge has since been removed. With the exception of one short length renewed since the 1960s, when the M4 was constructed, hedges appear to be those

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38 GA, D 668.74.

39 Williams, David H., *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster, 2001), pp. 245–246.

40 Lewis E.A. and Davies J.C., *Records of the Court of Augmentation re. Wales and Monmouthshire* (Cardiff Board of Celtic Studies: History and Law Series XIII 1954).

41 NLW, Lockwood Volume 1, Plans of Estates in the county of Monmouthshire belonging to Mark Wood Esq.

shown on the Tithe map. The Merthyr Geryn hedge (previously a lane boundary) and the parish boundary hedges may well be of medieval origin.

Gern Hill and Lower Gern Hill

Gern Hill lies to the north of Great Field. In 1674 there were '2 acres of woodland...abutting on the south-west with 'The Grove'". This forms part of Upper Gern Hill, shown as arable on the Tithe map, and by then hedged on three sides. On the Tithe map Upper and Lower Gern Hill fields are separated from each other by several enclosed fields. Upper Gern Hill consists of four enclosed fields which contain a number of open strips. Lower Gern Hill is one smaller field on the Tithe map, divided into three strips, which is enclosed to form two fields. Gern Hill previously extended further east to Storefields Lane. In 1758, Capel Hanbury held an enclosed field called 'The Gurnel' abutting this lane.[42] This is the eastern portion of the lower field.

Common pasture and woodland

Common-y-coed and Knollbury in the north of the parish were originally both common pasture or woodland. Common-y-coed is described as common woodland on the Tithe map. In 1711 it was stated that commoners of the two Manors of Undy 'have always intercommoned … in all the hill and moor commons';[43] Also, there were 'no cottages on highways or commons' (i.e. no encroachments). However, by 1749 the Tredegar Estate was managing enclosed areas of woodland ('fenced land') here: this included'standards of oak 'cut from 5–12 inches Deamiter'. A plan shows enclosures around these woods, while Common-y-coed was still open.[44]

Encroachments on common land here are recorded from the late eighteenth century in Court Leet records. In 1776 William Piggrin was encroaching on Common Coed and 'putting a Gate thereon'. Goats were being kept there (being a 'Nuisance') in 1783. In 1802 John Thomas is listed as 'labourer of common-y-coed'. From 1811 until 1824 a John Thomas and John Thomas Jun. are frequently mentioned in respect of 'encroachment at Common coyd' or 'on the lord's waste'. Fines due vary from £5 to £11, and over time became a regular rent for the now-established premises. Two of the seven households listed for Common-y-coed in the 1841 census and the Tithe apportionment were occupied by people with the surname Thomas. Similarly, Joseph Brace was fined £2, or 10s p.a. for encroaching on 'Common coyd' in 1821. He is described as an agricultural labourer in the 1841 census, but by the 1851 census it would seem he had risen in the world and was 'farming 13 acres.' The small encroachment fields here probably date, then, from no earlier than the late eighteenth century. Not all the encroachment was by landless squatters. One of the offenders, Thomas Lawrence, seems to have been enlarging his farm, which by 1842 amounted to 200 acres across the parish. Encroachments are also mentioned in 1815 at the Dancing Place, and the Tump, probably part of the Great Field, nearer to the village.

Small patches of wood and brake still exist at Knollbury and Upper Gern Hill, although significantly reduced from the eighteenth century.

('Forest land' mentioned in various leases from 1541 onwards does not always seem to refer to these upland areas, as one lease states that 'it abutteth to a way leading from Undy to Chappell'.

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42 GA, D.1111.11.
43 GA, D.668.25.
44 NLW, Tredegar 976.

This seems to be the road leading onto the levels, so perhaps refers to waste, or perhaps alder carr, cleared in the late medieval period.)[45]

Storefields Lane

Storefields lies to the east of Common-y-coed. Near the village, close to Elm Farm, the parish boundary is the hedges of small fields east of the lane. These boundary hedges show the distinctive short curves, right-angled bends and straight stretches typical of the furlongs of medieval ploughland. This was the common Great Westfield of the neighbouring parish of Llanfihangel Rogiet. These relic plough strips are shown on a Tredegar Estate map of 1763–4.[46] Daniel Baker of Llanfihangel was presented to Undy manorial court in 1776 for 'stopping up a road leading from Undy to Llanfair cutting Wood on the side of the said Road and halling the same away'. This would seem to be Storefields Lane, which led to Llanfair Discoed, and perhaps shows woodland clearance at Common-y-coed or Coed-y-mynydd.

Hedgerow survey analysis

The average number of woody species, found in the 109 hedges surveyed ranged from two to nine, but most fell within the range four to six. This shows some similarities with results for hedge surveys in Devon. Twenty-one woody species were noted, with hawthorn the dominant shrub in 95% of hedges. Less common species included spindle, wayfaring tree, wild privet, dogwood and buckthorn, (found on limestone in south Gwent, according to A. Wade).[47]

All hedges surveyed included at least one of the common hedge species: hawthorn, blackthorn, elder and rose species. Only these were found in two-species hedges, which probably originated as single-species hawthorn hedges. Hedges with the fewest species were all datable from maps to the late-nineteenth or twentieth centuries.

Three-species hedges always included hawthorn, together with one or two common hedge species Elder was the most usual additional species (54% of hedges), followed by blackthorn (47%), and either hazel or briar. Ash or willow appeared as standard trees in these hedges.

The largest group contained four species (just under a quarter of the whole sample), and as well as the four common species might also contain hazel, field maple, spindle, holly, wild privet or dogwood. One or more of these shrubs, together with wayfaring tree, were found in hedges containing from five to nine species. Standard trees included oak, ash, cherry, willow and sycamore. Sycamore is not included in the MAFF list referred to in the introduction, nor is bullace (*prunus domestica*), which was widely found in the hedges of lanes of former woodland and wood pasture. These were not included in the calculations.

Thorny species are obviously more suitable for stock-proof enclosures. Other plants may have been encouraged to grow along boundaries as leaf fodder for grazing cattle. Oak, mostly found at Knollbury or Common-y-coed, is associated with wood pasture, and rights of pannage allowed commoners to loose pigs into woodland to graze on acorns. Cherry, a woodland indicator, was restricted to former areas of wood pasture.

Oliver Rackham, in *The History of the Countryside*, states that field maple and dogwood are rarely planted in hedges, nor are they good colonisers, and hazel and spindle tree even less so. He suggests that the former pair may be found in Tudor hedges as fourth or fifth species, and

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45 GA, D.668.25.
46 NLW, Tredegar 961.
47 Wade, A.E., *The Flora of Monmouthshire* (Cardiff 1970), p.87.

that hazel and spindle are characteristic of pre-Tudor hedges containing at least six woody species. However, these statements do not apply to some hedges here that have confirmed dates of planting. Field maple was found in almost all eight-species hedges, dogwood in roughly half of six- to eight-species hedges, and spindle in almost half of four- to eight-species hedges. Field maple, spindle-tree and wayfaring tree all thrive here on limestone. Hazel, found in all of the seven- to nine-species hedges, is also present in 40% of three-species hedges, although not in the most recent two-species hedges, many dateable to the nineteenth century. If we look for a possible explanation, we should remember that oak/hazel woodland was common in Wales: hazel, with its many uses, may have been deliberately propagated and coppiced for building, for making wattle hurdles, and to provide nuts for food. Evidence of coppicing was found in hedgerows, brake and woodland, especially at Common-y-coed, Upper Gern Hill and Knollbury.

A species which might be considered as a crop rather than a hedging species is willow. Although very few specimens were found in hedges, two small fields on the fen edge close to cottages, are named on the Tithe schedule as withy-beds. One, described here as pasture, had the field name of Withy-bed, suggesting historical use. Willows would have been pollarded, the new growth being used for weaving a range of items, which may have included baskets, hurdles or salmon putchers.

Dating the hedges

Using map regression analysis in this area is only partially possible.[48] The earliest plans only date to the 1700s, and do not cover the whole area, only such fields as belong to the commissioning landowner. These confirm the scattered nature of landownership. For a more complete picture we have the Tithe map of 1842, the Enclosure award and map of 1854, and the 25 inches to 1 mile O.S. maps of 1887 and 1921. These last confirm the new enclosure boundaries. For other documentation covering a broad area, the 1711 Presentment book of the Manor of Undy contains details of earlier leases. Court Leet records from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries show encroachments on common land, and the creation of new smallholdings. (The maps created by the Commissioners of Sewers in 1830 only go as far as the fen edge, and so unfortunately do not cover the area of this study.)[49]

Hedges with three woody species have been discussed in the section on survey analysis. Of twenty-six hedges with an average of four species, ten can be dated from the nineteenth century, tentatively from evidence of encroachments, or positively because they are post-Enclosure. Five are shown on maps from 1758 or 1763.

Older maps do appear to show hedges with a higher species count. Seventeen out of twenty-two five-species hedges appear on pre-1760 maps. Only one such hedge seems to post-date 1843. A hedge along Storefields Lane contains an average of 5.5 species, with an anomalous short stretch of three species. On a Tredegar Estate map of c.1770 the lane bears north-east at this point; it seems to have been realigned between then and 1842. This, then, is the three species stretch.

All but two of the hedges with six or more species apparently date from before 1842. Eighteenth-century maps show thirteen out of twenty-one six-species and five each of the seven- and eight-species hedges. Two other eight-species hedges form part of parish boundaries. A hedge with an average of nine species (and eleven different species) is on Vinegar Hill, opposite West Field. The adjoining field was a wood in 1751, named ‘The Grove’, and described in 1674 as lying to the south-west of woodland.

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48 Map regression analysis consists of comparing relevant maps, from increasingly earlier dates.

49 GA, D 1365/1.

However, two hedges, one with seven species and one with eight, prove to post-date 1842. Between 1842 and 1887 a straight lane across Knollbury Common was created, cutting out a bend, but linking with the old lane at each end. At the north it joins an old parish boundary, whose hedges have an average of eight species. The new stretch of hedge contains a wide range of plants, including dogwood, wild privet, wayfaring tree and hazel, and seems to have been fashioned by whatever came to hand. (This may also be true of 'The Grove' hedge.) Part may be medieval, but its history has been complicated by later alterations.

Conclusion

In the absence of pre-eighteenth-century maps it is only possible to state that some hedges, probably of early date, were in existence by the mid-eighteenth century. Fields or lanes named in earlier documents may not have been fenced at that time. However, in many cases the older the datable hedges are, the more species they appear to contain. This generally accords with Dr Hooper's theory, but his suggested dates need to be modified for this area of Monmouthshire.

The correct date-range for most three-species hedges in Undy is probably 1760–1870. If, as Hooper claimed, we can add one hundred years for each additional species we might tentatively propose a table of possible dates for Undy hedges. But we must also bear in mind that the range can vary by + or – 100 years.

Table of possible dates for Undy hedges

3-species hedges	From 1760	To 1860
4-species hedges	1660	1760
5-species hedges	1560	1660
6-species hedges	1460	1560
7-species hedges	1360	1460
8-species hedges	1260	1360
9-species hedges	1160	1260

There seems to be some correlation between the known history of land use and enclosure in this part of Gwent and these dates. The area of both pasture and arable was extended in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries.[50] Woodland was being cleared in the eighteenth century. Most of the hedges surveyed fell into the four- to six-species categories, and so may date from between 1460 and 1760. With the 100 years +/- latitude, four-species post-Enclosure hedges fit into this category.

Four five-species hedges can be found at the south end of Vinegar Hill, where they cut through and enclose part of the common field strips in the Great Field. These must post-date the medieval strips, but existed in 1758, so may date from the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries.

Benches Field may have acquired a hedge separating it from Merthyr Geryn grange land between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, since this boundary consists of six- to eight-species, including dogwood and spindle.

However, hedges in Undy do not appear to fit neatly into a species/date correlation. Hazel is found more widely than we might expect. There are some demonstrable anomalies where hedges

[50] Courtney, Paul, 'The rural landscape of East and Lower Gwent, c. A.D. 1070–1750' (unpublished PhD thesis, Cardiff,1983), p.359.

can be dated precisely. They may have developed differently for a variety of reasons: uncleared shrubs left to form a hedge on wood margins, or using locally self-seeded plants; later, hedges were planted from whips bought from nurserymen. Underlying geology is also a factor, favouring particular species.

In *Interpreting the landscape*, Aston warns that it is not possible to expect to discover an accurate date in the west of the UK solely by counting hedge-species. He gives the sound advice that 'it is more important to work out the date of enclosure from documents and maps, and then look at the actual hedge and assess not only the number but also the type of species represented.'[51] Counting the number and type of species, then, is one additional method of investigating the history of enclosures, but cannot of itself provide an accurate basis for dating them.

Undy is only one of the historic parishes that lie on the fringes of the Gwent Levels. Despite its closeness to Magor, or to Caldicot, the development of the landscape shows its own distinct character. Open or enclosed fields with their hedges on the upland, and reens on the Levels, are part of the history of land tenure and farming here. In 2023 the past thirty years of increased development have all but removed these hedges.

Appendix

List of woody species identified in survey	**Standard trees**
(* indicates not included in the MAFF list of species referred to in footnote 2)	
Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna)	Ash (Fraxinus excelsior)
Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa)	Oak (Quercus robur)
Elder (Sambucus nigra)	Willow (Salix alba)
Rosa species	Cherry (Prunus)
Hazel (Corylus avellana)	Sycamore* (Acer pseudoplatanus)
Field maple (Acer campestre)	
Spindle tree (Euonymus europaeus)	
Holly (Ilex aquifolium)	
Wild privet (Ligustrum vulgare)	
Dogwood (Cornus sanguinea)	
Wayfaring tree (Viburnum lantana)	
Guelder (Viburnum opulus)	
Yew (Taxus baccata)	
Buckthorn (Rhamnus cathartica)	
Bullace* (Prunus domestica)	

[51] Aston, M., *Interpreting the landscape* (Routledge, London 1985), p.100.

RAILS TO MAY HILL, MONMOUTH

By Richard Coates

Much of the modest railway history of Monmouth town is focused on the east bank of the Wye, at a spot called May Hill, originally in Dixton parish. This article investigates that connected history, which expired in 1964, and explores its relationship with the produce of Forest of Dean industries and some issues of social concern.

Monmouth and the Wye

For a place of no massive significance in the greater scheme of things, May Hill by Monmouth has had an interesting transport history. Its – and the town's – railway era starts and finishes close to the eastern end of Wye Bridge, which allows access to Monmouth from the Forest of Dean. This site near the east bank of the Wye, but originally just outside the borough boundary in Dixton parish, was the most convenient and least disruptive site at which to service the town's need for the products of the Forest; and the industries that flourished here as a consequence of the first railway's arrival had a role in determining future local rail development, low-key though this was. Some uncertainties of detail about this history persist.

Monmouth had a west-bank, i.e., town-side, wharf on the Wye by 1791 (and far earlier[1]). The tourist and diarist Sophia Ward went to see it in that year[2] and commented on the price of coal as sold from the barge: '10s a Ton'. That must mean that Monmouth's coal was shipped in, most likely from a quay at Lydbrook, or perhaps Redbrook. She did not say exactly where the wharf was, but it may be the quay marked on the town bank of the Wye downstream of Wye Bridge as far as the end of Chippenhamgate Street, a continuation of Grinder Street [now Glendower Street], on T. Morries's town map of about 1800 in Coxe's *An Historical Tour in Monmouthshire*.[3] Any traces of it disappeared when the A4136 Wyeside Road was built in the 1950s and then absorbed into the new A40 trunk road along the riverbank, but its function had already long been overtaken.[4]

The pioneering Monmouth Railway

Another wharf[5] had sprung up close to the other end of Wye Bridge, at May Hill, on land belonging to the Duke of Beaufort (like most of the rest of the district), though it is not documented exactly

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1 As indicated by Henry of Lancaster's grant just before 1300 of the right to levy murage tolls on imports, no doubt mostly arriving by river; Patent Roll of 25 Edward I, TNA MS. C 66/117, cited by Keith Kissack, *Mediaeval Monmouth* (Monmouth Historical and Educational Trust, Monmouth, 1974), 36, and rehearsed in his *The Lordship, Parish and Borough of Monmouth* (Lapridge Publications, Hereford, 1996), 149–50. A ship appears on the town's 13th-century seal.

2 National Library of Wales MS. 19758A.

3 Coxe, William, *An Historical Tour in Monmouthshire, illustrated with views by Sir R[ichard] C[olt] Hoare*, 2 vols (private, 1801).

4 In the nineteenth century there were wharves on the town side east of Wye Bridge, perhaps mainly for the benefit of Swift's timber business since by then the Monmouth Railway had failed, as we shall see, and was no longer delivering Forest logs. (It has not been widely noticed that Swift's had a little internal tramway of its own, of which there is no known account; Ordnance Survey 6″, 1888–1913 revision. It reached the bank of the Wye where Monmouth Rowing Club now is.)

5 Note that *wharf* in industrial contexts does not necessarily mean a waterside structure, as it does not in this case, which is consistent with the sense given in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, https://www.oed.com/, under *wharf* n[oun] 1, 2. e,: 'A place raised or otherwise marked out on which stuff is deposited for subsequent removal to another place.'

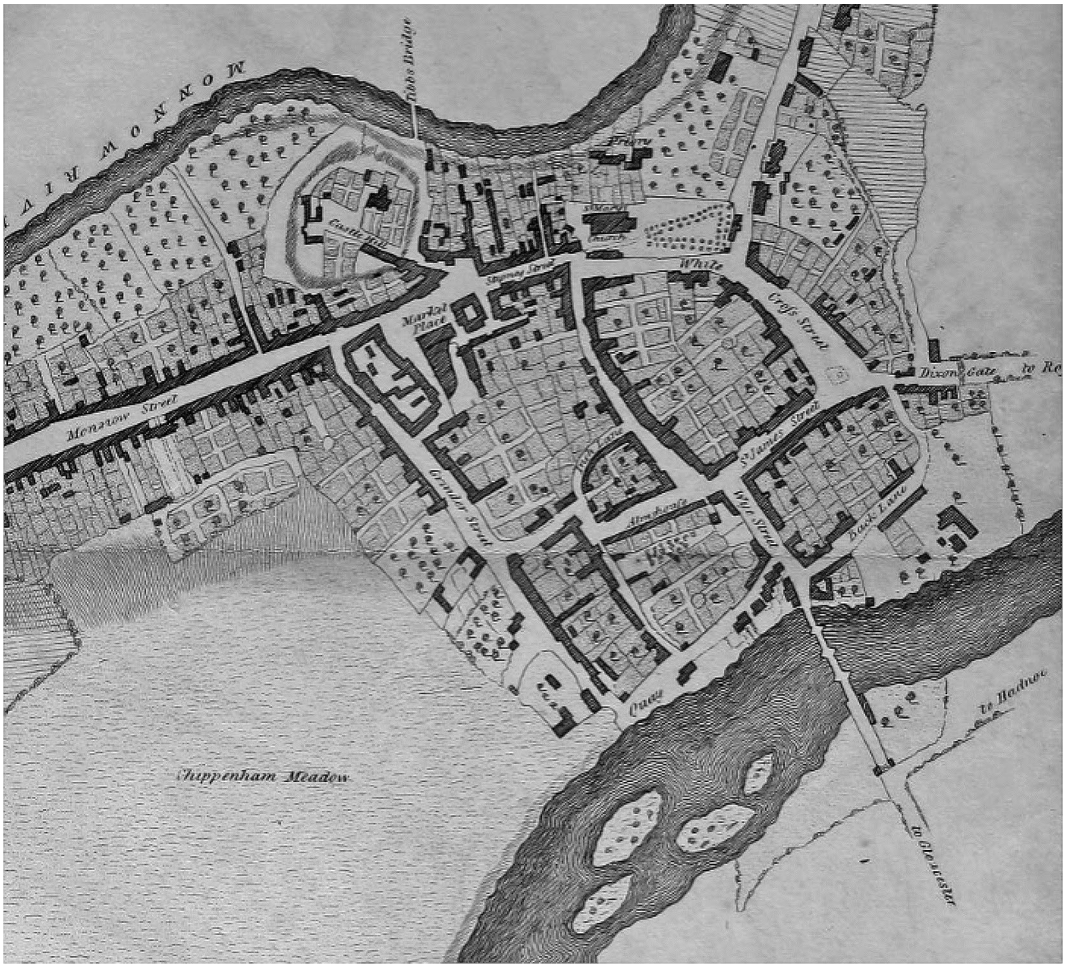


Fig. 1: Monmouth c.1800, T. Morries (extract; Coxe, *Historical Tour of Monmouthshire*, 1801).

when. It served as the terminus for the first of the town's railways, and it may well have been founded in exactly that function. The coal supply for Monmouth's urban market was complicated and expensive, requiring the slow road journey and cumbersome transhipment arrangements for onward travel by barge implied by Sophia Ward's observations. This is what prompted the first proposal for a railway, whose prime purpose was to alleviate this problem.

First mooted as early as 1802, to a hostile reaction from the Free Miners of the Forest of Dean,[6] but then seriously pursued in 1808, the iron road eventually arrived on 17 August 1812 in the shape of the 3' 6" gauge Monmouth Railway [MR], a horse-drawn plateway authorized two years previously.[7] It was especially notable because the Act of 1810 made provision for charging for the

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6 *Gloucester Journal*, 1 March 1802, cited by Keith Kissack, *Monmouth: The Making of a County Town* (Phillimore, Chichester, 1975), 281.

7 'A great number of waggons, laden with coal, lime, paving-stone, and other productions of the forest, followed a procession of thousands of people, accompanied by flags and a band of music. A numerous company afterwards met at the Beaufort Arms Inn [, Monmouth], where a most excellent dinner was provided on the occasion'. *Gloucester Journal*, 24 Aug. 1812.

carriage of passengers – perhaps a statutory world first.[8] Buried in Section LXVII of the Act, we read that 'For every Carriage conveying Passengers' a toll of 6d a mile could be exacted, meaning that, alone in a carriage, you could reach May Hill from Coleford for half a crown [a little under £7 at 2021 prices].[9] The several references to 'Waggons and other Carriages' in the Act might be thought to embrace smart carriages for gentlemen to ride in, secured on a flat truck as often on later railways, but in this phrase it may really be just a legal way of avoiding being over-specific about Waggons and their possible occupants. The *Oxford English Dictionary* makes it clear that *carriage* at this period could be used to mean 'wagon' or 'cart'.[10] No doubt the new railway would 'in other respects be of great publick Utility', but it may have been thought a viable substitute for the well-groomed horse and personal conveyance on Georgian roads in the Forest. The next stage of development is represented by what is believed to be the frame and body of a purpose-built MR passenger carriage of about 1848 preserved at the South Devon Railway, which may be the sixth-oldest surviving carriage in Britain.[11]

Section I of the Act allowed the building of a line 'to a certain Place near the Town of *Monmouth*, called *May Hill*, or to a certain Place in the said Town of *Monmouth*, extending North-eastward from *Wyebridge* to the *Nag's Head*, near *Dixon* [Dixton, RC] *Gate*, by passing the Bridge over the *River Wye*, or by passing the said River by a Boat or Barge to be drawn across the same by a fixed Rope or Chain …' Since *passing* means 'crossing' regionally (compare the ferries called the *Old* and *New Passage* across the Severn), the possibility was clearly envisaged of laying rails across the 17th-century Wye Bridge itself, to be extended as far as the Nag's Head inn in the old heart of the town. The bridge was narrower than at present until its rebuilding in 1879, but perhaps rail traffic would never have been dense enough to seriously hold up ordinary carts or pedestrians. The Act alternatively permitted ferrying 'Coal, Stone, and other Products' of the Forest of Dean to the same destination using a boat-and-wire arrangement like that still in operation across the Wye at Symond's Yat. Neither scheme came to fruition; the tramway stopped at May Hill. Traditional movement by horse from there into Monmouth must have been judged more economical.

The plateway main line was eventually fed by three branches which converged just east of Coleford, each of which was fed by spurs or other direct means of access from Dean pits and quarries:

(i) the northerly branch, from Pot Lid, New Found Out and Thatch(ed) Pit collieries
(ii) the eastern, and original main, branch, from Derby Pit, Land Pit (with a short spur) and Lead Pit collieries, Howlers Hill (quarry) and Howlers Slade (colliery); probably not opened before 1852 despite its centrality in the original plan[12]

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8 Its 60 pages of legal prose can be read at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukla/Geo3/50/123/contents/enacted, accessed 13 July 2022. The first actual fare-paying, horse-drawn passenger railway in the world was the Oystermouth Railway in Swansea. The original Oystermouth Railway or Tramroad Act of 1804, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukla/Geo3/44/55/contents/enacted, accessed 3 Aug. 2022, did not make provision for passenger conveyance; that occurred under an agreement operative from 25 March 1807 between Benjamin French and the Company.

9 Bank of England inflation calculator, https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator, accessed 8 Aug. 2022.

10 https://www.oed.com/, under *carriage*, n[oun], 3. a.

11 South Devon Railway Association, 'Littleworth coach', http://www.southdevonrailwayassociation.org/Coach-484.html, accessed 28 Sept. 2018, where it is described as 'this woodworm riddled chicken shed'.

12 Paar, H[arry] W.,*The Great Western Railway in Dean: A History of the Railways of the Forest of Dean, volume II*, second edition (David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1971), 93.

(iii) the southerly branch, whose actual extent has not been determined for certain, but at least from Prosper Pit (with a short spur), and beyond that from the direction of Dark Hill (the site of David and Robert Mushet's ironworks) possibly by an end-on junction near Prosper Gosty Knoll pit with the Severn & Wye Tramway

These routes are not exactly as specified in the wording of the 1810 Act, but their function is essentially as envisaged.[13] We know that 3' long L-shaped rails ('plates') were laid and were 'bolted to octagonal oak pins driven into holes in the stone sleepers';[14] the MR was a plateway of the most old-fashioned kind.

The wharf at May Hill

At May Hill the plateway or tramway terminated at the new wharf, whose coal business by an unknown date (perhaps from the outset) had been diversified by the opening of a brick- and lime-works. There was a brick-kiln right by the very end of the line. Although precise dates are lacking, we know that the mineral businesses at the wharf were run successively by the following entrepreneurs:

> around 1830 by Charles Ford (born about 1761–1844; local 'merchant and farmer' and possibly the same man who was Governor of Monmouth Gaol at this period), James (life dates not known) & Peter Teague (1787–1872), and Thomas Trotter (1805–1855), all of these being '& Co.' (coal and lime merchants); and by Charles Ford & Co. and Knight & Richards (brick and tile makers)[15]
>
> around 1841–3 Mr Ford and Peter Teague reduced their prices in 1842 – at the wharf, coal to a 11s a ton and lime to 7s 6d 'per dozen' – 'in consequence of the Monmouth Railway Company having lowered the Tonnage on the Railway';[16] Teague cut his price for lime by a further 6d the following

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[13] 'WHEREAS the making and maintaing [sic] a Railway or Tram Road from or near the Head of Howler Slade in His Majesty's Forest of Dean, by the Town of Coleford and Villages of Newland and Redbrook in the County of Gloucester, to a certain Place near the Town of Monmouth called May Hill, or to a certain Place in the said Town of Monmouth, extending North-eastward from Wyebridge to the Nag's Head near Dixon Gate, by passing the Bridge over the River Wye, or by passing the said River by a Boat or Barge to be drawn across the same by a fixed Rope or Chain, and the making and maintaining the following Branches of Railway or Tram Road, to lead from and out of the said first mentioned main Line of Railway or Tram Road; (that is to say,) One Railway or Tram Road from the said main Line at or near Winnall's Hill in the said Forest Southwards, to or near to a Colliery called the Winnall, with a collateral Line of Railway or Tram Road leading out of the Branch of Railway last mentioned to or near to a Mine-pit in Clear Well Mead in the said Forest; One other Railway or Tram Road from the same Point of the said main Line at Winnall's Hill Northward, to or near to the Head of Wymberry Slade in the said Forest; One other Railway or Tram Road from the said main Line at or near the Lane leading from the Swan Pool, to or near to the Village of Staunton; One other Railway or Tram Road from the said main Line in the Lord's Grove to Redbrook Tin-works, and there branching into Two Railways, the one extending to the Tin-works at Lower Redbrook, and the other to the River Wye, at or near a Place called the Cinder Bank, in the Parish of Newland in the County of Gloucester, there to cross the said River by a Boat or Barge to be drawn across the said River by a fixed Rope or Chain, to or near to a Place called Pool Dee, in the Parish of Penallt in the County of Monmouth, with necessary Wharfs …' 50 Geo. III [1810], cap. 123, The Monmouth Railway Act, 2733–2792, at 2733–2734. The permission for the passage from Redbrook to Pool Dee [Pwll Du] was never activated.

[14] Kissack, *Monmouth: The Making of a County Town*, 281.

[15] Pigot's directory (1830). This, along with decennial census and England and Wales Register (1939) data, were accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

[16] *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 13 Aug. 1842. Newspapers cited in this article were consulted via the National Library of Wales website between 18 and 27 July 2022.

year;[17] especially because of inflation during the Napoleonic Wars, the wholesale price of coal had gone up a great deal since 1791, when it had been 10s a ton from the barge;

around 1844 by Henry Dyke and Peter Teague (coal and lime) and Dyke (brick and tile)[18]

around 1851–61 by Henry Dyke (1817–1874; 'Coal merchant' 1851 and 1861 censuses); I have no evidence that Francis Dyke, an underemployed journeyman carpenter aged 51 and born in Usk, who committed suicide on the railway close to May Hill in 1881,[19] was a relative of Henry, but the coincidence is striking;

around 1875–81 by William Burgham (1843–1922; 'Coal Merchant' 1875 parish records; 'Brick and Tile Merchant' of May Hill Wharf 1881 census; 'brickmaker', liquidated, *Merlin* 17 November 1882; previously 'clerk' 1868, 'agent' 1871, to Henry Dyke);

around 1901–11 by James Hall (born about 1849–1911), 'brick and tile merchant' 1901 census, and William Ticklepenny [yes, really!] (1862–1932; Freemason – occupation 'surveyor' in his lodge records 1897; 'brick and tile maker' 1901 census; absent 1911 census), both also in Kelly's directory for 1901; Ticklepenny was a 'surveyor and valuer', and 'brick and tile maker', while Hall was a 'timber, slate and lime merchant, builder and contractor, brick and tile dealer', 'building material dealer', all in 1901 Kelly's; and Hall was a 'Builder and Builders Merchant' 1911 census.

The wharf was latterly known as *(Oliver) Parry's yard*, after Oliver Tippins Parry (1888–1948; 'tiler' 1911; 'builder' 1939, who lived at Mayhill), an established Monmouth builder who must have taken over the premises when Hall and Ticklepenny moved on (date not known, possibly in the early 1930s).

The shadowy Monmouth Railway and its ghost

Much is not certain about the latter days of the MR, but the uncertainty begins early. Lt. Robert K. Dawson's map, 'from the Ordnance Survey', prepared to accompany the Reform Act of 1832, shows the line leaving May Hill south of the Staunton road but stopping short in the woodland of Lord's Grove, near the Redbrook road and well within the historic and proposed borough boundary shown by Dawson (Image 3). Nevertheless, it is widely believed that, in some guise or other, it staggered on till about 1872, possibly having been provided with edge rails in the 1860s. It was replaced east of Wyesham over much of its length by the Coleford Railway [CR] (Act passed 1872, line opened 1883), but with the passionate urgency of giant panda reproduction: various stages in the process are documented from 1853 to 1883.[20] The operation of the original MR as an entity must therefore have ceased no later than 1872, at least east of the Coleford, Monmouth, Usk & Pontypool Railway's

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17 *Merlin*, 1 May 1843.

18 Pigot's directory (1842–4), as note 15.

19 *Cardiff Times*, 17 Sept. 1881.

20 The Coleford Railway Act, 1872, https://vlex.co.uk/vid/coleford-railway-act-1872-808308089, accessed 20 July 2022. However, the Forest historian Cyril Hart observed succinctly that '[t]he Coleford, Monmouth, Usk & Pontypool Railway purchased most of [the MR] in 1853, but failed to convert it into a railway, this being done by the Coleford Railway Co in 1883 …'; Cyril Hart, *The Industrial History of Dean: with an Introduction to its Industrial Archaeology* (David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1971), 394. A copy dated 24 Feb. 1866 of a draft conveyance of the 'line, branches and works of the Monmouth Railway, from the Monmouth May Hill terminus to Coleford Gas Works' to the Coleford, Monmouth, Usk and Pontypool Railway Company can be found as Gwent Archives D3934/15. The non-urgent demise of the MR is all too clear.

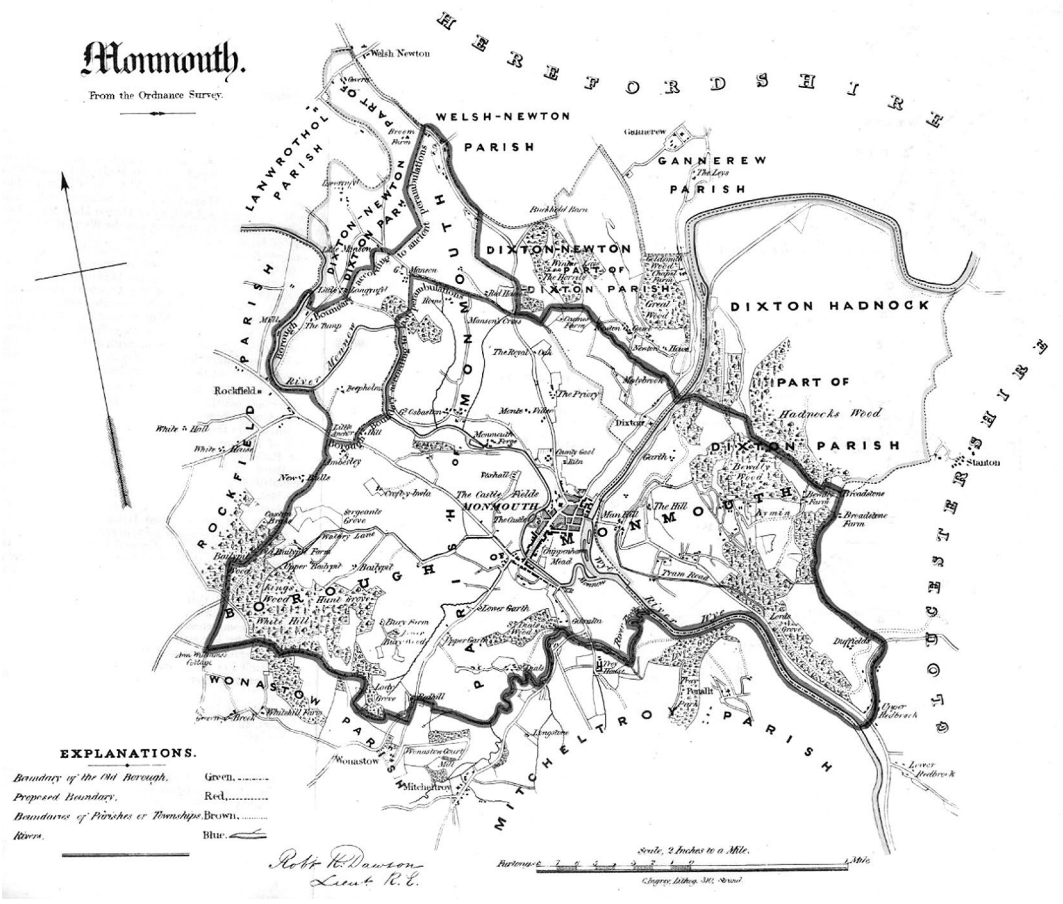


Fig. 2: Dawson's map for the Reform Act (1832) showing the 'Tram Road' from 'Man Hill' [sic] emerging southwards between the 'O' and 'N' of 'BOROUGH OF M**ON**MOUTH' but stopping in Lords Grove woodland close to the south-eastern boundary.

[CMU&PR's] new riverside wharf connecting with the CR at Wyesham.[21] The track from May Hill as far as Wyesham appears on Ordnance Survey [OS] 6" and 25" maps surveyed in 1879–81 (published 1886 and 1881 respectively) but not on the resurveyed maps of 1900–2. It seems to have remained in use, repurposed in a truncated form to serve claypits in a field at Wyesham, into which a new extension had been constructed, for bringing clay to the May Hill brickworks. But the only brickworks marked as such on the 1901 revision of the OS 25" map is some way south of May Hill, by the waterworks in the elbow of the road to Wyesham village, implying that the use of the tramway stopped altogether whenever it was that brick production moved from May Hill wharf to

21 Christiansen, Rex, *A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain: volume 13: Thames and Severn* (David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1981), 131.

the new site, closer to the claypits. The later brickworks had been derelict for many years when it was demolished in 1967.[22]

A further element of uncertainty is provided by John Wood's plan of Monmouth 'from actual survey', dated 1835.[23] This shows what appears to be a short tramway (though unlabelled) emerging from the 'Brick Yard' at May Hill, bypassing Mr Ford's 'Coal & Lime Wharf', and crossing the Staunton road to enter a second 'Coal & Lime Wharf' between the Hadnock and Staunton roads opposite May Hill school, i.e. what is now the hotel of that name. The MR as described above, terminating in the 'Brick Yard', is not marked at all, and the line depicted by Wood appears therefore to be separate from it. No other evidence for such a capricious leap across the road has been found.

The MR tramway (or its ghost) is called 'old' on the 1879–81 OS 25" survey; the claypits are marked as 'old' claypits on the 1900–2 survey. When the *Merlin* of 5 November 1880 reported an exceptional flooding of the Wye,[24] it stated that '[t]he water was 5ft. deep … on the *old* Dixton railroad.' (Recall that May Hill was originally in Dixton parish.) That must confirm that the tramway finally went out of use during the unsuccessful tenancy of the wharf by Mr Burgham before 1880. By that date the line can only have been the truncated tramway serving the claypits, and the report implies that even that part of it no longer functioned by that date. So the Monmouth Railway faded out ingloriously and inconspicuously through the middle decades of the nineteenth century. A sale document of 1901 dealing with some of the Duke of Beaufort's Monmouth properties[25] refers to 'accommodation land [= land for grazing bullocks] fronting Wyesham Road (with access to Chepstow Road [i.e. Redbrook Road] over the old tramway)', which is the last documentary mention of the tramway as such, so far as I know.

During the earliest years of its existence the wharf would have been perched on the edge of the floodplain of the Wye, before the Chepstow turnpike (now Redbrook Road) was squeezed in between the river and the wharf in the late 1820s. Today the works site is in the parcel of land between Redbrook Road and Wyesham Road, and close to Mayhill House, which was in the 18th century a lodging house, later a school and now a pub/hotel. Stone and rendered buildings from the era of the brick- and lime-works survive in 2023 among those on the west side of, and on the corner of, Wyesham Road, including a former post office, but the industrial buildings themselves have succumbed partly to inter-war private housing and partly to the car park of the Monmouth branch of Lidl, whose main building occupies the adjacent former County Garage site.

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[22] Notes attached to pin on https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/en/image/WPW048181, accessed 12 July 2022. It is commemorated by Claypatch Road in Wyesham.

[23] Conveniently reproduced on the endpapers of Kissack, *Monmouth: The Making of a County Town* (see note 6), and *Victorian Monmouth* (Monmouth Historical and Educational Trust, Monmouth, 1986).

[24] *Merlin*, 5 Nov. 1880.

[25] 'Further Riverside accommodation land partly in the p[arish] of Monmouth, and partly in the p[arish] of Dixton Hadnock; Accommodation land, a strip of land lying between the Chepstow Road and the Monmouth Railway, Mayhill Wharf with dwellinghouse and buildings, a freehold building site lying between the Wyesham and Chepstow Road near the Waterworks, accommodation land fronting Wyesham Road (with access to Chepstow Road over the old tramway), small piece of land adjoining and a cottage on the Chepstow Road fronting the River Wye, 2 building sites lying between the Wyesham and Chepstow Roads, a nursery on the Chepstow Road (adjoining Wyesham Church) and a building site between the Chepstow Road and the River Wye, (including a portion of the towing path) … all in the p[arish] of Dickston Hadnock.' Glamorgan Archives MS. DSA/6/56 (1901), http://calmview.cardiff.gov.uk/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=DSA%2F6%2F56, accessed 18 July 2022.

Associated industries

North of the wharf, on the other side of the Staunton road, were the gasworks (1829–about 1939 or 1960),[26] the small associated naphtha works (before 1857–1870s) and the steam sawmills (1856–after 1959). These undoubtedly owed their situation to the MR, which will have transported the Forest of Dean coal necessary for at least their initial operations. Timber for the sawmills was most likely sourced locally, within heavily wooded Dixton parish, e.g. at Hadnock, or from the adjacent Highmeadow estate in Staunton and Newland. Sidings to accommodate timber trains were provided between May Hill and Symonds Yat. The gasworks could have been reached first by the Coleford, Monmouth, Usk and Pontypool Railway, whose Act (1853) provided for a half-mile branch at Dixton to the manufactory, but this was never built.[27]

Flooding: the Wye strikes back

As we have seen, being above the estimated flood maximum was no guarantee of remaining dry-shod, and the trackbed was severely flooded from time to time. The 1880 flood that affected the old tramway also hit May Hill station. The *Merlin* reported that 'the railway station at May Hill could only be approached by means of raised planks …'[28] Major flooding in Monmouth and Dixton occurred many times in the 19th century, exacerbated in mid-century by the poorly disposed-of soil from the failed 1847 railway project; in the railway era proper May Hill station was also inundated in 1910, 1912 and 1947. Several photos from different years show the rails fully under water; Fig 3 shows such a scene in 1947. We turn now to the modest drier history of this new station.

The Ross and Monmouth Railway, abortive schemes and May Hill station

Keith Kissack's view is that the confident initial investment in the MR which was barely successful in paying its way, let alone a dividend, discouraged investment in other schemes locally, despite local dissatisfaction with 'the abominable tram way'.[29] The second railway to arrive at May Hill might have been one proposed in 1836 to link Merthyr Tydfil with Gloucester, via Ross; May Hill was to

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[26] Differing dates have been suggested for the closure of the gasworks and the siding serving it (and the two issues are separable), but the matter is too ill documented to be sure about in the present context. For the earlier date, see R. A. Cooke, *Track Layout Diagrams of the GWR and BR (WR), section 36: Ross, Monmouth and Chepstow*, fourth edition (Lightmoor Press, Lydney, 2017), diagram 36/29; and Neil Parkhouse, *West Gloucester and Wye Valley Lines*, British Railway History in Colour, vol. 1, second edition (Lightmoor Press, Lydney, 2018), 234. For 1960 by implication, Stanley C. Jenkins, *The Ross, Monmouth and Pontypool Road Line*, Locomotion Papers LP220, second edition (Oakwood Press, Usk, 2009), 113. Wikipedia, 'Monmouth Gasworks', says 'sometime after 1960', and Disused Stations web-site, http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/m/monmouth_may_hill/, accessed 29 July 2022, concurs. The champions of the 1960s date imply that the gasworks operated till the advent of natural gas, but are indeterminate about the status of the siding, which is marked along with the gasworks on large-scale OS maps into the 1950s, but usually with the exact date of survey not given. A horizontal reciprocating steam pump by Joseph Evans & Sons Ltd, Wolverhampton, which was used to pump tar at this gasworks, is preserved in the National Museum Wales collection, Ref 12.9.

[27] Christiansen, *Thames and Severn*, 131. Some sources, including 'Monmouth gasworks', Wikipedia, accessed 10 Jan. 2023, give the erroneous impression that this CMU&PR branch was actually built, apparently due to a misunderstanding of a sentence that could have been better worded in Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust's page 035 Wyesham: Lower Wye Valley, http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/historic_landscape/wye_valley/english/wyevalley_035.htm, accessed 23 July 2022.

[28] *Merlin*, 5 Nov. 1880.

[29] Kissack, *Monmouth: The Making of a County Town*, 281. The disrespectful quote is from the *Monmouth Gazette*, 1 Dec. 1849, whose editor also opined that coal at the town could be reduced to 9s. a ton if it had a proper railway. The Monmouth area also participated in nationwide recurrent complaints about railway mania leading to underinvestment in roads (Kissack, p. 284).



Fig. 3: The flood of 1947 at May Hill station
(from http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/m/monmouth_may_hill/index.shtml).

have been the site of the town's station.[30] Another might have been a line linking Ross and Monmouth with Brunel's approval, but this succumbed to Brunel's other interests including the South Wales main line, and it had as its legacy a hypothetical rock garden beautifying an embankment in nearby Dixton's Vicarage Field plus a certain amount of water trouble (see above).[31] Work started on this Monmouth & Hereford Railway in 1847 but was abandoned because of the banking panic and stock market crash of that year, with the result that the actual second coming was that of the standard-gauge Ross & Monmouth Railway [R&MR], which reached May Hill (at first written *Mayhill*) in 1873.[32] A temporary terminus was established before the line was extended across the Wye the next year to the CMU&PR's Troy (originally called *Troy House*, from the nearby mansion),[33] Monmouth's main station and a spot much more inconvenient for passengers heading for the town. It has been claimed that the R&MR opened to Troy straight away, and that May Hill was opened shortly after in response to public demand as a 'drop' station more convenient for the town.[34] That seems to be the wrong way

30 Kissack, *Victorian Monmouth*, 167.

31 Monmouth and Hereford Railway Act (1845), https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukla/Vict/8-9/191/contents/enacted, accessed 05 August 2022; plan and book of reference TNA MS. Q/RUm/190/1. On the embankment, letter from Brunel in Dixton's parish chest, cited by Kissack, *Monmouth: The Making of a County Town*, 281.

32 Jenkins, *The Ross, Monmouth and Pontypool Road Line*, 20–24, 111–113.

33 Benson, Anne, *Troy House: A Tudor Estate across Time* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2017).

34 See 'Dean Forester' [pseudonym of a working group consisting of L. E. Copeland, H. W. Paar and D. A. Tipper], 'A note on Monmouth's stations', *Journal of the Stephenson Locomotive Society* 35.417 (June 1959), 191; Harry Paar, 'Railway stations of a lesser breed', *Journal of the Railway and Canal Historical Society* 28.6, 248–51 (1985), at 249. The apparently well-supported alternative claim about the sequence of opening is by 'Dean Forester'. However in 1985 Paar says that the 1959 article contains a misleading statement and needs amplification – but he doesn't say what! It may relate to this point.

round, according to the bulk of other commentators, though it appears clear that an original intention to close May Hill when the line to Troy opened was 'dropped' owing to vocal passenger demand for the site nearer Wye Bridge and Monmouth town centre. A flimsy platform was knocked together a week before the R&MR officially opened, with ceremonial more like a raspberry than a fanfare.[35]

May Hill began as and remained a block post, i.e. it had a signal box controlling the southern end of a section of track, though the section in every other respect continued as far as Troy when May Hill was no longer a terminus. This rather unexpected arrangement could be taken as evidence that the R&MR intended to run double track from May Hill to Troy, a suspicion confirmed by the surviving bridge under the A466 with two single-track portals (Fig 4), though the Duke of Beaufort bridge carrying the line over the Wye onwards to Troy opened the next year in single-track form only. The early box was on the platform (with another mapped in 1881 just off its northern end, presumably controlling siding access, though a whole signal box for that job seems excessive), and a single later replacement was located just off its southern end.

A few years later, in 1877, a connection was mooted from May Hill to Wyesham by the Wye Valley Railway to link its own line from Chepstow with that from Ross, forming a triangular junction that offered the option of bypassing Troy. It would have consisted of a chord fully east of the Wye, on or close to whatever remained of the MR's trackbed, but despite being provided for in the WVR's Act (1866)[36] and the second Act (1871) required after the delay caused by the collapse of the company's original bankers Overend, Gurney in 1866, it was never built. The idea of such a chord surfaced again briefly, but not officially, when British Railways was considering the future of all Monmouth's lines in the late 1950s, but again it came to naught. It would have enabled the retention of a through line from Chepstow to Ross, with a single passenger station for Monmouth at the more convenient May Hill, allowing the closure of Troy.[37]

The final railway at May Hill that never was was the Midland, Monmouth and Severn Bridge Junction Railway, mooted in the mid-1880s. This economically absurd fantasy might have connected Pontrilas (Herefordshire), via the Monnow valley, with the R&MR at May Hill.[38] It was planned as an extension of the Golden Valley Railway [GVR] from Hay-on-Wye to Pontrilas on down the Monnow valley to Monmouth, even though the penniless GVR had not yet succeeded in reaching

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35 Kissack, *Victorian Monmouth*, 170; *Monmouth: The Making of a County Town*, 284. It is sometimes claimed that May Hill station is on the site of an earlier wharf, but the Tithe Award and map for Dixton parish (1843) show no sign of any such thing: https://places.library.wales/viewer/4560953#?cv=2&h=142&c=&m=&s=&manifest=https%3A%2F%2Fdamsssl.llgc.org.uk%2Fiiif%2F2.0%2F4560953%2Fmanifest.json&xywh=1369%2C861%2C2886%2C1202, accessed 08 August 2022.

36 Wye Valley Railway Act, 1866, https://vlex.co.uk/vid/wye-valley-railway-act-808438209, accessed 20 July 2022; see also Wye Valley Railway Book of Reference, TNA MS. Q/RUm/407. '… the third side of the Monmouth Triangle is near-mythical since everyone offered to build it but the half-mile long chord between Wyesham and Monmouth May Hill which could have saved Monmouth's rail link – perhaps – was lost with the demise of the Monmouth Tramroad and has now completely disappeared.' (Gawain Nicholson, 'The Wye Valley Railway', https://booksrus.me.uk/gn/page%2061.html#1, accessed 20 July 2022.)

37 According to Gawain Nicholson, 'Railways of Monmouth', https://booksrus.me.uk/gn/page%2050.html, accessed 31 July 2022.

38 *Western Mail*, 1 March 1888; W. A. Twiston-Davies, 'The Monnow Valley Railway', *National Library of Wales Journal* 6.1 (1949), 109–10. Local gentleman Clive Meysey, even before the proposed extension, said of the GVR that it 'leads from a place of no importance to a place of no importance…[it] appears to be practically useless and to involve a wasteful expenditure of money'; quoted by Bob Steele, 'The rise and fall of the Golden Valley Railway', http://www.ewyaslacy.org.uk/-/The-rise-and-fall-of-the-Golden-Valley-Railway/1875-1953/rs_gdv_0001, accessed 3 Aug. 2022. The line mentioned in the present article was an afterthought to a previous abortive Monnow Valley scheme about which Twiston-Davies gives details.



Fig. 4: The sole surviving railway structure at May Hill: the R&MR bridge under the Staunton road. Only one of these portals (left) ever admitted a railway line. © R. Coates.

Hay. It was a desperate attempt to salvage the GVR by pretending it contributed to a potential through route from north-west England to Bristol via mid-Wales. The Act for this extension was passed at the second attempt in 1889; it would have permitted a junction with the R&MR north of May Hill station and a siding south of both it and the Staunton road, on what is now Monmouth School's cricket field. Funds, and the GVR, were exhausted, and nothing more ever happened.[39]

May Hill, leisure and Society

May Hill station soon served as a reference point for other transport endeavours. Thomas Morgan's Pleasure Boats, 'Patronised by H. R. H. The Crown Prince of Siam', offered trips 'to all parts of the River Wye' from 'near Mayhill Station', according to Morgan's recurring advert in the *Monmouthshire Beacon*.[40]

The most distinguished moment in May Hill station's early history, judged by the priorities of the time (and probably those of more recently too), also hinged upon the titled. This was the visit

[39] The Golden Valley Railway Extension Act (1889), shorn of its pretentious prospectus title involving the Midlands and the Severn Bridge, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukla/Vict/52-53/195/contents/enacted, accessed 5 Aug. 2022.

[40] Illustrated in Keith Kissack, *Monmouth and its Buildings* (Logaston Press, Hereford, 2003), 13.

of the Duke and Duchess of York in November 1900. The narrative is best left in the hands of the *Cardiff Times* of 3 November:

> THE ARRIVAL, SCENE AT THE STATION. May Hill Station, Monmouth, is one of the smallest stations on the Great Western Railway line. There are little more than two long low sheds divided into booking office, waiting-room, and stationmaster's office on either side of the single line which runs to in the one direction and Troy in the other. Seldom or never has it fallen to the lot of Royalty to alight at such a diminutive station but the Great Western Railway officials had risen well to the occasion, and the May Hill Station on Monday was not what one is wont to see. In fact, it had been almost doubled in size, the addition having taken the form of a gaily bedizened canopy which overhung a length of platform draped with crimson cloth and upon the opposite side of which steps especially constructed for the occasion led to the station yard, where the procession was to be marshalled.[41]

The Duke and Duchess had simply come to visit Lord and Lady Llangattock at The Hendre, their country seat just outside Monmouth.[42]

The saddest rail transport report concerning May Hill in those early years must be that in the *Western Mail* and other papers of 21 January 1888:

> A CHILD THROWN FROM A TRAIN NEAR MONMOUTH. About ten minutes after the 12.20 train left May-hill Station, Monmouth, on Thursday afternoon, the body of an infant was found about a hundred yards below the station, on the railway embankment, between the rails and the Redbrook-road. There was every trace of the child being newly born. The body was conveyed to the mortuary of Monmouth General Hospital, to await an inquest. The police are investigating the case.[43]

The *South Wales Echo* reported three days later that an inquest had revealed the child had never lived, and 'a verdict in accordance was returned'.[44] The 'supposed infanticide' story then disappeared from the press.

May Hill and industry

The new R&MR presumably also had at least one eye on the traffic that would be generated by the Monmouth Steam Saw Mills, Coal and Lime Company (to give it its full title) and the town gasworks, which was now finally reached by rail after the abortive authorization of 1853.[45] The R&MR, between Symonds Yat and Monmouth, had sidings for the reception of timber from what was once the Bengough family's Highmeadow estate,[46] but was in Crown hands in the railway era:

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41 *Cardiff Times*, 3 Nov. 1900.

42 If you are keen to know about the streetsful of loyal demonstrations, of which there was an explosion – after all, the Duke was to become King George V ten years later – along with an account of what the Duchess was wearing, please consult the *Cardiff Times*, https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3426809/3426815/146.

43 *Western Mail* and other papers dated 21 Jan. 1888.

44 *South Wales Echo*, 24 Jan. 1888.

45 Jenkins, *Ross, Monmouth and Pontypool Road*, 112. Some sources state that the gasworks dates from 1870, but it features in the right place on Wood's town plan of 1835.

46 Baggs, A. P., and Juřica, A. R. J., 'Staunton', in *A History of the County of Gloucester: Volume 5, Bledisloe Hundred, St Briavels Hundred, the Forest of Dean*, ed. C. R. J. Currie and N. M. Herbert (Victoria County History, London, 1996), 272–84. *British History Online*, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/glos/vol5/pp272-284, accessed 2 Aug. 2022.

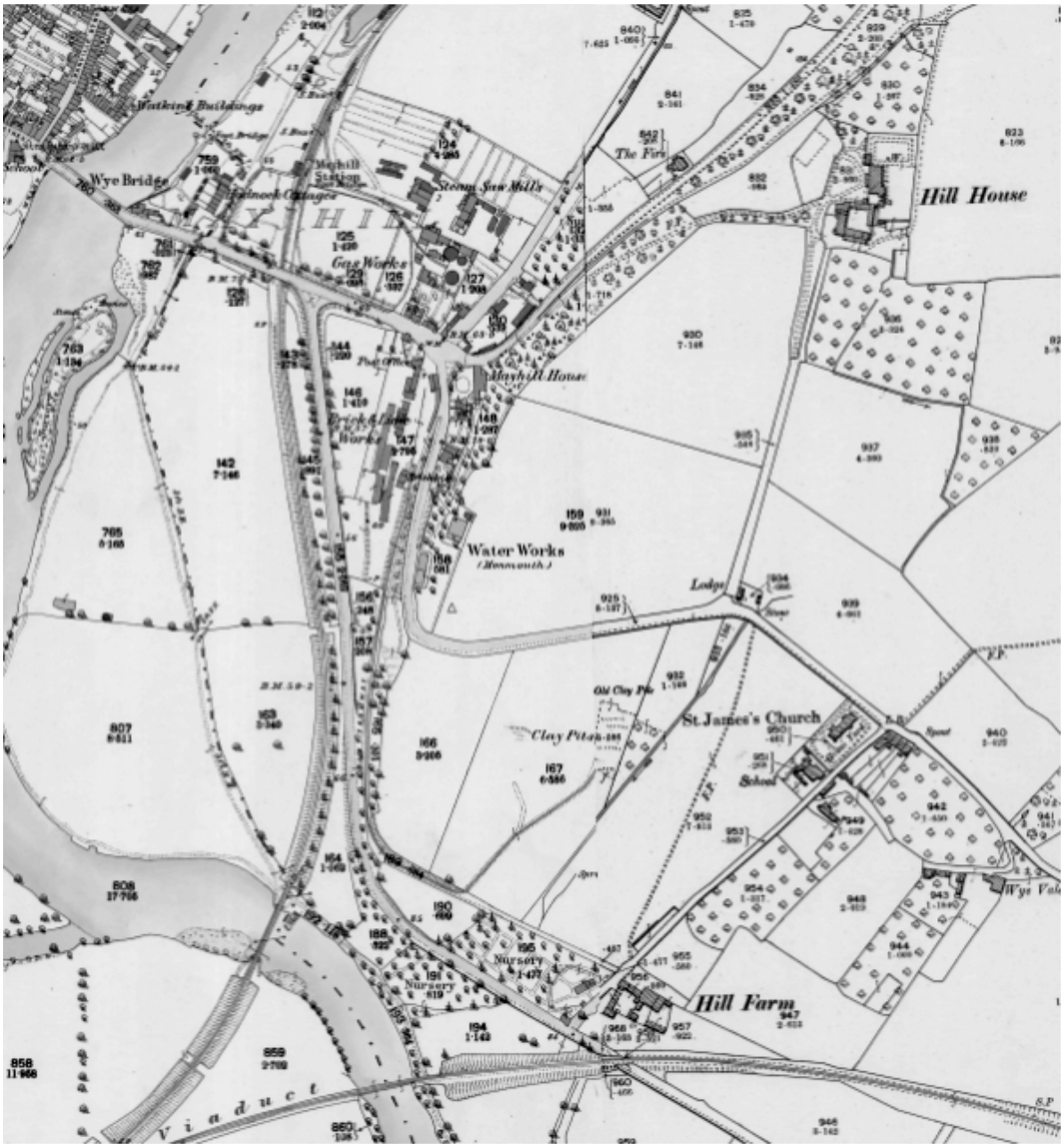


Fig. 5: The complexities of Monmouth (May Hill), OS 6", revised 1892–1914; note the main line northwards to Ross on Wye, the goods loop, the spur to the gasworks and sawmills, and the brick and lime works that had formerly been the terminus of the Monmouth Railway, whose former trackbed can just be seen; on close inspection it can be seen labelled 'OLD TRAMWAY'.

Slaughter and Highmeadow sidings. Nearer May Hill was the later Bannerman's siding, serving the former Crown estate at Hadnock from 1924. Timber from all these could be transported with ease to a short branch originating just north of May Hill station, consisting of a spur protected by a ground frame (signal) and entered from the north (down or Troy station direction). This spur divided to serve the two industrial operations. The gasworks repaid the R&MR by supplying the gas to light

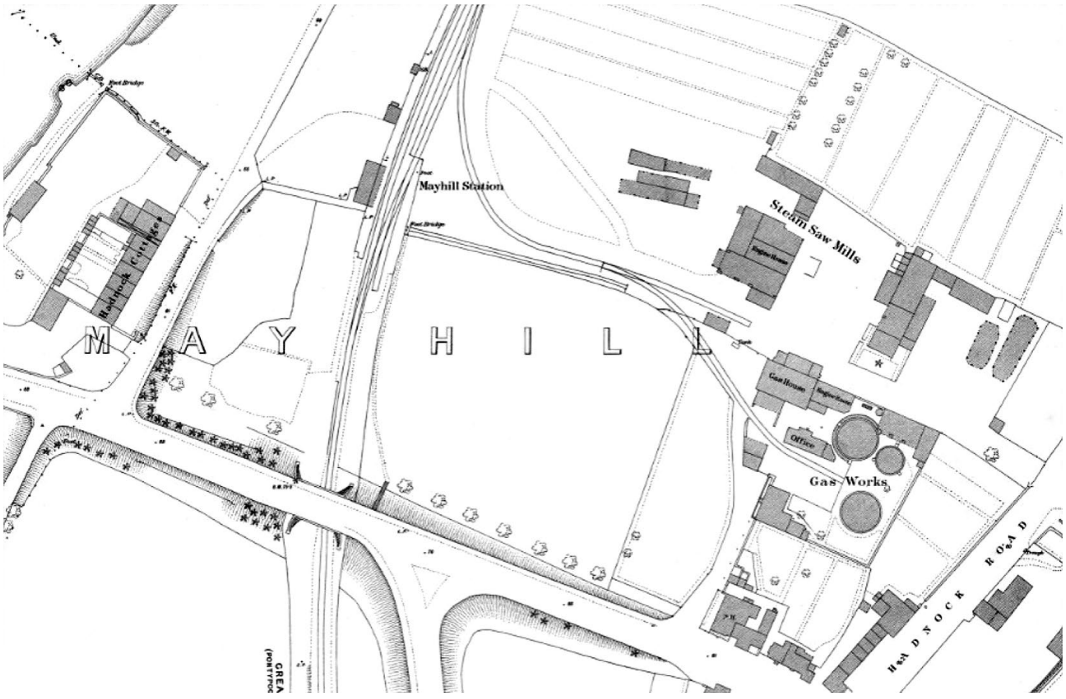


Fig. 6: OS 1:500 town plan (surveyed 1880), showing the sidings at May Hill; the same map shows the northern extremity of the 'old tramway' in the brickworks yard whose northern end can be seen left of centre bottom.

the station.[47] The sidings had been reconfigured in a fairly small way by 1920, probably to smooth out curves in order to permit access by longer-wheelbase wagons or locos;[48] for maps of their classic instantiation see Figs 5 and 6, and for a corresponding aerial view, Fig 7. By 1880 the station had a goods loop parallel to the running line, from which the industrial sidings diverged (the loop can be seen in Fig 8). The sawmills and gasworks sidings branched from the loop as approached from the north (i.e. by down trains, those heading for Troy station).[49] The loop was truncated at the south end

[47] The gasworks had a further transport connection, though not a public one: it supplied the gas for the Hon. Charles Rolls' pioneer balloon ascents. The best two images online at the time of writing (accessed 15 Aug. 2022), showing the balloon 'Dolce far niente', gasworks and sidings, were on the websites of the British Balloon Museum and Library, https://www.bbml.org.uk/collections/photos-videos/, and offered for sale from the Mary Evans Picture Library by prints-online at https://www.prints-online.com/royal-aeronautical-society/photographic-new-photographic-content/hon-charles-rolls-balloon-monmouth-13094772.html.

[48] Cooke, *Diagrams, 36*, 36/29.

[49] The track diagram in Jenkins, *Ross, Monmouth and Pontypool Road*, 110, shows two separate sidings issuing from the loop, one northwards to the gasworks and one southwards to the sawmills, with a crossover. Jenkins's diagram is difficult to square with map and aerial photo evidence, which suggests that direct access to both these industrial sidings was consistently from the Ross direction (i.e. southwards) only. However, Cooke, *Diagrams 36*, 36/29, suggests that the arrangement shown by Jenkins did indeed exist around 1877.



Fig. 7: In 1938 the gasworks and sawmills sidings can be seen, and the white building bottom left marks the northern extremity of the former brick- and lime-works site; https://www.casgliadywerin.cymru/items/463564, © Crown copyright: by permission of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

in 1953,[50] leaving access to the sawmills siding allegedly until April 1960,[51] and the rest of its track was removed altogether after the line finally closed in 1964.[52]

The buffers

Passenger services to May Hill station were ended in the pre-Beeching closures of 1959, but the line serving it was partly retained for goods traffic, as just noted. This was operated as a spur to the sawmills from Troy requiring a reversal there by Wye Valley line goods trains from Chepstow which alone remained to serve it, and finally to Monmouth's ex-military Ministry of Agriculture,

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50 Parkhouse, *West Gloucester and Wye Valley Lines*, 235.

51 However, there is photographic evidence of a visit by a locomotive to the siding in 1961, for an enthusiasts' excursion to May Hill: Parkhouse, *West Gloucester and Wye Valley Lines*, 236.

52 Jenkins, *Ross, Monmouth and Pontypool Road*, 113.



Fig. 8: May Hill in about 1937, with diesel railcar, and with the gated goods loop on the right. By permission of Mike Morant.

Fisheries and Food depot north of the station (the large brick building marked 'Store' on the OS 1:2,500 plan of 1969, still standing in late 2019[53]). This depot was opened in 1942, originally with its own siding accessed from the direction of Ross, and finally closed as a civilian food store on 6 January 1964, thereby ending all rail transport at May Hill – and indeed at Monmouth – after 152 years.

[53] Confirmed by site visit, 12 Nov. 2019.

‘LIARS, KNAVES AND COWARDLY POLTROONS’: OPPOSITION TO THE PEOPLE’S CHARTER IN NEWPORT AND MONMOUTHSHIRE[1]

By Chris Williams

Introduction

The Monmouthshire Antiquary is the most appropriate place in which to publish an assessment of those who opposed Chartism in Newport and its hinterland, because some of those who played a critical role in the formation and early years of what was initially titled the Caerleon Antiquarian Association were also amongst those most prominent in resisting the People’s Charter. These include the first President of the Association, Sir Digby Mackworth and his successor, Octavius Morgan.[2] Morgan, son of Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar House, participated as a magistrate in the committal of the Chartist leaders and served on the Grand Jury which met in Monmouth in December 1839 to decide which of the Chartists would be put on trial for treason. A review of his correspondence at this time leaves no doubt as to his anger at what he termed ‘the late traitorous outrages’ that culminated in the attack on the Westgate Hotel in November 1839.[3]

Opposition to the Chartist movement – its personnel, its character, its rationale – has tended to receive only passing attention from historians. There has been work done on individual ironmasters, coalowners and landowners, but they tend not to have been studied as opponents of Chartism.[4] A major exception is Thomas Phillips, whose career and political opinions have been subjected to some investigation.[5] Mayor of Newport at the time of the rising, knighted for his role in its defeat, Phillips is important, but what follows concerns a much wider range of anti-Chartists. Equally, although there have been studies of what David J. V. Jones termed ‘the machinery of law and order’, the wider social and political contexts in which people took up oppositional stances to the Six Points have been relatively neglected.[6]

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1 ‘Liars, knaves and cowardly poltroons’ was Henry Vincent’s description of Mayor Thomas Phillips and his fellow magistrates, uttered at a public meeting at Newport on 25 Apr. 1839, and reported in the *Western Vindicator*, 4 May 1839.

2 For the early years of the Association, see Knight, Jeremy K., ‘Foreword: The Caerleon Museum and the Association’, and Williams, David H., ‘Octavius Morgan, Antiquarian and Politician’, both in *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 13 (1997) 1–4 and 13–17.

3 N[ational] L[ibrary of] W[ales], Tredegar MS 40/13, letter of 12 November 1839 from Morgan to the Marquess of Normanby, Home Secretary; 40/23, letter of 16 January 1840 from Morgan to Lord Granville Somerset; 40/31, 9 February 1840 letter to Normanby. Morgan would go on to serve as one of the Conservative MPs for Monmouthshire from 1841 to 1874.

4 Examples include Davies, John, *Cardiff and the Marquesses of Bute* (U[niversity of] W[ales] P[ress], Cardiff, 1981); Guest, Revel, and John, Angela V., *Lady Charlotte Guest* (Tempus, Stroud, 2007); Phillips, Roger, *Tredegar: The History of an Agricultural Estate, 1300–1956* (Self Publishing Association, Newport, 1990).

5 Williams, Chris, ‘ “The great hero of the Newport Rising”: Thomas Phillips, reform and Chartism’, *Welsh History Review*, 21 (2003) 481–511; idem, ‘Wales’s “unionist-nationalist”: Sir Thomas Phillips, 1801–67’, *Llafur: Journal of Welsh People’s History*, 8 (2003) 7–17; idem, ‘Sir Thomas Phillips and the problem of “class-antagonism”’ in Turner, Michael J., (ed.), *Reform and Reformers in Victorian Britain* (Sunderland University Press, Sunderland, 2004).

6 Jones, David. J. V., *Before Rebecca: Popular Protests in Wales, 1793–1835* (Allen Lane, London, 1973) 161–91; Mather, F. C., *Public Order in the Age of the Chartists* (M[anchester] U[niversity] P[ress], Manchester, 1959).

This investigation has been inspired by the work done on late Victorian and Edwardian anti-suffragism by Brian Harrison.[7] Anti-suffragism has some parallels with anti-Chartism in that both were hostile to the extension of the franchise, whether that be to women or to all adult males. There was a time when much scholarship would hold, sometimes explicitly but often implicitly, that explanations for political behaviour could be explained by social and economic status or class, or (in the case of anti-suffragism) by one's identity as a man or a woman. Harrison's approach to the opposition to women's suffrage rejected such simple reductionism, in that he took the arguments that the opponents made seriously and sought to uncover the logic behind their position. Not all opponents of women's suffrage were men, for there were many women actively opposed to gaining the parliamentary franchise. The issue was not simply a struggle of power between the sexes.

Harrison argued that in seeking to understand the motivations of anti-suffragists one needed to utilise more sophisticated explanations that went beyond reductionist assumptions. One should not necessarily take all historical actors' views at face value, but one should accept, unless there is evidence to the contrary, that people's expressions of their views were sincere. Furthermore, Harrison suggested, any consideration of the forces inhibiting 'historical progress' is important 'not only for its own sake but as a complement to the history of reform'.[8] It is important to understand why those whom today we might see as those who stood in the way of progressive change thought the way they did.

From the perspective of the twenty-first century, one might be tempted to think the opponents of Chartism foolish, self-interested, their ideas a compound of prejudice and self-interest. Historians have been measured in their dismissal, but dismissed them nonetheless. For John Davies they were simply 'defenders of the status quo', whereas for Ivor Wilks 'the south Wales bourgeoisie remained firmly attached to the trinity of Crown, Parliament and Law which manifestly existed to protect the interests of property'.[9] In the eyes of many, those who opposed the Chartists have been justly consigned to history's rubbish heap. But only in the light of later events do the arguments in favour of the major reforms of the Charter seem so convincing and natural. To many contemporaries they often seemed misconstrued and mistaken. What follows investigates why a reform (universal male suffrage and various attendant measures) now so widely recognized as appropriate, beneficial and inevitable was resisted for so long and so effectively, and by whom.[10] The objective is to gain a better understanding not only of why Chartism failed in November 1839, but also why, ultimately, the main principles of the People's Charter were accepted.

The Rationale for Opposition

The Chartist movement had as its central objective the attainment of the six points of the People's Charter, namely the extension of the suffrage to all adult males; the secret ballot; the abolition of property qualifications for MPs; the payment of MPs; the division of the country into electoral districts of equal population; and the annual election of parliaments. There was opposition both to this programme and to the rest of the iceberg of which the six points were often held, by both supporters and opponents, to be the tip.[11]

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7 Harrison, Brian, *Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain* (Croom Helm, London, 1978).

8 Ibid., 16–17.

9 Davies, *A History of Wales* (Allen Lane, London, 1994) 377; Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839: Class Struggle as Armed Struggle* (Croom Helm, Beckenham, 1984) 251.

10 Harrison, *Separate Spheres*, 20–21.

11 Saunders, Robert, 'Chartism from above: British elites and the interpretation of Chartism', *Historical Research*, 81 (2008) 463–84: 468.

However, opponents of Chartism were often not just rejecting the specifics of the Chartist programme, they were also refusing the means that the Chartists were employing to realize their objectives. The key issue for many, made explicit in speeches and writings before as well as after November 1839, was the threat of violence on the part of the Chartists and their open defiance of the law.

Thomas Phillips was eloquent on this theme. Speaking at Christchurch on 12 April 1839, he declared he was prepared to stand by ‘the laws and constitution of the country’. He had no objection to people expressing their opinions, even if he disagreed with them, but they should equally respect the opinions of others:

> ... we desire not to interfere with them; but do not let them attempt to dictate to us therefore let them not tell us, that if we do not agree with them we must become the victims of their violence, or be doomed to live in a state of continual terror and intimidation.

Phillips pointed out that all around ‘active resistance to the law’ was being ‘openly inculcated as a duty; – resistance carried on by arms, by which the laws are to be altered, and the settlement of property disturbed’. Of course the institutions of the country were not perfect and the Chartists, he argued, had a right to state their opinion and to present petitions, but the Chartist did not have a right to carry those opinions by force, nor to threaten force: ‘it is not his right to say, that if the changes he may recommend be not adopted, they must be carried by force, and at the point of the pike or the bayonet’.[12]

Opposition to the principles of Chartism became inseparable, in reality, from opposition to the methods by which the Chartists sought to achieve their aims or had sought to achieve their aims in Newport in November 1839. Many felt that the introduction of violence into the political system and the threat of revolution heralded great disaster, and they pointed to the example of France as a country whose material fortunes and prosperity had been sorely damaged by frequent violent revolutions.[13]

After the Rising, heavy emphasis was placed on the outrageous nature of the Chartist attack on Newport, and the Chartists were regarded with great suspicion and very little toleration even though many protested they were now convinced of the folly of the ‘physical force’ strategy.[14] Oppositional attitudes were entrenched by the violent nature of the initial confrontation and took a long time to ease.

Thus ‘Historicus’ wrote to the Tory paper the *Monmouthshire Beacon* on 25 December 1841, commenting on pleas for a pardon for Frost and his fellow leaders, to say that it was not for their political opinions that they were punished:

> they suffered, and suffered justly for their violence; for their tumult; for the disturbance and terror caused to a whole district; for the armed bands excited by them to violence; for the bloodshed and the lives sacrificed in their mad and criminal outbreak.

The violence associated with the Chartist movement was often to the fore in critics’ minds when considering their reasons for opposition. Violence was a symptom of, but could also cause, constitutional instability, a danger definitely to be avoided. Many of those unconvinced of the need

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12 *M[onmouthshire] M[erlin]*, 13 Apr. 1839.

13 NLW, Tredegar MS 57/148, ‘An Address to the Misguided Men called Chartists’ (27 Nov. 1839). Chase, Malcolm, *Chartism: A New History* (MUP, Manchester, 2007) 74, notes that ‘past and current events in France were a near-constant subtext to the contemporary discussion of Chartism’.

14 Osmond, David, ‘After the rising: Chartism in Newport 1840–48’, *Gwent Local History*, 98 (2005) 8–52.

for the People's Charter would have been opposed to the Great Reform Bill of 1832. Tories were unhappy with the record of the Whig governments of the 1830s (particularly the introduction of New Poor Law) and saw no good grounds for extending the franchise further than the middle classes. Even those who had backed the Reform Bill could be reluctant about further changes, wishing to see the current constitutional arrangements bed down. Given that the constitution, as reified in public memory if not in historical reality, had been unchanged for hundreds of years, and had just been subject to a major and hugely controversial transformation, the resistance to making an even more thoroughgoing and far-reaching reform was entirely predictable.

As for opposition to the specifics of the Charter, the single most important stumbling block was the objective of universal male suffrage. A conventional contemporary reason for resisting universal suffrage was the belief that for someone to have the right to vote they should also have a stake or interest in the country, most obviously property of some kind. The argument was easily made that if a person did not have something to lose they might carelessly vote for foolish or injurious policies. Without property, it was thought, one could not be trusted to exercise the vote with sufficient good sense. An example of this argument could be found in the *Englishman's Catechism* of 1792:

> If the mode of election be altered, and the scale of it extended, *men of property*, interested *by that property* in the real welfare and stability of the nation, would not be chosen; but *cunning, low-minded men who had nothing to lose*. Actuated by the lust of *power* and *gain*, under the mask of *Equality*, they would give the watchword to their Friends without doors – declare the King and Lords useless … and fabricate, what *they would call a Republic … a violent usurpation of all the lands and property of the Kingdom*, which would be at the disposal of them and their adherents.[15]

Opposition to universal male suffrage, whether articulated so clearly or whether simply born of systemic inertia, long outlasted Chartism. The property qualification for voting remained in place, in various forms, until 1918. Its disappearance at that point owed much to the wartime history of mass volunteering and conscription. Men who had fought for their country, it was reasoned, could not be denied the parliamentary vote. But the circumstances of the First World War – the fielding of a large citizen army in 1915, the introduction of conscription in 1916 – were unequalled in British history, and certainly did not apply in the 1830s.

A related argument against the extension of the franchise focused not on property but on education. Men had to show themselves capable, it was argued, of comprehending politics in order to make informed political choices. When so many of the population had no or minimal literacy, the danger in extending the franchise to all would be an upsurge in demagoguery, with an ignorant electorate easily swayed by rabble-rousing politicians. The utopian socialist and philanthropist Robert Owen (no regular defender of the status quo), wrote to the *Poor Man's Guardian* in 1835 to argue that:

> Were you to have a Parliament chosen next year by universal suffrage and vote by ballot, it would be most probably the least efficient, most turbulent, and worst public assembly that has yet ruled this country.[16]

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[15] Burgoyne, John, *The Englishman's Political Catechism* (R. Trewman, Exeter, 1792) 8–9.

[16] Cited in Hammond, J. L., and Hammond, Barbara, *The Age of the Chartists, 1832–1854: A Study of Discontent* (Archon Books, Hamden, Connecticut, 1962) 269. Owen had changed his mind on the question of universal suffrage by the end of the 1840s.

The development within the Chartist movement itself, post-Newport, of what was termed ‘knowledge Chartism’ could be seen as conceding that a basic level of education was a necessary qualification for the exercise of the vote.[17] This argument continued to be made in relation to post-Chartist proposals to extend the suffrage. Lord John Russell, for instance, advancing his reform bill in 1860, acknowledged that he aimed to admit to the franchise only ‘that large number of the working classes who, by their knowledge, their character, and their qualifications, are fitted to exercise the franchise freely and independently’.[18] As Keith McClelland has noted in relation to the Second Reform Act of 1867, ‘being brought within the pale of the constitution was a particular kind of man whose definition – the social, political and moral qualities he was thought to carry, his perceived relationship to processes of government and politics – was crucial to the redefinition of what the political nation was and might become’.[19] There was a desire, amongst reforming as well as reactionary politicians for the progress of reform to be linked to the spread of knowledge and education. Were these not to be matched step for step, it might be suggested, disaster would result. For those opposing Chartism, the risks of filtering political influence and responsibility further down the social hierarchy were thought to be too great.

What of the rationale for opposition to other points of the Charter? Resistance to abolishing the property qualification for MPs flowed from the opposition to universal suffrage. Members of Parliament, it might be considered, should have their own property and income, for unless they were independent they would be open to pressure. It was thought desirable to have as public representatives men of independent means who could take a principled stance. MPs should not be beholden to external organizations, such as parties or caucuses, which might force them to adopt a partisan stance, but instead they should work to represent the interests of all their constituents, not only those who had elected them.

The ability to tolerate a system which retained profoundly unequal electoral districts was also connected to a rejection of the principle of universal suffrage. Constituencies, it could be argued, should represent discrete interests – agricultural, industrial, or commercial – rather than be determined in their size and shape by the number of voters they contained. Towns, even towns geographically separate, were thought to have more in common than they did with the countryside in which they were situated. Hence the distinction in the nineteenth-century electoral system between borough and county seats. Newport, Usk and Monmouth together formed the Monmouth Boroughs constituency, although their electoral history reveals that they had relatively little in common in terms of voting traditions, leaving the remainder of Monmouthshire as the (two-member) county constituency.

The Chartist objective of annual parliaments was somewhat idealistic, and remains the only one of the Six Points not to be in due course enacted. At the time of the Newport Rising parliament had to be dissolved every seven years rather than five (the maximum term being reduced in 1911). Many constituencies were rarely or infrequently contested, so the objective of holding annual parliaments was thought to be a way of ensuring greater democratic involvement in the selection and election of MPs. It was believed that annual parliaments would ensure that governments were more responsive to public opinion. Such a gesture towards direct rather than indirect democracy was

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17 Explored by Chase, *Chartism*, 168–71.

18 Cited by Hoppen, K. Theodore, *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846–1886* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998) 239.

19 Hall, Catherine, McClelland, Keith, and Rendall, Jane (eds), *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867* (C[ambridge] U[niversity] P[ress], Cambridge, 2000) 71.

ultimately not sustained by reform groups that followed Chartism, although the Social Democratic Federation's 1881 programme did include the objective of triennial parliaments, and both William Morris and Sidney Webb advocated annual parliaments in the 1880s. The Webbs, however, had dropped this objective by 1891.[20]

The one demand of the Chartists on which there was greater agreement (often including those who opposed universal male suffrage) was that of the secret ballot. Thomas Phillips had been (temporarily) a supporter of the secret ballot, and many liberal reformers supported this objective, including Benjamin Hall. The argument in favour was that it afforded a measure of protection to voters who might otherwise be vulnerable to intimidation or consequences visited upon them by a disappointed employer or landlord. Such sentiment built over the coming decades, reaching something of a crescendo after the 1868 General Election, and leading to the 1872 Ballot Act.[21] Those opposed to the secret ballot felt that it was necessary for men to display their decisions in public, and that in doing so, they performed a necessary and masculine demonstration of their independence.

Military Opposition

The Newport Rising was directly defeated by military force, specifically by thirty regular infantry of the 45th Regiment of Foot. At a fundamental level the soldiers opposed Chartism because that was their duty, and they appear to have fired their muskets without any appreciable hesitation. The Chartists were ultimately disappointed in their hope that some of the soldiers stationed locally might act on any sympathy they might have had with the cause of the Charter.[22] Sympathy with the Chartists' objectives was not implausible: Chartism was the mass movement of the working class, soldiers were working class, and even if one accepts that soldiering was an occupation less likely than many to generate class-based support (because of the itinerant nature of army life and its clear line of separation from civilian society), we can assume that a certain number of the soldiers in Newport in 1839 would have been receptive to the Six Points. But the position that they found themselves in on 4 November 1839 was not one in which they were being invited to debate the pros and cons of political reform. They were confronted by one of two choices: to obey, or disobey, the instructions of their officers. To have disobeyed at that moment and to have supported the Charter they would have had to desert, or to turn their weapons on their comrades, and neither course of action was likely.

Before November 1839 there is scant evidence of significant disaffection amongst the soldiery. There was one case of desertion by John Clarke, reported in the *Merlin* for 16 November, of one day's duration.[23] More than a dozen soldiers had deserted from the 29th Regiment, stationed in Newport in early 1839 (it is not clear whether or not this was politically motivated), but the 29th had since been replaced by the 45th. Many of the 45th were Irish, which may have constituted something of a barrier to them finding common cause with local Chartists, and the detachment had

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[20] Barrow, Logie, and Bullock, Ian, *Democratic Ideas and the British Labour movement, 1880–1914* (CUP, Cambridge, 1996) 12–13, 17, 31, 35–6.

[21] On which there is an extensive literature, including Jones, Ieuan Gwynedd, *Explorations and Explanations: Essays in the Social History of Victorian Wales* (Gomer Press, Llandysul, 1981) and Cragoe, Matthew, *Culture, Politics, and National Identity in Wales, 1832–1886* (O[xford] U[niversity] P[ress], Oxford, 2004).

[22] Thomas Phillips wrote to the Home Office on 12 March 1839 (T[he] N[ational] A[rchives] HO40/45) noting that the Chartists seemed to think that the soldiers would not oppose them. *MM*, 1 June 1839, reported that attempts were being made by the Chartists to induce the soldiers to desert.

[23] *MM*, 16 Nov. 1839.

been there but a month by the time the Rising took place, also restricting opportunities for political fraternisation.[24]

Instead of deserting, the choice the soldiers made was to follow orders and to fire upon those who were firing on them. Their loyalty to each other as a group triumphed over any less tangible loyalty they may have had to any idea of the interests of the working class.[25] This is hardly surprising – their lives were threatened, their response was to defend themselves against their attackers. This was well understood at the time. In the wake of the Rising ‘One of the People’ authored *Riots in South Wales: An Address to the Working Classes of Wales on the Late Occurrences at Newport*, arguing that the possibility of the soldiery joining the revolt was ridiculous:

> Because the soldier has the same feeling of class as you yourselves have. – This feeling of class, this attachment that is formed between ourselves and those with whom we are associated – our fellow workmen for example – is universal; it binds the operative to the operative – it binds the master or employer to *his* class – it makes men jealous of the rights of their own class and suspicious of being over-reached by other classes.[26]

In these circumstances the soldiers would stick together and were extremely unlikely to sympathise with any insurrectionary movement. Supplementing the soldiery were the municipal police, and the special constabulary, of whom there were about 60 in the Westgate at the time of the confrontation with the Chartists. It is not clear that they all remained to fight, Thomas Phillips having feared that ‘but few of [the Special] Constables would be found ready to face danger should the necessity for doing so arise.’[27]

The specials were ‘police auxiliaries and therefore an integral part of the apparatus of state tyranny’ according to Owen Ashton, historian of the Chartist ‘riots’ in Llanidloes, earlier in 1839.[28] If they were then they were also local residents, embedded in Newport society. They included men such as scavenger Moses Scard, Thomas Walker of the Parrot Inn, bookseller and printer Thomas B. Oliver and the *Monmouthshire Merlin* reporter John O’Dwyer.[29] We do not have detailed information on the special constabulary in Newport, but the historian of British crime and policing Chris A. Williams has observed that 95 per cent of special constables in Sheffield were men of status whose names were recorded in local trade directories.[30] Another study of specials in Stockton on Tees, York

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[24] Jones, David J. V., *The Last Rising: The Newport Insurrection of 1839*, (OUP, Oxford, 1985) 83. Chase, *Chartism*, 104, notes that ‘a comfortable Chartist assumption’ about soldiers having more in common with Chartists than not, ‘was exploded’. On ethnic issues see Williams, Chris, ‘ “Decorous and creditable”? The Irish in Newport’, in O’Leary, Paul (ed.), *Irish Migrants in Modern Wales* (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2003).

[25] Loyalty to the primary group is a well-established element in discussions of ‘combat motivation theory’. For a worked example involving evidence from the First World War but which also reviews a wider literature see Williams, Chris, ‘Taffs in the Trenches: Welsh National Identity and Military Service, 1914–1918’, in Cragoe, Matthew, and Williams, Chris (eds), *Wales at War: Society, Politics and Religion in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (UWP, Cardiff, 2007).

[26] Published by the Cambrian Office, Swansea, 1840. The quotation is from page 9. The whole argument runs over four pages.

[27] Phillips, letter to Lord John Russell, TNA TS11/502, 22 Apr. 1839.

[28] Ashton, Owen, ‘Chartism in Llanidloes: the “riot” of 1839 revisited’, *Llafur: Journal of Welsh People’s History*, 10 (2010) 76–86: 83.

[29] Moses Scard was one to flee the Westgate once the firing started according to Newport Reference Library, Chartist Trials Records, Vol. VI, evidence against James Aust.

[30] Williams, ‘Society, politics, order and disorder’ (University of Sheffield PhD thesis, 1998), cited in Swift, Roger, ‘Policing Chartism, 1839–1848: The Role of the “Specials” Reconsidered’, *English Historical Review*, 122 (2007) 669–99: 672.

and Middlewich in Cheshire has found that most were from the middling classes, from the ranks of the respectable and the propertied.[31] In Llanidloes we know that they were frequently farmers and men of property.

That covers those who opposed the Chartists with physical force in the form of muskets, swords and truncheons.

Civilian Opposition

Not armed with muskets, swords or truncheons, but no less vital in the defeat of the Newport Rising, were those controlling the coercive powers of the state locally. These included the solicitor and industrialist Thomas Phillips (the Mayor of Newport), the industrialist and landowner Capel Hanbury Leigh (the Lord Lieutenant), the industrialist, banker, owner of Llantarnam Abbey and Liberal MP for Monmouth Boroughs Reginald J. Blewitt (the Deputy Lieutenant), the landowners Colthurst Bateman of Bartholey House (the High Sheriff), Lord Granville Somerset and William Addams Williams of Llangibby Castle (the County MPs), Sir Digby Mackworth of the Glen Usk estate (Chairman of the Poor Law Board of Guardians) and many other magistrates, town councillors, guardians and other public representatives. These men were the personification of the local state, directly responsible for handling the situation on the ground, liaising with the Home Office in London on a regular basis. To a degree they received instructions and guidance from the Home Office but they had a good deal of scope for their own initiative or action.[32]

These office holders had a clear sense of duty, and their responsibility, irrespective of their political sympathies (a number were Whig Reformers) was to maintain law and order, even at some risk to themselves. The Chartists had made a point of singling out a number of prominent individuals for vitriolic and personal abuse for some considerable time. Epithets hurled in print (often in the columns of the Chartist newspaper the *Western Vindicator*), in private correspondence and at public meetings against those deemed enemies of the Charter included them being termed 'contemptible foes', 'scoundrels', 'nincompoops', 'notorious liars', 'old maiden-men', disgraceful 'hacks', 'boozers', 'kangaroos' and 'chimpanzees'.[33] They could be in little doubt that their own lives would be in jeopardy were the Chartists to take control of Newport and its hinterland.

In addition to any political objections they may have had to Chartism, along the lines referred to earlier, these office holders' opposition was determined by the threatening form (as they viewed it) taken by the Chartist movement for much of 1839, which had culminated in the clearly unlawful attack on Newport. In the circumstances it was their responsibility to endeavour to uphold the law, whatever the consequences. As members of the aristocracy, gentry, and of the industrial leadership of the locality, they would also have had a keen sense of the threat the Chartist movement posed to the existing social hierarchy. They would have been supported by many from similar social backgrounds, including the former Newport Town Clerk, the solicitor and coalowner Thomas Prothero, the solicitor and clerk to Newport Magistrates' Court Thomas Jones Phillips, the agent of the Tredegar estate Frederick Justice, ironmasters such as Samuel Homfray, Richard Blakemore, Crawshay Bailey, Richard Fothergill, and Thomas Brown, coalowners including Thomas Powell, and other businessmen including James Brown and J. J. Cordes of the Dos works.

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31 Swift, 'Policing Chartism', 681–2.

32 The relevant sources are the TNA Home Office and Treasury Solicitor's Papers which include a good deal of correspondence back and forth between central government and the locality.

33 *Western Vindicator*, 27 Apr., 15, 29 June, 17 Aug. 1839; TNA TS11/499: evidence of Roebuck regarding Chartist meeting of 25 Apr. 1839; TNA TS11/502: anonymous letter sent to Thomas Phillips, received June 1839; *MM*, 20 Apr. 1839.

Of course, opposition to Chartism did not begin and end on 3 and 4 November 1839, and it coalesced in various ways in the months leading up to the Rising. One manifestation was ‘defensive arming’, evident from April 1839 in the formation of the West Monmouthshire Association for the Protection of Life and Property: the so-called ‘Christchurch Yeomanry’ who Ness Edwards called the ‘White Guards of their day’.[34] Leading lights in this organisation included Sir Charles Salusbury, the aforementioned Thomas Prothero and Thomas Jones Phillips, William Brewer, Lewis Edwards, William Phillips of Whitson House, and the Anglican clergymen Richard A. Roberts and A. A. Isaacson.

April 1839 also witnessed 200 inhabitants of Newport sign a requisition to the town magistrates demanding that Chartist meetings be declared illegal.[35] This duly happened and was directly responsible for the subsequent arrest and imprisonment of Henry Vincent and his fellow Chartists William Edwards, John Dickenson and W. A. Townsend.

Other evidence exists which helps identify those opposed to Chartism, specifically in the public reaction to the role played by Mayor Thomas Phillips in defeating the Rising. Initially 192 Newport citizens signed a requisition that he remain as Mayor for a further annual term.[36] Once Phillips had indicated that he would not continue then 86 citizens (including thirty new names) signed a statement of thanks for his services.[37] A fund was then started to honour Phillips, which raised £862 10s. To this there were no fewer than 463 contributions, with names (not all of which were from the locality) published in the *Monmouthshire Merlin*.[38] Finally, when Phillips was honoured in September 1840 with a meeting, dinner and presentation of silver plate, approximately one thousand people were in attendance in some form or other.[39]

It is possible to delve more deeply into the identities of those who aligned themselves with opposition to the Charter. As noted, 222 individuals signed either the November requisition or subsequent statement of thanks, or both. A further 338 new names subscribed to the fund for Thomas Phillips, leaving a total of 560 individuals who were prepared to declare publicly their adherence to law and order. Relatively few of the entries in the newspaper lists carried any evidence of the social position of these 560, but it has been possible to identify the occupations of 311 (56 per cent), through other nominal records including trades directories and census enumerators’ books. Such methods are inevitably tentative rather than watertight, and it is easier to identify individuals with non-standard surnames than those named ‘Davies’, ‘Evans’, ‘Jones’, or ‘Williams’. In addition, it should be noted that expressing approval of Mayor Phillips, especially after the Rising, does not of itself prove one’s anti-Chartist credentials, although it certainly suggests them. Equally, these lists are skewed against identifying those from the lowest ranks of the social pyramid, less likely as they were to be invited to put their name to a requisition or letter, and less able given their income to contribute to any fund. Notwithstanding such caveats this hitherto unexamined evidence facilitates some insight into the social composition of those who are most likely to have been ranged against the Charter.

For the purposes of analysis, the occupations of those identified have been clustered first under certain common headings, and then categorised according to the social classificatory scheme

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34 Edwards, Ness, *John Frost and the Chartist Movement* (Western Valleys Labour Classes, Abertillery, 1924) 41.
35 *MM*, 27 Apr. 1839.
36 *MM*, 9 Nov. 1839.
37 *MM*, 23 Nov. 1839.
38 *MM*, 16 Nov., 14, 21, 28 Dec. 1839, 4, 11, 25 Jan., 8, 15, 29 Feb., 7 March 1840.
39 *MM*, 26 Sept. 1840.

developed by Alan Armstrong.[40] To give some examples: gathered under the heading 'tailor and draper' have been those (fourteen in total) identified as 'draper', 'linen draper', 'tailor', 'tailor and draper', and 'woollen draper'. Both 'draper' and 'tailor' appear in Armstrong's classification as Class III occupations. Gathered under the heading 'agent' have been thirteen individuals ranged across the following titles: 'agent', 'canal agent', 'commission agent', 'iron agent', 'land agent', 'life insurance agent', 'mine agent' and 'mineral agent'. In Armstrong's classification the only 'agents' listed are for coal and land, but they both appear in Class II, and hence that is where the thirteen variously titled here have been placed. Inevitably there is some measure of approximation in such categorisations, and one might well quibble with some of the classifications ('brewer', for instance, strikes one as oddly out of place in Class IV). Nonetheless, Table 1 sets out the total numbers appearing in each of the five 'Classes' used by Armstrong, and some of the most commonly appearing occupations in each Class.

Table 1: Social Class Composition of Thomas Phillips's 'Supporters', 1839–40

Social Class	Number and % Total	Selected Occupations
I	119 (38%)	Minister of Religion (25), Solicitor (13), Landowner (12), Ironmaster (11), Coalowner (10), Holder of Public Office (9), Surgeon (8)
II	47 (15%)	Agent (13), Coal Merchant (7)
III	126 (41%)	Tailor and Draper (14), Grocer (13), Publican (11), Clerk (9), Merchant and Victualler (7)
IV	10 (3%)	Brewer (5)
V	9 (3%)	Labourer (7)
Total	311 (100%)	

Reviewing individual names in these lists is also revealing. Of those who appeared in all three lists there were many who formed part of the social and political elite of the town and its surroundings: the Anglican minister the Reverend A. A. Isaacson, editor of the *Monmouthshire Merlin* Edward Dowling, Frederick Justice and H. J. Davis of the Tredegar Estate, the coalowners Thomas Powell and Thomas Prothero, the agent J. J. Nicholas, the solicitors James Birch, F. J. Hall and Thomas Jones Phillips, the coal merchants Joseph Latch and Martin Morrison, corn merchant James Lobbett, ironfounder William Edwards, shipowner Richard Burton and the proprietor of (naturally) the Westgate Hotel, S. T. Hallen. But there were others, no less diligent in their support for Phillips, of

[40] Armstrong, W. A., 'The use of information about occupation', in Wrigley, E. A., (ed.), *Nineteenth Century Society: Essays in the use of quantitative methods for the study of social data* (CUP, Cambridge, 1972). See also Armstrong, Alan, *Stability and Change in an English County Town: A social study of York, 1801–51* (CUP, Cambridge, 1974). There is extensive discussion as to the relative merits of any classificatory scheme. See, for example, Higgs, Edward, *Making Sense of the Census Revisited: Census Records for England and Wales, 1801–1901 – A Handbook for Historical Researchers* (Institute of Historical Research / The National Archives, London, 2005); Drake, Michael, and Finnegan, Ruth (eds), *Sources and Methods for Family and Community Historians: A Handbook* (CUP and Open University Press, Cambridge, 1994); and Mills, Dennis, and Schürer, Kevin (eds), *Local Communities in the Victorian Census Enumerators' Books* (Leopard's Head Press, Oxford, 1996).

more modest status: ironmonger Benjamin Jefferis, publican John Clements, grocers John Morgan, George Baker and John Corner, carpenter Morgan Evans, maltster William Cope, saddler Edward Daniel, mason James Gough, post office messenger Edward Harris.

How does such a distribution of the opponents of Chartism match the overall pattern of society? The most consistent analyses of social class distribution for the mid nineteenth century have been conducted using the 1851 population census, and of course there is considerable variation from locality to locality according to the particular socio-economic character of the regional economy. That said, for various towns such as York, Wakefield, Nottingham and Sleaford, the percentage of the population in Class I is no higher than 8 (the range is 3–8 per cent), with varying but always higher percentages located in Class II (12–21 per cent) and Class III (35–62 per cent). Classes IV and V are smaller (13–27 per cent for IV, 9–14 per cent for V).[41]

Compared with these contextual figures one can see that the 'anti-Chartists' located in the 1839 and 1840 lists were heavily over-represented in Class I, more or less equally represented in Classes II and III, and under-represented in Classes IV and V. So the leaders of society opposed Chartism, much as one would expect, but they were bolstered by ample support from the 'middling sort': the 'artisanate', the lower middle class and even the ranks of the labour aristocracy. For in Class III we find bakers, boot and shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, brickmakers, coopers, masons, painters, saddlers, tallow chandlers, seafarers and tanners. The industrial working class and the poor are much less in evidence. As noted, by and large working men would not have been able to afford to make contributions, would not have signed requisitions, but we can find some coming forward from relatively lowly trades including those of 'cabinet maker', 'pilot' and even 'labourer'.

The Chartists saw themselves as ranged against the upper ranks of society – the aristocracy, gentry and squirearchy, the urban, industrial and commercial elites – and the evidence from Newport and Monmouthshire reinforces that perspective. The bulk of the Chartists themselves were working class, and there is relatively little evidence of active opposition to Chartism from that class, although the extent of passive opposition is difficult to judge. The critical battle for loyalties took place just above the ranks of the industrial proletariat, amongst those who enjoyed a measure of financial and social independence. Amongst the artisanate were to be found many supporters of the Charter, and it was estimated by the *Western Vindicator* in August 1839 that between a fifth and a quarter of Newport Chartists had the parliamentary franchise, suggesting that they were men of some means.[42] At the same time the evidence of the 'Phillips lists' examined here suggests there were many drawn from very similar social and occupational categories who opposed Chartism.

Clerical Opposition

The names of some ministers of religion – the Reverends Roberts and Isaacson – have already been spotted amongst the ranks of those to the fore in public opposition to the Chartist movement, and overwhelmingly such a stance was shared by other ministers of religion. The Reverend James Coles of Michaelston-y-Fedw presided over many of the examinations of Chartist prisoners.[43] Other ministers preached sermons against Chartism, many of which then found their way into the extensive pamphlet literature in both the English and the Welsh languages. Examples include Thomas Thomas of the English Chapel, Trosnant, Pontypool; J. R. Taylor, curate of St Woolos, Newport; Thomas

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41 Mills, D. R., and Schürer, Kevin, 'Employment and occupations', in Mills and Schürer, *Local Communities in the Victorian Census Enumerators' Books*, 155.

42 *Western Vindicator*, 17 August 1839.

43 Jones, *Last Rising*, 26.

Morris, of Tabernacl, Pontypool; the Reverend T. Williams of Merthyr Tydfil; and Evan Jenkins of Dowlais.[44]

The latter began his sermon by affirming that 'The doctrines taught and urged by the Chartist leaders, are as diametrically opposed to the doctrines revealed in the eternal word of God, as the North is to the South.' Jenkins denied that the Bible taught equality, showing instead how inequality existed in nature, and in every field of human life and government, and argued that it had divine sanction. He argued that the Chartist doctrine that poverty was the result of 'unjust human laws, and of the oppression of unfeeling, selfish, hard-hearted, and grinding rich men' was disproved by the Bible which says that 'The poor shall never cease out of the land.' Jenkins instructed his audience to ask themselves 'who is right and who is wrong? … the all-wise God or the Chartist leaders'?

For Jenkins the points of the Charter were easily disposed of: annual parliaments would mean 'annual squabbles', universal suffrage 'universal confusion' with father divided against son and mother against daughter. Vote by ballot would be 'nothing but a law for rogues and knaves, nothing but a cloak for dishonesty, insincerity, hypocrisy and lies!' To pay MPs would only make inefficient MPs more idle and would turn the Parliament into a group of adventurers whose whole interest would be 'How to advance their own wages'. Jenkins concluded by advising the people to turn from the Chartist leaders, to cease attending Chartist and political meetings, have nothing to do with secret societies and oaths, and instead 'embrace religion'.

Official assemblies of Wesleyans, Calvinistic Methodists and Baptists tended to pronounce against Chartism, threatening to expel members who were Chartists. There were denunciations of the Chartists by Anglicans and Wesleyans at Blackwood and Varteg, while the Baptist Association meeting at Risca sent a loyal address to the Queen.[45] The Reverend Timothy Thomas, Baptist Minister of Bethesda, Bassaleg, preached a sermon on the Sunday after the Rising: 'The reverend gentleman, at the same time congratulated himself and his congregation on the fact, that not one of the numerous members belonging to his chapel, had joined the lawless banditti.'[46]

An interesting example of religious opposition to Chartism from before the Rising is provided by the sermon given 'to the working classes' at St Paul's church in Newport on 21 April 1839 by the Reverend James Francis.[47] Leading radicals were invited, and Henry Vincent and several hundred Chartists attended the service. Francis began by admitting the right of the people to pursue democratic politics, but deprecating the manner in which it was done. Established powers were ordained of God, and in seeking to change this by force the Chartists were dividing society in a most dangerous way. Even if the Charter were granted tomorrow, it would not signal any moral or religious progress; seek first, said Francis, the kingdom of God:

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44 Thomas, Thomas*, The Civil Duties of Christians. A Sermon, Occasioned by the Late Outrages at Newport, Monmouthshire* (George Wightman, London, 1839?); Taylor, J. R., *A Sermon, on the Late Chartist Insurrection* (Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Co, London and Morgan Evans, Newport, 1839); *Ymddiddan rhwng Mr Bowen, Deiliad Ffyddlon i'r Frenhines a William Thomas, Siartist, Ar Ol y Terfysg yn y Casnewydd* (William Rees, Llanymyddyfri, 1839); Jenkins, Evan, *Chartism Unmasked* (Merthyr, 1840). See also England, Joe, ' "Engaged in a righteous cause": Chartism in Merthyr Tydfil', *Llafur: Journal of Welsh People's History*, 10 (2010) 58–75: 64; Chase, Malcolm, 'Rethinking Welsh Chartism', *Llafur: Journal of Welsh People's History*, 10 (2010) 39–57: 39, 45; Faulkener, H. U., *Chartism and the Churches* (Columbia University, New York, 1916) 60–3; and Jones, *Last Rising*, 26, 199, 223.

45 Jones, *Last Rising*, 29, 76.

46 *MM*, 7 Dec. 1839.

47 Francis, James, *A Sermon To The Working Classes, preached in Saint Paul's Church, Newport (21st April 1839)* (Henry Webber, Newport, 1839).

> I readily admit your right to seek to secure any civil advantages or immunities you may think proper. My aim is to show you the real value of all matters of this nature, with a view to induce you to pursue them as rational men, and especially as Christians, that you may be enabled so to pass through things temporal, that finally you lose not the things eternal. What you are seeking may not be sinful, but it may become highly sinful from the *manner* in which it is sought.[48]

Francis continued by bemoaning the fact that:

> … you are disregarding God in your eagerness to secure those rights. … There are families who were constant in their attendance here, and who were apparently exemplary in their observance of the sabbath, who are now very seldom, some of them never, seen within these walls, and whose sabbaths there is too much reason to fear, are now spent in reading, or hearing read, Sunday, or some other profane and inflammatory newspapers.[49]

Francis went on to condemn the ‘hopeless and absurd’ suggestion of physical force, which he typified as ‘a determination to imbrue their hands in the blood of their fellow-citizens.’

> Will the passing of the Charter make men sober? Will it make them universally honest? Will it put an end to family broils? Will it restrain the sinful lusts and passions of our race? Will it ensure us fruitful seasons? Will it give us perpetual health? You know it will not. Yet these are the sources of the far greater part of the miseries with which mankind are afflicted. I am far from undervaluing the blessings which result from wise laws; but I know it to be the extreme of folly to expect from any laws or institutions however excellent, the results which you expect. Your happiness is much more in your own power, than in the power of the most benevolent legislature that could possibly be formed. No alterations in the constitution of the country can ever bring about the beneficial results which you are taught to anticipate from the passing of the Charter.[50]

Not all ministers made their loyalties so clear: some Congregationalists and Primitive Methodists were more inclined to radicalism as were the Unitarians. Independent Ministers of Newport William Beynon and Benjamin Byron, Baptist Ministers William Thomas and William Miles were all sympathetic to John Frost and his comrades.[51] But they were exceptional and, by and large, the churches stood defiant against the promise and the challenge of the Chartist movement.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that the Chartists of Newport and Monmouthshire in 1839 found themselves confronted by a remarkably broad coalition of interests. Both pro- and anti-reform elements within the middle and upper classes were opposed to Chartism. So were Whigs and Tories. So were many Nonconformist ministers and all Anglicans. Chartism united in opposition people who previously

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48 Ibid., 16.

49 Ibid., 17. The purchase and reading of newspapers on a Sunday, whether they were political or not, was clearly frowned upon. For the broader context see Conboy, Martin, ‘Residual Radicalism as a Popular Commercial Strategy: Beginnings and Endings’, in Brake, Laurel, Kaul, Chandrika, and Turner, Mark W. (eds), *The News of the World and the British Press, 1843–2011: Journalism for the Rich, Journalism for the Poor* (Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, 2016) particularly 117–119.

50 Francis, *Sermon*, 23.

51 TNA HO52/42, letter from Edward Thomas to Lord John Russell, 7 March 1839; Letter from Beynon to Lord John Russell, 22 Jan. (?) 1839. Jones, *Last Rising*, 29; Jones, Keith B., ‘The religious climate of the Chartist insurrection at Newport, Monmouthshire, 4th November 1839: expressions of evangelicalism’, *Journal of Welsh Religious History*, 5 (1997) 57–71: 59. *MM*, 17 Aug. 1839, re Byron.

had been divided, and whose unity, once the Chartist threat had receded, rapidly dissolved. Some of those opposed to Chartism would have been opposed to any kind of reform, but they were not all reactionaries, not all necessarily opposed to reform or to progressive politics per se. Some had campaigned to end slavery in the British Empire earlier in the 1830s; many were supporters of the campaign to repeal the Corn Laws.[52] The *Monmouthshire Merlin*, in a reflective editorial published more than two years after the Newport Rising, advised the Chartists to 'mingle a little practical sense with their red-hot zeal', and to combine with the 'middle classes' to achieve 'corn-law abolition': 'good wages and plenty of employment will not leave them in a worse condition to speculate on the "five points" than they now are.'[53]

Not a few of those who ended up opposing Chartism had been supporters of Frostite radicalism earlier in the 1830s. For example, Lewis Edwards the Newport draper who acted in concert with Thomas Phillips in declaring Chartist meetings illegal in the town in April 1839, and who had stood successfully against Frost when Frost attempted to be reelected Mayor in November 1837, became a vehement anti-Chartist. Yet Edwards's split from Frost was not of long standing, for as late as May 1837 he and Frost had been working in close concert on the Poor Law Board of Guardians. Rather than see him as a reactionary, Edwards is more accurately characterised as an 'uneasy' radical, concerned about the direction in which Chartism was heading.[54]

Lewis Edwards was not alone. In May 1839 the *Monmouthshire Merlin* carried a letter from 'A Newport Shopkeeper' attacking 'The Vincent Nuisance' and praising the reformers of the early 1830s, all of whom (the letter mentioned the watchmaker Thomas Thackwell of Monmouth, the ironmonger Thomas Hawkins, the coalowner and coal merchant Hopkin Perkins and the postmaster and victualler Stephen Iggulden) were now opposed to Chartism, having been alienated by its direction.[55] William Townsend, Town Councillor and father of the Chartist imprisoned in 1839, kept his distance from the movement.[56] Samuel Etheridge, one-time secretary of the Newport WMA, left the movement in July 1839 concerned at the violent direction it was taking.[57]

Part of the problem in Newport was that John Frost ploughed his own furrow. Newport municipal and radical politics were deeply embittered by conflicts (Frost at their centre) stretching back more than fifteen years, even before a Working Men's Association was formed in the town in the summer of 1838. Frost had alienated people whom he would have done well not to alienate. He was devoted to the principles of reform and then of the Charter and he was unbending in his attitudes and actions. Frost welcomed the arrival of Chartism locally as giving him greater leverage in his long-running battle against his local enemies. He was a dogmatic and somewhat bombastic man.[58] No attempt appears to have been made to find common ground with more moderate reformers in Newport and district.

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52 Both Benjamin Hall and Thomas Prothero had campaigned for the abolition of slavery in 1832 and 1833. See *MM*, 22 Dec. 1832, 16, 23 Feb. 1833. On the Corn Laws see the meeting reported in *MM*, 16 Feb. 1839, chaired by Thomas Phillips.

53 *MM*, 4 Dec. 1841. When commentators referred to the 'five' points of the Charter rather than the normal six they usually omitted the principle of equal electoral districts, perhaps as implicit in the adoption of universal male suffrage.

54 *MM*, 11 Nov. 1837. For 'uneasy' radicalism (albeit that was committed to the cause of the Charter) see Ashton, Owen R., and Pickering, Paul A., *The Friends of the People: 'Uneasy' Radicals in the Age of the Chartists* (Merlin Press, Woodbridge, 2002).

55 *MM*, 4 May 1839.

56 *MM*, 1 Jan. 1842, 18 June 1842.

57 See TNA, QSD32/0016, evidence of Samuel Etheridge.

58 Williams, David, *John Frost: A Study in Chartism* (UWP, Cardiff, 1939) 14.

The polarisation and embitterment of Newport politics meant that many who might have supported the Charter, at least in its moral force manifestation, found themselves disinclined to align themselves with the movement. Chartism locally had taken such an uncompromising character that many potential sympathisers felt they could no longer work with the Chartists.

Notwithstanding the failure of the Newport Rising, in the long run it is the Chartists whom history has vindicated. A bust of John Frost was unveiled in Newport Museum in 1918, coinciding with the passage of the Representation of the People Act which gave the vote to all adult males. Had he not been terminally ill, coalowner, newspaper magnate, former Member of Parliament and government minister D. A. Thomas would have unveiled it.[59] It is tempting to think that Thomas, always possessed of an acerbic wit and a sense of irony, would have enjoyed the parallel between his ceremonial duty to honour Frost, and the fact that his forebears would certainly have wanted him hung! The commemorative trajectory has only further endorsed Frost and his followers: it was his biography that was published on the centenary of the Rising and it was the Chartists who were celebrated outside the Westgate Hotel in the shape of Christopher Kelly’s sculptures to mark the 150th anniversary, amongst other examples of public art and place-naming.[60] Chartism’s opponents had their success in 1839. But although they won the ‘battle of the Westgate’, their destiny was to be marginalized in the historical record. The foregoing has aimed to facilitate a better understanding of the identities and the motivations of those who stood in the way of what we now understand as the onward march of democracy.

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59 *Daily Mirror*, 28 May 1918, *South Wales Argus*, 6 July 1918.

60 Williams, *John Frost*. See Williams, Chris, ‘History, heritage and commemoration: Newport 1839–1989’, *Llafur: Journal of Welsh Labour History*, 6 (1992) 5–16; Francis, Luke, and Thomas, Huw, ‘Regeneration and the use of history: the case of Newport’, *Llafur: Journal of Welsh People’s History*, 9 (2007) 141–54.

REVIEWS

Barry J. Lewis, Madeleine Gray, David Ceri Jones and D. Densil Morgan (eds), *A History of Christianity in Wales* (University of Wales Press, 2022), pp. 384. ISBN: 978-1-78683-821-6.

This is a bold, broad and brave book. It is bold because it provides a history of Christianity in Wales from the year 1 to 2021 in just over 300 pages. To do all that in one volume with four authors is bold. It is broad because there is a broad story to be told over a broad period with broad research involving a broad range of sources, primary and secondary, prose works and poetry and archaeological at first. It is brave because it is not denominational history, like so many others, but tells the whole story of Christianity in Wales. The authors are all honest about the questions to which they pose credible answers and about the unanswered questions that remain. After its eleven chapters, each with its own endnotes, there is a helpful section of 37 pages which provide 'A Guide to Further Reading'. The chapters are written with enough clarity to make them interesting to the general reader.

In the first four chapters of 97 pages, Barry J. Lewis takes us to 1070. At the start Britain was so remote as to be 'little more than a rumour' and Wales 'as a concept' did not exist. We know very little of the spread of Christianity into what we now call Wales, except that it seems to have happened by the fourth century through the Roman conquest. We do not know whether there was a wave of Christian persecution in Wales under Diocletian, but Gildas, in the sixth century, mentions two martyrs, Julius and Aaron at Caerleon. There is very little evidence of Christianity in Roman Wales, but there is some evidence for Christians living in urban south-east Wales: in Caerwent a pewter bowl was found on the base of which was scratched the Chi-Rho monogram. There is a photograph of the bowl on page 86 of Ray Howell's book, *Silures.* As Barry Lewis observes, it is a paradox that the Romano-British church continued to expand after the end of Roman rule and extended further into Ireland.

Barry Lewis deals with 'The Age of Conversion c.400–c600' in Chapter two. Christianity became the sole religion of the ruling elite. 'We know little of the religion of the peasantry' says Lewis. This will remain true throughout most of this book. The most influential people asserted themselves through inscriptions on stone to commemorate their dead. Alongside the stones of a secular elite were memorials of bishops, priests and brothers. Clerical marriage was common and remained so in Wales. After the end of Roman rule the culture and language of the Church was Latin.

Gildas and Patrick demonstrate the growth of the monastic ideal in the sixth century. Gildas's writing reveals that the church was by then established and well-endowed with property. Monasteries owned land which bound them to kings and family loyalties. 'By 600 'official' Wales was Christian' writes Lewis, but though the sixth century was the 'age of the saints', little is known for certain about David, Deiniol, Illtud, Cadog, Teilo, Padarn and others. Their *Lives* are too untrustworthy to be used as historical sources. Lewis has more faith in *The Life of St. Samson* who came from an aristocratic family in south Wales and was educated by Illtud. The years 600–800 were an age of consolidation. The Church had spread, though thinly, over the whole of Wales. Small church settlements produced more than six hundred place-names in Wales that started with the word 'llan' (enclosed land). This became the oldest British name for a church site.

By 800 Wales had a well-defined culture and political life. Christianity was the only accepted religion. There was a distinct Welsh church under the authority of Rome. The *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* by Bede (finished in 731) is the authority for the mission of Augustine from Rome to convert the Angles and Saxons. The early Welsh Church did not differ greatly from other European churches apart from minor differences which it shared with Ireland. That did not constitute

a Celtic church; nor was there a distinct Celtic spirituality. From the ninth to the eleventh centuries there was much more interaction between the Welsh and English churches. During those years Wales was squeezed between the Viking raids from the west and the emerging kingdom of England to the east. Under this pressure, powerful kings emerged in Wales to threaten the balance of power and leave Wales ill-prepared for the coming of the Normans.

Until the twelfth century the structure of the Welsh church is uncertain. Historians disagree about how many bishops there may have been in Wales before 1045. Disputes arose between St. Davids and Llandaff about primacy as the Norman dioceses in Wales were developing fixed boundaries. Abbots were at the head of large churches and scholars have assumed a monastic takeover in Wales as in Europe. Welsh 'clas' churches provided worship, pastoral care and schools, and Lewis thinks that historians have forgotten this and been too biased towards monasticism. Barry Lewis completes his fourth chapter with two sections on 'The cult of saints' and 'Intellectual life and spirituality', including early medieval poetry, one of his special interests.

Barry Lewis was surprised that the devout Bede could 'rejoice in the slaughter of hundreds of monks'. Madeleine Gray quotes a description of the conquering Normans in 1066 as 'combining the most ruthless butchery with the most conventional piety'. It is a recurring theme. The boundary claims of Urban, the first bishop of Llandaff, in 1045, were strengthened by the collection of charters assembled in the 'Book of Llandaff,' by the twelfth century. Mother churches and subordinate churches were structured into independent parishes. Parish churches were established in Chepstow, Abergavenny and Monmouth, but all three were monastic churches built by the Norman lord in close proximity to the castle, and the townspeople did not take over until 1536. Wales accepted the authority of Canterbury. The Welsh dioceses developed administrative hierarchies on the Norman model with cathedral chapters, archdeacons and rural deans.

Part of the process of conquest involved establishing Benedictine religious communities. Like the Benedictines, the Cistercians arrived in Wales with the Normans. They quickly became favourites whose austerity and physical hard work appealed to the native Welsh who worked on their grange farms. The Cistercians gave help to the Welsh rulers in their struggle to preserve independence during the thirteenth century and during the Owain Glyndwr rising in 1400. Madeleine Gray provides evidence for the spirituality of lay people during this period from court poetry reflecting the high values of society. Much lay devotion was centred on the lives of the saints and the poetry dedicated to them. The increase in devotional literature illustrates a rising standard of literacy. The public services of the Church were in Latin, but there were Welsh translations of some prayers and Bible readings.

The local economy was stronger in the period 1420–1530 which Madeleine Gray presents as 'Christianity in Late Medieval Wales'. There were initiatives in church-building projects through the local elite and the raising of funds by communities for rebuilding, redecoration and for stained glass windows. As evidence of late medieval devotional life in Wales, Madeleine Gray instances the foundation of a few perpetual chantries, such as the one in Newport, Mon.There was a continuing interest in pilgrimages to St. Davids, Rome, Santiago and the Holy Land. There was an increasing network of shrines in Wales. The crucifixion (or rood) in medieval churches was stationed on the rood screen that separated the chancel from the nave of the church. The concentration on the five wounds of Jesus was a feature of late medieval piety. The obsession with the physicality of death was seen in wall paintings which were common in churches.

Clerical standards of education were low with few graduates. The Welsh dioceses were the poorest in the province of Canterbury and most Welsh bishops were absentees, but the church was not as corrupt and unattractive as it seemed with hindsight after the Reformation. There was no

desire for religious change and little resistance to that change when it came. At the end of her very thorough and detailed study, Madeleine Gray says that the 'Welsh response to the Reformation remains one of the great puzzles of our history'.

'Wales was happy under the Tudors' was how A.L. Rowse put it. David Ceri Jones says that there was a 'deafening lack of complaint' from the Welsh when Henry VIII separated from the Roman Catholic church. Yet that did not make them enthusiastic Protestants, as Bishop William Barlow found in his diocese of St. Davids after 1536. The poverty of the Welsh monasteries by 1536 brought little resistance to their dissolution, which served to enhance the economic prestige of the Welsh gentry through the monastic lands and buildings they acquired, as well as a good reason to remain loyal to the king who enforced the Acts of Union with England. The monoglot Welsh-speaking population did not understand the English language of the Bible and Book of Common Prayer. William Morgan's translation of the Welsh Bible appeared in 1588 fifty years after the English Great Bible. William Salesbury's translations in 1541 of the passages used as Epistles and Gospels in the liturgical year, served as a stop-gap. In Mary's reign there were only three Protestant martyrs, and some others went into exile, notably Richard Davies, the Elizabethan bishop of St. Davids who worked with Salesbury to produce a translation of the Prayer Book into Welsh by 1567. David Ceri Jones completes his chapter on Reformation Wales with sections on those who did not conform to the Elizabethan religious settlement, the Roman Catholics and the Puritans. Monmouthshire was a known stronghold of recusancy. Puritanism emerged later in Wales. By 1603 the Elizabethan Church of England was firmly established in Wales as in England.

In Chapter 9 David Ceri Jones traces the progress of the reformed church in Wales from 1603 to 1760. He describes this long period as the progress from laboriously 'winning over the Welsh to a more committed loyalty to Protestantism' to the Welsh being 'drawn in large numbers to an energetic and popular form of evangelical Protestantism'. The latter, described as the 'Great Awakening' of the eighteenth-century Methodist revival, is indisputable, but were they really preaching 'Protestantism'? That being said, the next section on 'Puritanism and the birth of Nonconformity' deals very well with the Jacobean church and the benefit it derived from moderate Puritanism. Reformed theology was communicated to the people through the Welsh translation of the Book of Homilies in 1606, a revised translation of the Welsh Bible in 1620, and the revision of the Book of Common Prayer in 1621. In the reign of Charles 1, William Laud, bishop of St. Davids 1621–1626 and later archbishop of Canterbury, restored Catholic sacramental worship in the Church of England. Bishops in sympathy with these views were placed in the Welsh dioceses. This brought Welsh Puritans out of their shells. By 1660 there were more than twenty Puritan congregations in Wales. The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 accompanied by an Act of Uniformity (1662) enforcing conformity to the Established church, brought the resignations of 95 Welsh clergy and a further thirty-five were ejected from their livings. Many of them became Dissenters. The Clarendon Code greatly restricted their activities until the Act of Toleration in 1689 gave them the freedom to worship in their own registered meeting houses. Education and literacy were promoted in Wales at this time through the schools of the Welsh Trust and the work of the Anglican Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge with its charity schools and lending libraries. In the thirty years after 1731, Griffith Jones, rector of Llanddowror, taught half the population of Wales to read the bible through his peripatetic or circulating schools. The schools provided a great stimulus to the Methodist Revival.

If the sources for this book became much fuller after 800, by 1760 they simply multiplied. In Chapter 10, D. Densil Morgan sets about 'Building a Nonconformist Nation' in anticipation of the claim of Henry Richard in 1866 that Wales was 'a nation of Nonconformists'. It did not seem so in 1760. There were not many Dissenting churches at the outset of the evangelical revival, whose

leaders were loyal members of the Church of England and never thought that Methodism would be anything more than a renewal within the Established Church. Methodism and Dissent went their own separate ways, but by the last decade of the eighteenth century it was clear that Dissent itself was being renewed by the Methodist movement. The ministry of the Baptist preacher, Christmas Evans, demonstrated the 'extraordinary revivalistic expansion' among Methodists, Independents and Baptists. Meanwhile 'the Anglican Church had become widely accepted in Wales and seems to have been held in some affection' in spite of the failings of the Anglo-Bishops in Wales during this period. Between 1760 and 1800 there was a High Church revival in the dioceses of St. Davids and Bangor which respected the sincerity of the Methodists but condemned their indiscipline. By 1811 Thomas Charles of Bala and Thomas Jones of Denbigh had concluded that the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists were no longer a renewal movement within the Church of England but had become a separate church. Thomas Charles severed the connection by ordaining eight Calvinistic Methodist preachers at Bala on 19 June 1811.

The Established Church was damaged by the secession. In spite of pastoral and evangelistic initiatives in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, it was not until mid-century that the dioceses were restructured under bishops Connop Thirlwall (St. Davids), Thomas Vowler Short (St. Asaph) and Alfred Ollivant (Llandaff). The Oxford Movement started to register in some parishes after 1840, but a vibrant popular Dissent was supreme in Wales by 1851. The evangelical revival created the exuberance of Nonconformist foreign missions and the growth of the Sunday school movement, the distribution of bibles through Thomas Charles and the production of Welsh religious literature. The political conscience of Nonconformist Wales was awakened by the Nonconformist disabilities in the first half of the nineteenth century and hugely sustained by the 'Treason of the Blue Books', the *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* in 1847. The religious census of 1851 proved the numerical superiority of Dissent over the Established Church in Wales.

In his final sections of this stimulating chapter, Densil Morgan deals with 'the theology of Dissent' which was Calvinism in its different guises, the most gifted theologian being Lewis Edwards. 'Pulpit, hymnody, the 1859 Revival and beyond' describes the features that were 'key to the expansion of Welsh Nonconformity' In the last section on 'Welsh religion by 1890, Densil Morgan finds the Welsh Church 'in good heart'. The Catholic Church 'in a buoyant mood' and Protestant Nonconformity 'still in the ascendant'.

The final chapter of this book, written by Densil Morgan and David Ceri-Jones, is entitled 'Adapting to a Secular Wales, 1890–2020'. The Presbyterian Church of Wales, convened in 1864, the Baptist Union of Wales meeting in 1866 and the Union of Welsh Independents in 1872 with the 'nation of Nonconformists' being educated at University colleges outside the control of the Established Church, looked well for the future. But the young people of Wales were weary of *odium theologicum.* Theologically the emphasis on the atonement through the Crucifixion was changing to the 'age of incarnation'. The religious revival of 1904–5 remains a remarkable event, difficult to evaluate. The campaign to disestablish and disendow the Established Church in Wales had dragged on for decades. It gave rise to hostility which harmed the spiritual life of Wales. It was achieved under David Lloyd George in 1914 but postponed until 1920, because of the First World War, which is the subject of the next section. D. Densil Morgan provided an excellent chapter on this in his book, *The Span of the Cross.* The war provided 'a convenient divide between a religious and a post-religious phase in modern Welsh history'. After the war 'specifically religious convictions were weakening daily'. Basic theological truths were being replaced by a humanitarian creed in which traditional Christianity was sacrificed to a spiritualised materialist ideology. Among evangelicals

there was a strong influence of fundamentalism and Pentecostalism, both coming from the United States. Liberal theology established itself as a norm among the Congregationalists. The writings of Karl Barth provided a counter to modernism. By the 1930s a more balanced biblical orthodox faith was expressed from Nonconformist pulpits, while Martyn Lloyd-Jones proclaimed conservative evangelicalism. During the 1950s attendances increased in Anglican churches with 182,864 Easter communicants in 1960. Roman Catholicism was also reporting progress in Wales by this time, but Nonconformist denominations were in decline. Attempts at renewal 'amounted to little in the end'. By the late 1970s Welsh Nonconformity 'was in a parlous state', and the same pattern, though less steep, was observed across all the historic Christian churches in Wales.

Against the background of the industrial and social changes in Wales in the twenty years after 1980, the Christian denominations in Wales continued to decline. This decline and marginalisation was softened by an increase in some Roman Catholic congregations while some churches in the evangelical community also experienced sustained growth. Some Anglican churches were also boosted during this time. 'The future of Christian witness in Wales remains exceedingly challenging on many levels' is the conclusion of this chapter, 'but Christians down the ages have taken solace from Christ's promise'. This last chapter must have been the most difficult for two Christians to write. Perhaps the Christian churches in the past were too obsessed with numbers of attendants and that is a continuing concern. I commend to all worried Christians the final paragraph of Bishop Rowan Williams's 'Foreword' to this book.

Arthur Edwards

Madeleine Gray, Tony Hopkins and Alun Withey (eds), *The Commonplace Book of John Gwin of Llangwm* (c.1615-c,1680) (South Wales Record Society, 2022)

The publishers and editors of this latest publication from South Wales Record Society must be congratulated for their attractively produced edition of John Gwin's Commonplace Book. The editors have worked together in a thorough and orderly way to produce an introduction in fifty-five pages, which deals with the historical background, the provenance of the book, the nature and purpose of a Commonplace Book, John Gwin's life and status, his interests in fruit cultivation and medicine, his religious beliefs and Church affairs. Though part of it was written during the civil war, the Commonplace Book contains only one reference to the war: a reminder by John Gwin that he was Chief Constable of Trellech and Raglan when Raglan Castle surrendered to Sir Thomas Fairfax after its siege in 1646.

The editors admit that John Gwin's extensive interests have taken them all out of their intellectual comfort zones. That goes also for this reviewer, who has admired their intensive research to make John Gwin's book accessible to the general reader. If they did not know all the answers to the political and religious, medical and horticultural questions posed by this Commonplace Book, they knew people who did. They have acknowledged this while still providing ten pages of Endnotes to their introduction and five pages of Endnotes to their transcript of the Commonplace Book itself, as well as an invaluable glossary of terms used in the book, biographical notes of people encountered in the text (four pages), a comprehensive bibliography (eight pages) and an efficient index.

John Gwin III is identified as the main author of the small bound book with limp vellum covers, reinforced later with boards. The Commonplace book came into the possession of Gwent Archives at Ebbw Vale from the County Record Office via Newport Library, where the Borough Librarian,

John Warner, had received what he called a 'Memorandum Book' from Mrs. Annie Watkins, widow of Uriah Gwynne Watkins, a descendant of John Gwin, who called it 'the old book'. A cataloguer in Newport Library had called it the Commonplace Book and our editors adequately justify that title on page 9 of the introduction. The book had more than one author since it was written in more than one hand over a period of more than a hundred years. John Gwin III may have received the book from his father, John Gwin II, on the latter's death in 1645. As his only male heir, John Gwin III seems by then to have become wealthy and to own much land in his home parish of Llangwm Uchaf and possibly elsewhere. This would seem to settle the editors' problem about his social status as he rose from yeoman farmer (Introduction page 32) to minor gentleman farmer (page 39). His son, John Gwin 1V, appears truly to have arrived when he was given the title of 'Esquire' at his marriage in 1675. He served as sheriff in that year and he became a J.P. through the Marquess of Worcester, whom successive Gwins had served since their arrival in Monmouthshire from north Wales (where they were known as Wynn) in the sixteenth century. Pedigree was more important than wealth in Wales at that time.

It is impossible in one review to do justice to the wealth of this book in its record of John Gwin III's diverse interests, recorded to remind him of local and family history (often copied from manuscripts and notes), rents due and paid on his own lands, estate rentals, leases and surveys for himself as well as for the Marquess of Worcester. The medical content of Gwin's book is described as 'perhaps one of the most intriguing elements' (page 28). He made regular purchases in Bristol for his recipes and solutions. Also important to the book are his tips on good husbandry, planting, grafting and pruning a wide range of fruit trees. If I had read his book before I planted the apple tree in my garden, I should have done it at full moon and made it more fruitful.

Gwin was insatiably curious. He quarried everywhere, even in the unpublished poems of William Wroth, the Puritan rector of Llanvaches, and founder there of the first Independent congregation in Wales. John Gwin's wife, Joan, was a cousin to Wroth's colleague, Walter Cradock, and John was close to his Cradock relations. He also held Bible meetings at his home attended by Baptist preachers like William Thomas, a free-communion Baptist and a friend of Walter Cradock.

The editors wisely say (page 47) that 'we cannot put the people of the seventeenth century into neat little boxes'. To which I would add, nor can we estimate the pervasive influence of itinerant Puritan preachers. Whatever their influence over John Gwin III, he was still the obvious social choice for churchwarden of Llangwm Uchaf. His energy and devotion to his community enabled him to sort out the problems he encountered over the allocation of the church pews and the repairs to the churchyard wall. It is a pity that we do not know more about his activities as churchwarden. Even so, the editors fully justify their conclusion that 'John Gwin's legacy is a rich and important one'.

Arthur Edwards

Breeze, David and Guest, Peter *Frontiers of the Roman Empire/ Ffiniau'r Merodraeth Rufeinig. The Roman Frontiers in Wales/Ffiniau Rhufeinig Cymru* 96pp, 138 illustrations, colour and black and white. Archaeopress and Cadw 2022. Paperback £14.99. ISBN. 978-1-80327-291-7 (print); 978-1-80327-292-4 (e book).

The frontiers of the Roman Empire, wrote Edward Gibbon, were 'guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valour'. They stretched for some 7,500 kms, through twenty countries. Between 1987 and 2021 elements of these in a number of European states (though not in Wales) were inscribed as

parts of a new World Heritage Designation 'The Frontiers of the Roman Empire'. This generously illustrated and wide ranging bilingual book is one of a series of thirteen,written by local scholars under the general editorship of David Breeze, covering all sectors of the frontiers, including its maritime section (details of the full series can be found on https:www.archaeopress.com/Archaeopress/Collections/Frontiers-of-the-Roman-Empire).

The first part describes the history of these frontiers and of their research and the problems and techniques of their study and preservation. Well-chosen illustrations show surviving elements of the Roman frontier systems in Europe and beyond. Their relationship to the world outside the frontiers of the Empire is also considered. The illustrations include some Chinese silk from Palmyra in Syria and a coin of an Indian king found in Egypt.

The second half of the book is perhaps of more direct interest to members of the Association. It deals with the Roman frontiers in Wales, with a series of excellent maps illustrating its historical phases. In the final period, in the early fourth century, defence had shifted to fortified towns in the south like Kenchester and Caerwent, whilst the two surviving forts in mid and north Wales, Caersws and Caernarfon, were both in major metal mining areas. There is an up to date account of Roman Caerleon, incorporating the results of geophysical survey and of the recent excavations by one of the authors. The illustrations include a recent stamp issue showing Caerleon amphitheatre. The final section 'The Legacy of Rome' carries the story forward into the early medieval period, when local rulers erected memorial stones inscribed in Latin (of a sort) and claimed descent from Roman usurpers like Magnus Maximus. This attractive and well produced book can be warmly recommended, and Welsh learners might find the bilingual text a helpful crib.

Jeremy Knight

Driver, Toby, *The Hillforts of Iron Age Wales* (Logaston Press 2023). ISBN 978-1-910839-67-6. XIV+322pp. Pb. £20.

This volume is a very welcome addition to the corpus of literature relating to Iron Age Wales. The author, an aerial archaeologist for the Royal Commission, Wales, wrote the successful book *The Hillforts of Cardigan Bay* and brings a depth of knowledge to the subject.

The Iron Age was pivotal in British history as native societies developed only to be shattered by the Roman invasion. The hillforts, of various sizes and no doubt various functions defined these societies to the extent that understanding one is essential to understanding the other. The author provides readers with a sound basis for approaching their study.

The author reviews recent investigations, examining our current differences in definition of sites and pointing to the British-wide *Hillfort Atlas Project* and the Cadw-funded *Defended Enclosures Survey Project* which have increased our understanding and added to the Historic Environment Record for Wales. There are now 764 hillforts and over 1,000 smaller sites listed on *Archwilio,* the online resource.

The text helps readers to visualise these sites and begin to understand them in the context of Iron Age and, in many cases, Bronze Age and Romano-British society. The explanations are easy to follow and helpful. Comparisons with North American native groups and Scottish Highland clans are instructive and useful.

Particularly helpful are the many excellent illustrations which support the text, many prepared by the author. Some of these invite a new perspective. A case in point is the decision to simply rotate

the map of Iron Age Wales on the eve of the Roman conquest to show Wales as central to an Atlantic and Irish Sea maritime region. The author's inclusion of a gazetteer of 'Welsh place-names and archaeology' is both sensible and helpful.

Such insights abound as the book takes its readers through chapters such as Iron Age Wales and the wider world which considers both Greek and Roman contacts as well as other trading activity inviting comparison with Cornish, and other sites. Consideration is given to 'people, land and territory' which encourages readers to consider ways in which these sites may have functioned.

A chapter on weapons and conflict invites the reader to consider a range of finds such as the Lesser Garth terret and more up-to-date discoveries such as the Pembrokeshire chariot burial. There is an interesting discussion of the carnyx, the 'war horn of the hillforts'. The author then moves on to a discussion of hillfort designs and the social demands of their construction. 'Shock and awe' and an impression of strength and impregnability were probably more important considerations than the actual strength of the hillfort.

An interesting chapter on houses and farms invites consideration of the lifestyles of these communities with reference to the relative comfort offered by modern roundhouse constructions with reference to sites such as Castell Henllys which can be visited today.

A separate chapter is given to the promontory forts which stresses the extent to which these imposing coastal sites represent a 'world apart'. Not surprisingly well-illustrated and well-chosen examples are used to stress the uniqueness of these often-imposing sites.

Readers will, no doubt, be inspired to go and have a look for themselves. So, helpfully, the final chapter, 'Visiting the hillforts of Wales: a top ten' is an invitation to do just that. Discussion and guidance to the recommended sites is excellent and readers of this journal will be pleased to find Sudbrook as one of the recommended site visits.

It is not often when writing a review such as this that the reviewer can simply conclude that Members should 'buy this book'. However, that is my recommendation. This volume will be a welcome addition to anyone's library shelves.

Ray Howell

Hurley, Heather, *Horse Drawn Tramways of the Wye Valley* (Logaston Press, Eardisley, Herefordshire, 2022), 164pp, numerous colour and black and white illustrations. ISBN 978-1-910839-60-7. Pb £12.99.

Anyone familiar with the countryside of north Monmouthshire, or the adjacent parts of Hereford and the Forest of Dean will know the many former horse drawn tramways of the district, which once formed a vital communications network for many rural industries. The creation of canals in the final years of the eighteenth century enabled bulk goods like iron and coal to be transported from ironworks and collieries to Newport and other ports. The Monmouthshire Canal Act was passed in 1792, the year which saw the first use of the word 'railway'; the Brecon and Abergavenny Canal Act the following year. This strategic network needed to be supplemented by tramways to convey the output to the canal heads and for the distribution of the products of rural industries to the surrounding countryside. At the end of the decade, William Coxe described a tramway at Blaenafon in detail as an interesting technical novelty.

Elsewhere, tramways were needed to convey goods from the Forest of Dean to towns like Monmouth and Hereford. The Monmouth tramroad opened in 1814 to convey coal, timber, building

stone and other goods to Monmouth, despite complaints that it was ‘injurious to the rights and privileges of the Forest of Dean Free Miners’. The Llanvihangel railway opened in the same year, followed by the Grosmont railway in 1819, linking Llanfihangel Crucorney to the Hereford-Abergavenny road. This attempt to bypass the difficulties of transport among the hills of the Three Castles and the Gwent-Hereford border received widespread support, though both closed in 1846.

Walkers who have explored the surviving parts of this tramway network have long wanted a book detailing their histories and acting as a guide to the surviving remains. Heather Hurley, well known for her previous books on the Herefordshire borders, has now filled that need, having previously written of the other factor in the equation, Herefordshire river traffic. Hill’s Tramroad on the Blorenge was built by Thomas Hill II to open a market for Blaenafon coal in Hereford via the Abergavenny and Hereford railroad. He failed partly due to the opposition of the Wye boatmen. The writer describes in clear detail not only the iron tramplate types and stone tramway sleepers beloved of industrial archaeologists, but also the wagons and the horses that drew them, along with the surviving buildings, limekilns and other remains. These horse-drawn tramways were superseded by local steam railways, sometimes using the same tracks. Sadly, this local network of steam trains is now as extinct as the earlier tramways themselves. Logaston Press maintain their high standard of book production, including a colourful multi-image cover – and at a very reasonable price.

Jeremy Knight

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARIAN ASSOCIATION SEPTEMBER 2022 TO SEPTEMBER 2023

Over the year we have held a number of lectures, walks and visits. This is a brief summary of our activities. This year has seen the return of more 'normal' activities after the disruption caused by the Covid pandemic, with members meeting in person on some occasions. The intention is to continue to offer a variety of formats for the coming year with a greater emphasis on meeting in person and being able to meet others of like mind and shared interests. In the colder part of the year a remote programme using technology will continue as this has proved popular with members and attracts a sizeable audience who are not able to join in person.

On 9th **November** 2022 we heard from Peter Bonvoisin of the Caerwent Research group. Over the summer the group had contributed greatly to excavations and community engagement at **Llanmelin Hillfort Outpost**, under the supervision of Cadw. During the excavation a large amount of Iron Age pottery was found within a ditch. This is possibly one of the largest finds of Iron Age ceramic material in south Wales to date, and potentially will change current thinking about the period. During the lecture, conducted by Zoom, Peter summarised the work and reported the findings so far. A report of the ceramic finds, funded by MAA is forthcoming, and will be available in the library and in *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* when it is published. This is a splendid example of a community project that has contributed to knowledge locally and across the region.

On 15th **December** we held our first ecumenical carol service. Thanks to The Rev Canon Dr Arthur Edwards we were able to join with the community of **Llanhennock**. We asked them to share the event with us when we heard they were without any clergy and unable to hold a carol service as would be their custom. It was lovely to see so many people on such a frosty winter night. Traditional and new carols were sung, and readings and poems were read by members of the congregation. A collection was taken up and this resulted in over £200 being donated to local food banks to provide extra treats over Christmas. After the carol service we moved to the village pub and enjoyed mulled wine and minced pies donated by the local church community. Thank you to Arthur Edwards for organising the evening, Terry Price of Pontypool for playing the organ and to Gerry Hawkins and Jill Gwynder-Lewis (Church Wardens) for organising and to Marg and her staff at the Wheatsheaf for the warm welcome we received there. It was a truly lovely start to the festive season.

The new year began with another Zoom lecture. This time it was the turn of Simon Maddison to tell us about the work being carried out by Chepstow Archaeological Society at **Grove House in Piercefield Park, Chepstow**. Simon has sent regular reports of the work through the previous summer and these have been circulated to MAA members from time to time. The conclusion of the talk was speculation about the nearby tower, originally thought to be a folly of some kind, and the building remains of an elaborate cottage built for the daughter of the landowner in the 18th century, and the possible agricultural building that succeeded it. Work on this site has continued through 2023, along with other work Simon is leading close by. I am certain this small corner of Chepstow will continue to demand attention for some years to come.

In **February** we held our first in person indoor lecture since the end of the pandemic. On 15th February William Gibbs gave us a lecture on **Lady Llanover and her Circle**. This was a well-attended meeting in a new venue, The Sir John Herbert Memorial Hall in Llanover. William took the audience on a visually stimulating tour around a dozen or so of Augusta Hall's relatives and acquaintances. He used paintings, silhouettes and sketches to illuminate the people and the places he spoke of. Many of these had never been seen before. Even those in the room who may consider themselves to be something of an expert on the topic found that they learnt something new from William's lecture. We found out about those who inspired Augusta, including her aunt, Mrs Delany, and her older sister Frances, later Baroness Bunsen. We learnt about Lady Llanover's patronage of local arts, such as the Abergavenny Eisteddfodd, nationally significant events across Wales, and her wider circle, including Carnhuanawc (Rev Thomas Price, Cwm-du) and Lady Charlotte Guest, whom Augusta influenced, but was possibly not such a close friend as many have previously supposed. We were told about art works that were collected and kept at Llanover for the benefit of a close circle of friends. It was clear that William has carried out research far and wide, often making links that once explained were obvious, but possibly not apparent to the casual researcher. William spoke for over an hour, showing 153 slides. The audience were attentive to the end of the talk, a measure of how captivated they were.

Canal walk Saturday 25th **March**: This walk was a follow on from a similar walk in 2022 starting at the same point, Pontymoile basin. On this occasion the party walked south towards Cwmbran through the suburbs of Pontypool, formerly the self-contained villages of Griffithstown (named after the local station master) and Sebastopol. This stretch of canal was originally the Monmouthshire Canal. It amalgamated with the Abergavenny and Brecon Canal to form the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal in 1865. A small party made up equally of Monmouthshire Antiquarians and Pontypool Local History Society members walked the tow path past the former workhouse, now the County Hospital. We admired the enormous railway arch carrying the branch line across the canal and on into the eastern valley, and noted where a narrow-gauge track once took coal from the canal into the hospital site. This stretch of the canal is now surrounded by houses, but we could see how rural it had been in the past. There are fewer observable canal features along this stretch which runs along the contour without locks until it reaches 5 locks in Cwmbran. It is a tranquil haven for wildlife and it is difficult to realise that the canal is now close to many homes and busy roads. Having reached the modern winding hole, constructed in 2016, which marked the end of the navigable water in the first stage of the canal restoration, we returned to Sebastopol and walked along the old railway track back to Pontymoile. It was always going to be a gamble with the weather however a brief shower did not dampen our spirits.

In **April we visited St Mary's Priory Church in Chepstow**. This was a well-attended meeting, where we heard from Annabel Bowker-Dance about the work of The Friends of St Mary's, who are engaged in securing the fabric and community life of the building. We were given a guided tour around the important monuments in the nave and crossing, hearing the stories of the people commemorated there and looked at monuments in the chancel. Our president Jeremy Knight told us of the importance of this church and its place in the history of the town. Had it been spared the restorations of the 19th century and the deprivations after the Reformation this building would rival the best cathedrals in Europe. It was good to see a long-time member of MAA, Keith Underwood, join us for the visit. Our thanks to the clergy and church wardens for supporting the visit and to the friends of St Mary's Priory for supplying refreshments at the close of the afternoon.

On **Friday 28**th **April** a group of twenty Antiquarians and friends from Shirenewton and Llangwm Societies were treated to a tour around the **reenactors camp at The Battle of Monmouth event hosted by the Sealed Knot**. We were introduced to Ianto Evans – an experienced war horse and his trainer, and Tom who was ridden by the commander of the parliamentarian cavalry. We were shown the tack and kit including the pistols and holsters and the apparel of the riders. We went on to the encampment where we were met by a musketeer who showed us his weaponry and explained the intricacies of loading and firing a matchlock musket. We were also treated to a display by a pikeman and infantry soldiers. Other villagers demonstrated their skills as weavers, dyers, apothecaries and so forth. There was even a resident portrait painter which I guess was the 17th century equivalent of taking a selfie. We are indebted to member Gareth Morgan for inviting us and hosting us for the visit. It is certain to be a memorable experience for those who came along.

With warmer weather and longer days, the 20th **May** found us **walking from Magor to Undy** around the boundaries of Tintern Abbey's Moor Grange. MAA members were accompanied by members of the Cambrian Archaeological Association. The walk started in Magor Square where we found out about the lives of some of those commemorated on the war memorial. We visited the church and the Procurator's House before setting off onto the moors. During the walk we had the opportunity to look at the reens and to explore how a relatively small village such as Magor fitted into the wider medieval world. The wildlife did not disappoint either. Having reached Undy church we then returned via a circular route close to the railway line.

Later that week many Antiquarians took the opportunity to visit **Usk Castle** at the invitation of the Friends of Usk Castle. The evening started with light refreshments, and we were treated to a fascinating talk by Neil Ludlow, followed by a tour of the castle with our newfound knowledge to help us understand some of the finer points of its architecture and purpose.

The **Annual General Meeting** on 3rd June brought the best attendance of the summer. It coincided with Dr. Mark Lewis and the team from National Museum of Wales and members of the local community carrying out excavation works in Caerwent churchyard. Geophysical survey earlier in the year and the subsequent excavation in May showed that an area left open after excavations in the early 20th century had been filled with debris from a refurbishment of the church later in the century. This was an endorsement of the geophysical survey findings and added a little more to the story of this site. The supporters of the church were also holding a plant and cake sale for church funds, and there were other groups visiting that day. It was lovely to see so many people enjoying a normally peaceful churchyard and learning more about the Roman, Medieval and more recent past of the space. Our president Jeremy Knight treated us to a talk about the church and its relationship to early Christian sites across southeast Wales. After the AGM we heard a talk from Jennifer Evans of Gwent Archives who told us about a project that is running across several south Wales institutions and archives called 'Crowd Cymru'. My thanks to the church warden and the Friends of the church for providing the refreshments and looking after us so well on the day.

Later **in June** we held an evening visit to **Mamhilad Church**, led by member Mrs Christina Evans. Christina, whose late husband was a vicar at the church, presented a wealth of information about the church and specifically about the yew trees in the churchyard. This is a charming little church and Christina's affection for it was evident in her presentation. At the close of the visit, we walked around the grounds counting how many yews we could spot. I don't think there was any consensus,

and we could appreciate how difficult it is to decide if we were looking at large and very old trees with multiple trunks or groups of small younger trees. The visit was followed by a congenial supper in the nearby Star Inn. Our thanks to Christina and her supporters for a memorable evening.
On **July 1**st **the annual MAA/GCHA day school** for 2023 was hosted by the Caldicot and district Local History Society and visited Rogiet. It was attended by an audience of 30, plus seven speakers. A full report of the event by Peter Strong follows this report.

Later in **July, the picnic and walk at the Newport Wetlands** suffered from an uncertain weather forecast. Only 3 members were present. We managed to eat our picnics before the showers began. Thank you to Adrian Smith who took some atmospheric pictures and posted them on the Association's Facebook page.

The final visit of the season was **to Tintern Abbey on 27**th **September 2023**. 15 members and guests arrived despite the impending storm Agnes being about to break. We were met by Will Davies of Cadw who began by explaining the reasons behind the major works at the Abbey. The current evaluation is to determine how to scaffold the building for future works to consolidate the structure. The stonework is suffering from delamination and needs urgent intervention. Will introduced MAA member David Robinson who is the archivist for the project and is carrying out historical research on the abbey and capturing as much as is known about past interventions from its foundation in 1231 to its gifting to the Nation in the early 20th century. The intention is to build a virtual database to avoid having to repeatedly commission new surveys prior to procurement of works. There is already a wealth of information in reports, journals, notebooks and jottings going back to the time when the Dukes of Beaufort took ownership of the monument in the 19th century. Information from the 18th century from grand tourists in the form of sketches, diaries and paintings are all being plundered to bring information together for the archive. Some older records exist back to the Reformation and to the earlier life of the building. Constructing a huge digital archive that brings together all this information is a new way of working that will build a future proof data set that can be used long into the future.

We also heard of the geophysical works carried out before the evaluation commenced, and the role of Ross Cook, ArchaeoDomus (formerly of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales) who is a building recording expert. The fourth member of the party showing us around was Richard Lewis, CEO of Black Mountains Archaeology.

Ross has been analysing the fabric of the building and looking at how different phases of building and alterations have left their mark on the walls and on the stones themselves. We know that the original church was smaller than the current building, and in parts underlies the walls of the aisle of the church. Its outline is shown by kerbs laid out in the early 20th century; however, the evaluation has not yet been able to verify the position of the foundations of these walls. Ross has the skills and experience to read the walls themselves.

The geophysical survey that preceded the excavation work was carried out by Tiger Geo. The purpose was to provide some targets for the evaluation works. The reason for the ground truthing is to verify the nature of buried remains in order that they can be mitigated during the scaffolding phase. The idea is to avoid damaging buried features and equally to keep the workers safe by avoiding placing work platforms over voids or areas which are unstable and could result in collapse.

Richard explained that an evaluation is not a research excavation. The diggers stop as soon as they encounter buried archaeology. Sometimes this agrees with the geophysical survey and at other times does not. It means that a fuller picture of the information provided by the survey can be verified. So far, a large number of graves have been found, which is to be expected around a medieval church. A number of questions have been raised by differences in these burials, such as the presence of coffins or shrouds, and age of some of the individuals at death. The burials outside the south and east end of the church are possibly part of a cemetery where members of the monastic community may have been buried.

A large group of encaustic floor tile fragments have been uncovered and it is suggestive of some remodelling of the church in the early period. Some were also found in the upper layers of grave cuts suggesting that the graves had been dug through the tiled floor. The tiles can be studied to learn more about the secular influencers of the time, including the de Clare family and Richard, Earl of Cornwall and King of the Romans, all of whom are represented in the heraldry shown on the tiles. Throughout the tour David provided us with timelines of known events associated with the Abbey and linked this to events happening elsewhere in the same period.

Sadly, we had to leave the building before we had time to digest all of the information as the wind picked up to the extent that no amount of hard hats would have helped us if the walls had started to tumble. We were shown the evaluation trenches at the base of the exterior walls which also show the phasing of the building and interventions made by the Dukes of Beaufort (one of whom wanted to lift floor tiles from Tintern to floor his chapel at Windsor). We are indebted to the custodian for his concern for our safety during the visit. Nobody was harmed and the sun was shining by the time we left the site.

This was a very interesting and stimulating visit. There will be more archaeological evaluation over the next few years. Actual work on the masonry will probably start in 2028. It would be nice to think that by the 900th anniversary of the foundation of Tintern in 2031 that the work will be well on its way to completion. Will has promised to keep MAA up to date with news as the work progresses and this will be shared through the journal and at study days and lectures throughout the project. My thanks to Will Davies, Richard Lewis, Ross Cook and David Robinson for a stimulating and exciting tour and a fitting conclusion to our visits for this year.

Janet Bailey
Hon Secretary

Rogiet Day School, 1st July

The annual MAA/GCHA day school for 2023 was hosted by the Caldicot and district Local History Society and visited Rogiet. It was attended by an audience of 30, plus seven speakers.

Field archaeologist Tim Sandles kicked off with a presentation on ‘The Devil’s Quoit’, a standing stone that can be seen to the south of the B4245 just west of where it is crossed by the M4. He pointed out similarities with standing stones in other parts of Britain, many of which were given an association with the devil, possibly because the Christian Church wanted to warn people away from the remnants of paganism. Tim pointed to various theories and stories relating to the stone, many in common with stones elsewhere, but argued that more research and excavation was needed. When Tim pointed out that some stories were connected to fairies or pixies, a member of the audience suggested a connection with the name of Dancing Hill in nearby Undy.

Pete Strong, GCHA Secretary, followed with an account of the enclosures of common land in and around Rogiet. He pointed out that the situation was complicated by the fact that much of the common land on that part of the Caldicot Levels was shared by farmers from several manors. An attempt to enclose land in the 1770s was only partially successful, partly because it failed to gain the support of the Morgans of Tredegar House, lords of several of the manors concerned. However, opinion was shifting in favour of enclosure in order to improve the quality of the land on the Levels. Under the General Enclosure Act of 1853 1300 acres of land, mainly of the Levels, was enclosed. Only about half went to farmers who previously had rights to use the common, with the rest being sold off to cover legal expenses and the cost of raising parts of the sea wall and building new roads.

Rob Wilsher from Caldicot gave us a personal history of Severn Tunnel Junction. The opening of the station and the marshalling yards in 1886 following the building of the Severn Tunnel turned Rogiet from a small agricultural village into a bustling railway community. Rob had had a lifelong fascination with railways, something which his father, a train driver who had decades of experience of the hard work it involved, could never understand. Rob mixed insights into the development of the Junction, with stories of a youth spent exploring and train spotting.

A DVD produced by Monmouthshire Countryside service which dealt with the transformation of the marshalling yards into a country park was shown.

We then heard about two very different churchmen. Canon Arthur Edwards told us about Archdeacon Conybeare Bruce, one of Gwent's most respected figures, who having been Archdeacon of Monmouth, sought a quieter life as Rector of Rogiet. By contrast, Stephen Williams, Rector of Llanfihangel Rogiet from 1812 until his death in 1860, was something of a black sheep. Although generous to his parishioners and loved by many of them, he exasperated the bishop by frequently getting into debt and spent two spells in debtors' prison. He was subsequently removed from his livings in Magor, Undy and Rogiet, but was allowed to remain at Llanfihangel on the grounds that it was a very small parish and the people loved him.

Following an excellent lunch provided by the volunteers of 'Rogiet Community Junction', a charity which holds a weekly café and other events in the Church and Community Hall as part of a long campaign to build a community shop in the village, we visited St Mary's Church, Rogiet, where churchwarden Fay Baxter, told us about its history and development.

Our final talk was a double header. Pete Strong spoke about the growth of Rogiet since 1886, concentrating on the different approaches to housing the growing population. The first railwaymen in the village often relied on overcrowded lodgings. Eventually Chepstow Rural District Council stepped in to build its first council houses in the village, which were occupied in 1921. The original plan was to build 100 houses but only 22 were erected before it was abandoned due to government cuts. At this point the Great Western Railway stepped in, helping its employees to set up the Severn Tunnel Utility Society, a cross between a building society and a housing association. Led by a committee of nine railwaymen it built 90 houses between 1923 and 1939. The growth in the Junction workforce during the Second World War meant there was an urgent need for more housing. Instead of building prefabs, the British Transport Commission built 55 'concrete houses'. This proved to be a mistake. They were plagued by damp and demolished in 1955 to be replaced by council houses. The rundown of Severn Tunnel Junction from the 1960s and the closure of the marshalling yards in 1986, along with the large-scale sale of council houses from 1979 and the building of large new estates of private housing meant that Rogiet changed from being a railway community to a commuter village. These changes were reflected in a talk by former Rogiet resident Bob Avery, who described how Rogiet once had no fewer than nine shops, all now closed.

All in all, the day was a great success: well attended and with talks which went beyond mere ‘village history’ to look at how wider social and economic developments affected life in one Gwent community.

Peter Strong
Secretary, GCHA

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Janet Bailey is secretary of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association. She was born at St Woolos Hospital in Newport and spent her early years in Rogiet. Having moved to Newport she continued her education at Eveswell Junior School and St Julian's High School. She started her working life as an industrial chemist at Coates Brothers, Machen (known locally as the paint works) and moved on to The Radiochemical Centre at Whitchurch, Cardiff. After leaving South Wales for Lincolnshire Jan trained as a teacher, becoming Head of Science in a specialist science academy. After 20 years away from the Principality she returned to live in Wales and retrained as an archaeologist at UWTSD Lampeter. She has since worked for two of the Welsh Archaeological Trusts and at Cynon Valley Museum, Aberdare. Jan's interests are in industrial archaeology and textiles, local history and genealogy. She is currently helping Brecon Beacons National Park create an Historic Environment Action Plan and is a core member of the group revising the Archaeological Research Framework for Wales.

Richard Coates is professor emeritus of onomastics at the University of the West of England, Bristol. His research interests are in names of all kinds (especially place-names and family names in Britain), onomastic theory, and anything in the intersection of linguistics, history and geography.

Anne Dunton studied French at Royal Holloway College, University of London, having been a pupil at Newport High School. She trained as a teacher at the University of Bristol. After retiring she obtained an M.A. in Historical Landscape Studies from the University of Wales, Newport. The present article forms part of the Living Levels project, developed from her earlier study of the landscape of Undy.

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.

Madeleine Gray is Professor Emerita of Ecclesiastical History at the University of South Wales. She has close links with a number of heritage and community organisations, including the Church Monuments Society. She has published extensively on late medieval and early modern history with a particular focus on visual and material evidence for the history of religious belief and practice. She appears regularly on television and radio and is currently working on a survey of medieval tomb carvings in Wales.

Professor Ray Howell is Chairman of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust and the Torfaen Museum Trust. He is President of Chepstow Archaeological Society and of the Friends of Newport Museum. Professor Howell was volume editor for the first two volumes of the Gwent County History. He has written several books and numerous articles and has made regular television appearances including contributions to Time Team and to a range of historical and archaeological programmes on Sianel Pedwar Cymru (S4C).

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.

Simon Maddison is an Honorary Research Fellow at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. Towards the end of a successful career in telecommunications engineering, he studied archaeology, first at Birkbeck and then UCL. His MSc dissertation focused on the distribution of Hillforts in Britain and Ireland, and he has continued to do original research in this field, including the continuity of territoriality from prehistory to the early medieval period. Simon has published six articles since 2019, including a chapter in the major new work *The Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland* (2022, Edinburgh University Press) and a chapter in the authoritative textbook *Archaeological Spatial Analysis*: *A Methodological Guide* (2020, Routledge). He leads the fieldwork programme for the Chepstow Archaeological Society.

Peter Strong is currently secretary of the Gwent County History Association and its former chair; he is also chair of the Gwent branch of the Western Front Association. He is former head of history at Caldicot Comprehensive and since his retirement has lectured widely on aspects of the history of Gwent. He wrote chapters on the First and Second World Wars in vol 5 of the Gwent County History and has published several articles in *Gwent Local History*.

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 Williams was born in Newport and educated at Bassaleg School and Trinity College, Cambridge. He has two main research interests, the study of seals and Cistercian studies. He is acknowledged as one of the foremost scholars in the latter field. David Williams accomplished this whilst serving as an Anglican priest in Wales (including in the diocese of Monmouth), Libya and Poland, from which he returned in 1997 to settle near Aberystwyth. He was honorary editor of *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* from 1990 to 2000, after which for several years he was honorary assistant editor; as acting editor, he took volumes XXV–XXVI (2009–10) and vol. XXVII (2011) through the press. His book, *The Tudor Cistercians*, was published in 2014.

MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARIAN ASSOCIATION

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