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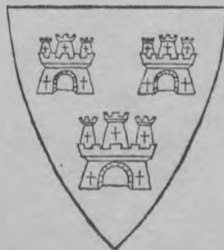

Edited by CEFNI BARNETT

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THE MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARY

VOL. III. PART I. 1970-71

THE POST GLACIAL DEPOSITS OF THE CALDICOT LEVEL AND SOME ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

By STEPHEN LOCKE

Summary

The stratigraphy of the post-Glacial deposits of the Caldicot Level is briefly described and the occurrence of Neolithic and Roman finds examined. The source of the Neolithic human skull found during the Newport docks excavations in 1910, originally described as gravel, was almost certainly an overlying clay similar to that within which a second Neolithic skull was discovered at Newport in 1961.

The significance of archaeological finds to the history of the Caldicot Level is discussed and it is concluded that some deposition of clay, following a rise in sea level, has occurred since Roman times. Existing evidence from the Caldicot Level is inconclusive with respect to the exact magnitude of such a rise in sea level and it is unlikely that this question can be settled until structural remains from a clearly defined stratigraphical horizon are described.

Introduction

The Caldicot Level (fig. 1) is a low plain bordering the Severn estuary between the rivers Usk and Wye. This flat surface extends some four miles inland at its widest, between Goldcliff and Llanwern, but narrows eastwards as far as Sudbrook where it is interrupted by higher ground. A narrow, isolated part of the same surface continues north-east of Sudbrook as far as the Wye. The height of the Level varies upwards from 15 ft. O.D. but generally is at about 20 ft. O.D. Mean high water spring tide levels are 20·6 ft. O.D. at Newport and 22·7 ft. O.D. at Beachley. The area would be subject to periodic tidal flooding were it not for the protection afforded by the sea-wall which extends the whole length of the coast.

There were prehistoric and Roman settlements fringing the Level, notably the hillfort at Wilcrick and the promontory fort at Sudbrook, and the Roman Pottery at Caldicot (Barnett 1965), which lie right at the edge, but no sites of this antiquity have been discovered on the Level. Medieval land use on the other hand has been well attested, for example Moor Grange of Tintern Abbey (Williams 1965).

The deposits of the Caldicot Level

Civil engineering on the Level has involved a large number of trial borings which yielded much information about the underlying deposits. Williams (1968) has described the deposits of the Usk estuary and the present account describes the stratigraphy of the Levels as a whole.

A

50

BISHTON

PORTON

Sea Wall

blue/grey clay and silt

OD

peat

blue/grey clay and silt

coarse deposits

ROCK BASEMENT

50

B

LLANDEVENNY

SCALES

A 0 ¼ ½ mile

B ⅛ ¼

FIG. 2. Sections of Fig. 1.

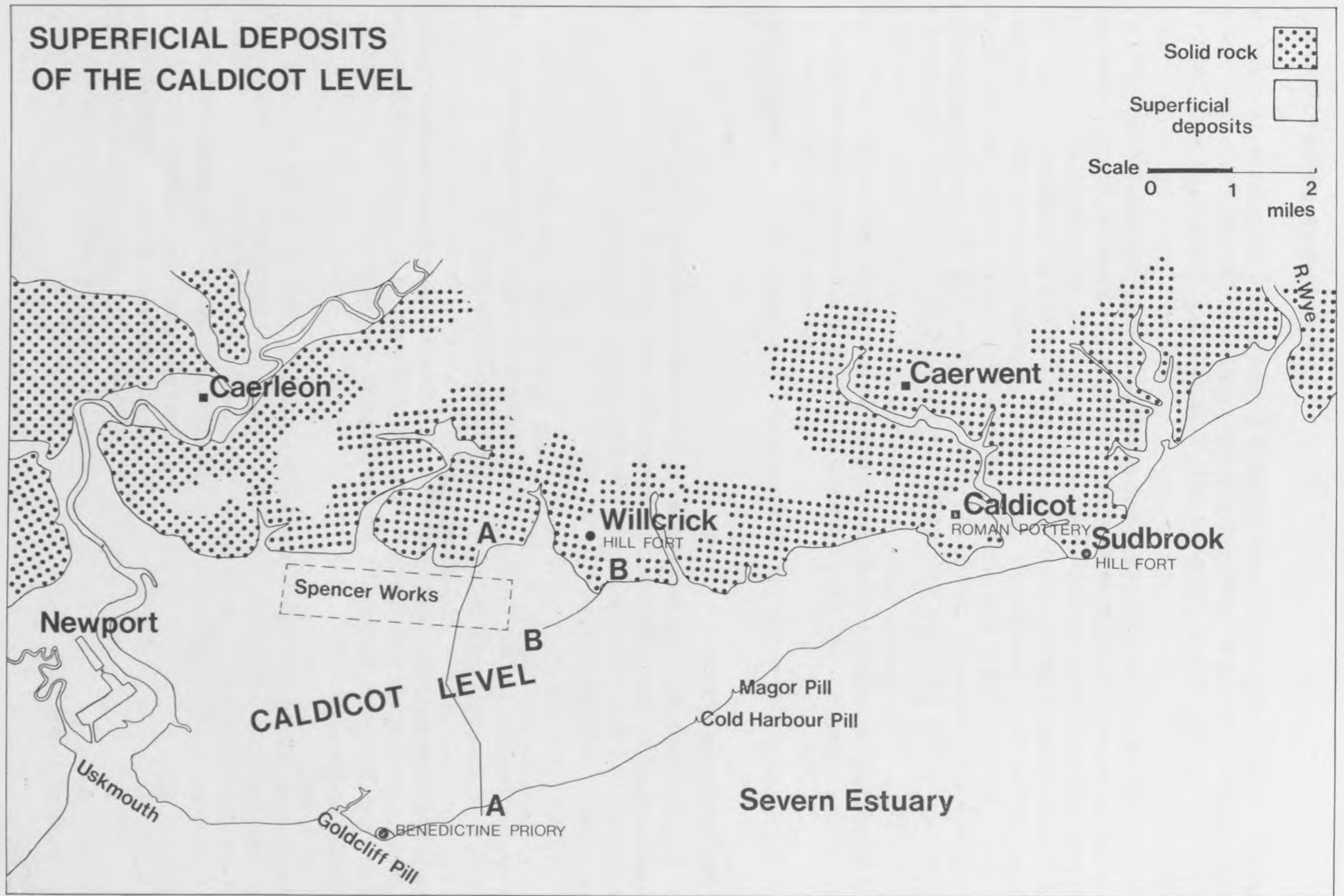

Fig. 1.

The results of trial borings must be interpreted with great caution for academic purposes, but important general conclusions can be drawn and additionally the author has been able to examine significant exposures in the upper parts of the sequence, which are of more interest to archaeologists.

Except in the close vicinity of the river valleys the deposits are generally between 25 and 40 feet thick; they are glacial and post-glacial, and rest on an undulating rock floor of Keuper marls and sandstones lying between —15 and —25 feet O.D. Immediately east of the Usk, where Williams (1968) has shown that a buried channel of the Usk is incised into the rock floor, and near the Wye, where there is some evidence for a similar buried channel west of the present river mouth, levels of —60 ft. O.D. are recorded. Inland the rock basement rises to the surface as low hills which form a well marked and often abrupt boundary. The buried rock platform has been interpreted as a wave cut surface (Williams 1968) and the boundary slopes as an ancient cliff-line (Steers 1948).

Where fully developed, the following general sequence of deposits occurs:

4. Upper blue/grey clays and silts
3. Peat
2. Lower blue/grey clays and silts
1. Basal sands, gravels and cobbles

The accompanying section (fig. 2) demonstrates the essentials of this sequence.

The basal sands and gravels

Coarse deposits lie at the base of the succession almost everywhere, varying in grain size from sands to cobbles and attaining their greatest thickness, in excess of 40 ft., in the buried channel of the Usk. Over the levels as a whole however values of 5–10 ft. are persistently recorded as far upstream as Mathern. Typical records are:

Whitson (390 839)	10 ft.
Llandevenny (407 862)	5 ft.
Magor Pill (436 849)	6 ft.
near Mathern (538 904)	9 ft.

(Note: grid references are introduced for the first reference to a location but not subsequently; they are all within the square ST).

Coarse deposits extend right to the edge of the Level in many places, e.g. the occurrence at Llandevenny, in the Severn Tunnel cutting (Lloyd-Morgan, in Richardson 1887) and near Llanwern and Bishton. A particularly interesting record at Bishton (3900 8725) revealed:

depth below surface (20 ft. O.D.)		deposit
ft.	ins.	
1	0	topsoil
4	6	grey clay
8	0	brown peat
10	0	soft yellowish grey sand
17	6	sand with sandstone fragments
20	6	sand with marine molluscs, fragments of sandstone, blue limestone, grey mudstone and
25	0	red marls resting on Keuper marls.

depth of boring 35 ft.

The deposits between the Keuper Marl and the peat can probably be interpreted as an ancient beach, as can similar occurrences beneath the Spencer Works just to the south.

The coarse deposits are rarely accessible to examination, but an unsorted deposit of red sandy clay with gravel and cobbles, obtained from a depth of about 25 ft. at Wharf Road, Newport (3215 8800), during excavations for the main drainage scheme, is probably either a till or a solifluction deposit (Mus. no. 72–19). Similar deposits are recorded at a number of places on the Level. The exact origin and date of the bulk of the gravel spread has been interpreted differently by Hawkins (1971) and Williams (1968) but they are certainly glacial or immediately post-glacial.

Lower blue/grey clays and silts

Except at the edges, where overlap by higher deposits onto the rock platform occurs, an extensive sequence of blue/grey clays and silts everywhere underlies the Level. Throughout most of the area a lower sequence can be differentiated from an upper series of similar aspect by the development of peat at and just above O.D. Typical thicknesses for the lower clays are recorded at:

Whitson	11 ft.
Porton (390 829)	22 ft.
Magor Pill	10 ft.
Spencer Works	10–20 ft.

Near the rivers Usk and Wye, where the upper and lower clay sequences cannot be differentiated, total values for the whole clay succession reach:

Nash (3385 8400)	40 ft.
near Mathern	61 ft.

Both sections record silty fractions, especially towards the base. Foreshore exposures between Magor Pill and Uskmouth reveal the upper few feet of these deposits and the lithology is a uniform soft, but tenaceous, laminated blue/grey clay or silt with abundant reed stems and rhizomes. Exposures at the Spencer Works site, and in drainage works at Newport, revealed a similar lithology.

Peat

Although peat sporadically occurs at lower levels, the most important development of peat is an extensive bed at about O.D. or somewhat above. It underlies the greatest part of the Level but is best developed beneath the Spencer Works, where it is presently dug for horticultural purposes, and it attains there thicknesses up to 15 ft. Typical values elsewhere are:

Porton	6 ft.
Whitson	5 ft. 3 in.
Magor Pill	4 ft.
Llandevenny	6 ft.
Bishton	3 ft. 6 in.

PLATE 1. A submerged forest lying to the left of the wooden framework of the putcher ranks (salmon traps) at Goldcliff. *Newport Museum photograph.*

The last two records are at the very edge of the Level where the peat typically overlaps the lower deposits onto the fringing bedrock: similar records were obtained both sides of the Portskewett ridge. Peat outcrops in a continuous sheet, except where cut by existing tidal pills, all along the coast from Magor Pill to Uskmouth. At Goldcliff it is seen to overlap onto the wave cut platform at the base of the cliff and at Uskmouth a number of thinner peat beds are developed rather than a single bed as elsewhere. Borehole records show this to be characteristic of areas adjacent to the Usk and Wye, where no single peat level dominates. In addition to the coastal exposures, temporary exposures at Llanwern, Newport and Magor all showed the upper part of the peat to be consistently woody with *in situ* tree stools. The fine coastal exposures are not mentioned on the relevent Geological Survey 6 in. maps or in explanatory Memoirs, but what amounts to a submerged forest is visible at many places along the coast. On the foreshore between Magor Pill and Cold Harbour Pill, at Porton and Uskmouth, the stumps and roots of trees are clearly visible washed clean by the tide, but at Goldcliff are the finest examples, where long trunks of trees are rafted into the peat (see pl. 1 & 2). The dominant tree is birch.

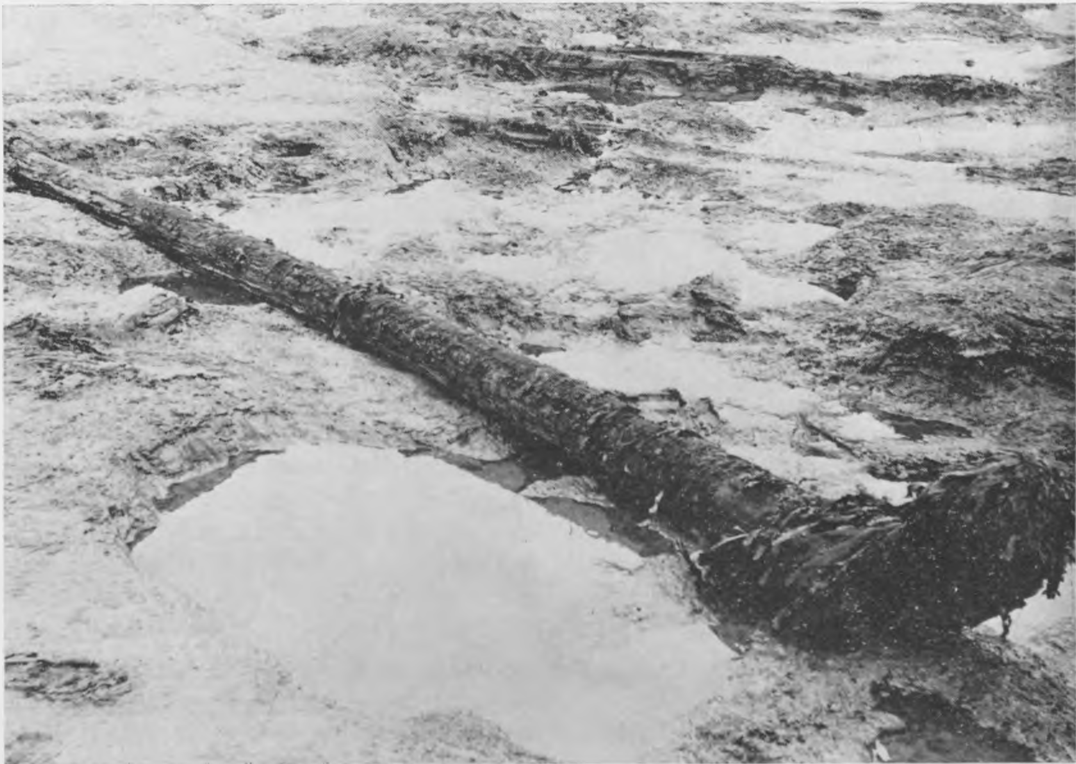

PLATE 2. A trunk of birch embedded in the peat at Goldcliff. *Newport Museum photograph.*

Upper blue/grey clays and silts

Where the peat is developed, an upper series of clays can be differentiated from the similar deposits beneath, and all the Level is immediately underlain by this clay. Beneath the Spencer Works site its thickness varies quite markedly from 2 or 3 feet up to 15 feet, and it is noteworthy that this variation occurs over the greatest development of peat, but throughout the greater part of the levels thicknesses between 10 and 15 ft. are general. (Porton 11 ft., Whitson 13 ft., Magor Pill 15 ft.). Thinning occurs at the edge of the Level where this deposit is frequently the highest member of an overlapping sequence. In coastal exposures between Magor Pill and Cold Harbour Pill (430 842 — 438 848) (see pl. 3) the lithology of the complete sequence can be demonstrated, and it has also been visible in the temporary exposures mentioned above. Everywhere it is identical in lithology to the visible parts of the lower sequence, namely a laminated blue/grey clay or silt with frequent bands of reed stems and rhizomes.

An important detail frequently recorded in borehole logs and seen exposed is the presence of a weathered zone extending generally some 5 or 6 ft. down from the surface. Within this zone the clay often assumes a tougher consistency and loses its blue/grey colour and takes on a darker or mottled appearance. The basic lithology remains the same however and reed stems are common at all levels.

Dr. John Haynes (Department of Geology, Aberystwyth) examined samples from the foreshore exposures between Magor and Cold Harbour Pills in order to determine the conditions of deposition as indicated by the foraminifera. Six samples were collected in the upper and lower blue/grey clays:

sample	depth below surface
6	100 mm
5	1 m
4	2 m
3	2.10 m
section obscured by modern mud until:	
2	6 m (immediately below peat)
1	6.5 m

Dr. Haynes concluded that all the samples appear to indicate marine deposition (marine being taken to include brackish water deposition in the intertidal zone). Sample 1 has the most open sea forms (probably current drifted) while samples 2, 5 and 6 appear to show conditions nearest to the tidal limit. It is noteworthy that *Ammonia limnetes* occurs in sample 1 only. This resembles its occurrence in the Dovey Estuary where it is abundant in Flandrian silts and in the clays of the " Romano-British Transgression " but apparently absent in the recent sediments. (Hanyes, personal communication).

Additionally the author collected molluscs from this section which Mr. Peter Dance (Department of Zoology, National Museum of Wales) determined as *Peringia ulvae* and *Macoma balthica* (Mus. no. 71–79), additional evidence for the intertidal nature of these deposits. Bones and teeth of *Bos* are not infrequently found in these clays, and a number of bones from a single individual of the Aurochs, *Bos primigenius* Bojanus, were collected from the foreshore at Uskmouth at about + 5 ft. O.D. (Mus. no. 70–129).

Summary: conditions of deposition

The post-glacial (= Flandrian) history of the Bristol Channel has been dominated by a rise in sea level. In late glacial times (about 8000 B.C.) it was much lower than now and a much longer river Severn flowed far out into the Irish Sea, but the post-glacial rise in sea level caused a drowning of the old river valley (the Flandrian transgression) to form the Bristol Channel.

The gravels at the base of the sequence in the Level are glacial or immediately post-glacial and the overlying clays clearly record the Flandrian transgression. The blue/grey clays and silts are deposits of a steadily rising sea. Sedimentation took place in an intertidal area which was much more extensive than now, due to the absence of the sea-wall, and this great expanse of intertidal flat was frequently a reed-swamp.

Detailed work on the Somerset Levels, notably by Godwin (see Kidson 1964 for comprehensive summary), has indicated that the Flandrian transgression was intermittent. It is suggested that sea level ceased rising about 3500 B.C. and raised bogs were able to accumulate during the Neolithic and Bronze Ages. Swamping of these bogs occurred in the Late Bronze Age, but the surface of the Somerset Levels was again habitable for much of the Roman period until a

renewed transgression, beginning about 250 A.D., is said to have deposited extensive spreads of blue/grey clay and silt on Roman settlement sites. (This transgression has been termed the Romano-British transgression and the clay the Romano-British clay: both are of course still Flandrian and it seems better to give geological terms to geological phenomena, and avoid the use of human cultural terms in such a context).

Hawkins (1971), however, has stated that there is no evidence for oscillations in the steady rise in sea level during the past 5000 years. Studies of the peat stratigraphy and associated archaeological remains play important roles in the formation of these alternative concepts.

Peat, alone of the Flandrian deposits of the Caldicot Level, is not a deposit of continually rising sea level, rather it forms during pauses in the rise. At such times reed swamp, more than any other vegetation, is responsible for transforming a fundamentally aquatic environment into a more-or-less terrestrial one, and eventually birch woodland may be established, enriched temporarily by other tree species such as oak (Walker 1970). The peat surface visible in the Levels clearly records this pattern and it has been dated as 2660 B.P. (710 B.C.) + or —110 years (Godwin 1964) so the thickness of peat below must have accumulated during the Bronze Age and perhaps the latter part of the Neolithic. In this respect the picture obtained for the Somerset Levels is clearly supported. The date for the top of the peat may or may not represent the renewed transgression indicated by the overlying marine clays, for woodland established on peat will ultimately fail naturally and yield to bog.

It remains to examine critically the archaeological remains from the Caldicot Level in order to determine their bearing on the subsequent history of deposition of the Level.

Neolithic and Roman remains from the Caldicot Level

The occurrence of all the archaeological remains from the Level, known to the author, is described and related to the stratigraphical sequence of the Level. They are Neolithic and Roman in age; no Bronze Age or Iron Age objects have yet been found.

The Newport Docks skull

A Neolithic human cranium was discovered in 1910 during the excavation of the Alexandra (South Dock Extension) new lock entrance and was described in a little known publication (Keith, 1911). The circumstances of this find were given to Arthur Keith by the resident engineer, Mr. J. D. C. Couper, whose original plans and sections are preserved in the local records of Newport Museum. As published they are unique among finds from the Level in ascribing the skull to the basal gravels rather than the overlying clay. The section recorded at the find spot (317 841) was of 29 ft. 6 in. of " bungum " (commonly used locally to describe the grey/blue clays and silts) between 12 ft. O.D. and —17 ft. O.D., overlying 20 ft. of gravel which rested on Keuper Marl at —37 ft. O.D. This level for the base of the clays agrees with that recorded in Williams (1968), section C, which passes close to the site of the skull. The higher gravels recorded on Williams' section with clays beneath them are relatively recent deposits of the river Ebbw, tributary to the Usk, whose course was altered during the construction of the

South Dock, but these gravels do not impinge on the section from which the skull came. The skull is said to have been found 7 ft. from the base of the gravel, i.e. at—30 ft. O.D. or 42 ft. beneath the ground surface. Also, remains of a number of animal species were recorded from this or nearby excavations and they are similarly reported to have occurred within the basal gravel, except for the horse's skull.

Horse	cranium, radius
Ox	skulls (2) vertebra, ribs, metatarsals, fibia, pelvis
Wild Pig	canine tooth
Red Deer	antler fragments, first dorsal vertebra
Wolf	pelvis
Sheep	metatarsal
Whale (small species)	vertebra

Apart from the human skull, the preservation of these remains is not described and unfortunately there is no trace of any of them in the collections of Newport Museum. The human skull is seen to be stained very heavily black.

It seems almost inconceivable that the skull was derived from the gravel for these reasons:

1. Its characteristic preservation, identical in all respects to other remains certainly known to have come from the clay, in particular a second human skull described below; and the difficulty in accounting at all for its preservation in the more violent conditions of deposition represented by the gravels.
2. The glacial age of the gravels.

It is not difficult to account for mistakes regarding the derivation of all of these remains Mr. Couper's sections in Newport Museum give an exact position for all of them, despite the fact that they were found scattered over a stretch of 2,200 feet, almost as if an archaeological excavation was being recorded. And yet this was far from an archaeological dig — this was a major civil engineering feat by any standards (the Alexandra Dock when completed in 1914 was the largest single enclosed dock in the world) and the year was 1910 with all that that implies regarding the education of the manual labour force. The conditions of excavation in the tenaceous alluvium, descending to depths in excess of 50 ft. and extending onto the foreshore, can only too readily be imagined. Indeed, photographs in the Docks history file at Newport Museum show well the nature of the work; six months previously a catastrophic collapse of part of these excavations had resulted in 30 dead and serious flooding. These then were the conditions that operated when the remains were found and it is very difficult to understand how every single fragment can have been localized *in situ.* It is far more likely that remains from the clay tumbled down as excavation proceeded; against the lighter gravels beneath they became readily visible. At this point the workmen may well have indicated the locations to Mr. Couper with precision and so they became recorded on the sections.

The Orb Works skull

A second Neolithic human skull was discovered during excavations for the Orb Works of the Steel Company of Wales at Newport in 1961 (Cowley 1961). It was embedded in clay at a

depth of 34 ft. (—10 ft. O.D.) and a nearby borehole (Stephenson Street 3255 8615) records 40 ft. of blue/grey clay and silt resting on gravels at —20 ft. O.D. A similar situation in fact to that at the site of the Docks skull find. Significantly, this boring records a peaty development with a surface at the level of the skull. This cranium is even more complete than the previous find, the facial bones are present, and its preservation is identical.

Roman pottery, Uskmouth

Unfortunately, both the unquestionably *in situ* finds of Roman pottery in the Level were discovered during temporary excavations. The conditions which pertain in these excavations in the clay must be experienced to be truly appreciated, especially when contractors are anxious to press ahead with their work; detailed examination of the situation becomes virtually impossible. A find was made during the building of the Uskmouth 'B' power station in 1959 when pottery and animal bones were found at the bottom of a pit dug for drainage (Barnett, 1961).

They were left undisturbed until examined by Mr. Barnett and at his request some more clay was cleared for a few feet around, but no further material was found. Fortunately in this case the depth of the find was recorded as 14 ft. (10 ft. O.D.) below the surface. Borehole records indicate the presence of about 40 ft. of blue/grey clay and silt overlying sands and gravels. The depth to bedrock is uncertain but exceeds 60 ft., for here we are directly above the buried channel of the Usk. Peaty material is recorded from the clays but the upper and lower clay sequences cannot be differentiated here.

The pottery was dated as 2nd century A.D. and it is not waterworn.

Roman pottery, Magor

A find of Roman pottery and animal bones was made in 1966, during the building of sewerage plant near Magor Pill, at 435 850 (Boon 1967). A trial boring at this point reveals this succession:

ground level at 22 ft. O.D.

depth in feet	deposit
0 — 1	topsoil
1 — 15	upper blue/grey clay and silt
15 — 19	peat
19 — 29	lower blue/grey clay and silt
29 — 30	firm red clay
30 — 36	soft red clay and gravel
36 — 40	Keuper Marl

The pottery was reported from a depth of about 10 ft. (12 ft. O.D.) (this information advanced by the workmen) and was dated from the first to the latter part of the third century A.D. — quite definitely not the product of a mere " bivouac " occupation. Having examined the material, the author is absolutely certain that it is in no degree water-worn.

Foreshore finds

There is an interesting history of pottery finds from the foreshore between Magor Pill and Cold Harbour Pill, i.e. a little south of the sewerage plant mentioned above. Nash-William (1951) describes an occurrence as follows:

" The find spot was on the open foreshore south of Magorpill Farm, about 100 yards east of Cold Harbour Pill. The finds were scattered over a fairly restricted area on the mudflats below high watermark (ordinary tides) where they had apparently been laid bare by the scouring action of the tide. The objects had the appearance of occupation ' sediment ' from a habitation — floor which had been washed away by the sea."

PLATE 3. Foreshore exposure west of Magor Pill. The weathered zone of the upper blue/grey clays and silts is revealed in the bank, the unweathered zone is concealed beneath the modern mud in the foreground. Many pieces of Roman pottery have been found in the vicinity, perhaps derived from the lower levels of the clay.
Newport Museum photograph.

Pottery was found and dated as 2nd century A.D. This find is interesting because it occurred in an area where today the single most complete section of the Level may be examined. The present appearance of the site is as follows: grassy wharf-land immediately beneath the sea wall is terminated towards the estuary by a small wave-cut cliff revealing the top, weathered 5 ft. of the upper blue/grey clay and silt (see pl. 3). From the base of this little cliff the foreshore slopes gently down towards the river and is covered by a foot or so of superficial mud, which may easily be removed in places to reveal the lower unweathered part of the upper blue/grey clay and silt; in fact this is often exposed in the little watercourses which wend their way across

the recent mud after each tide. Shelving out from beneath these clays is the peat bed at about 7 ft. O.D., 4 ft. thick and resting on the lower blue/grey clay and silt. These deposits are visible in a second small cliff, below which recent mud obscures the succession.

It is fairly clear from his description and photographs, that Nash-Williams's finds were made from the unweathered blue/grey clay and silt, which lies between the upper cliff and the peat shelf, at a time when these deposits were not obscured by recent mud. If this is so, then this level equates with that of the sewerage plant pottery.

A remarkable find was that of a complete 3rd century jar, 11 in. high (Boon 1967), which was also found on the foreshore, apparently in a bank, but further detail is lacking. Throughout the past two decades in fact, hundreds of pottery sherds have been collected from the foreshore between Magor Pill and Cold Harbour Pill (The "Redwick finds") ranging in age from 2nd to late 3rd century. The author has collected many sherds, mostly from the little beach at the base of the first cliff, but has never seen any in the bank itself. Such sherds as may be found are generally small and rolled and are getting rarer, but examination of earlier finds in Newport Museum shows that better material, some of it quite unworn, was available in years past, supporting the suggestion that the source deposit is now obscured. The remains certainly represent significant Roman settlement spanning the years from the 2nd to the late 3rd centuries: more tentatively we may suggest this settlement debris is now lying at about 12 ft. O.D.

The Goldcliff Stone

Perhaps the most interesting coastal find was also the earliest. The Goldcliff Stone was found in 1878 and the circumstances most fully described by Octavius Morgan (1882) although an earlier account exists (1880). Morgan used the Stone to support his theory that the sea-wall was Roman in origin and later writers have perpetuated this error. This aspect has been dealt with by Knight (1962) and an alternative interpretation advanced by Boon (1967). A lot of confusion has surrounded the Goldcliff Stone. The Stone itself (it may be seen displayed at the National Museum of Wales) is a trapezoidal slab of Lower Lias Limestone, (' Ostrea Beds ') some 3 in. thick, 21 in. high and narrowing from 14 in. at the top to 8 in. at the base. The slab was weathered before its inscription. The inscription " commemorates the construction of some kind of linear work by the century of Statorius Maximus of the first cohort — assuredly of the Second Augustan Legion at Caerleon — and the length given is 33½ paces . . . " (Boon 1967, p. 126). In the light of this the question of the level at which the stone was found is of vital importance and about this the existing literature is far from clear, apart from Morgan's account (1882). Because Morgan associated the stone with the sea wall it has been assumed that he claimed the stone was found in or very near the wall. With the abandonment of theories connecting the stone with the present sea wall there is some danger of denigrating Morgan's account of the actual find. Writing in a more leisured age, Morgan is discursive, ranging over many periods and aspects of the history of the levels, but the account thereby suffers, if at all, from a surfeit of knowledge not a deficit, and a persistent reader can readily identify the level at which the stone was found.

Morgan first of all (1882, p. 13) described the succession of deposits visible on the foreshore at the find spot (about 363 824). He accurately described the weathered layers of the upper

blue/grey clay and silt and then the unweathered sequence below, noting with precision the occurrence of reed-stems. Having previously (1882, p. 9) described the underlying peat in detail, including its submerged forest, it can truthfully be said that Morgan's account is the best geological description to date of the foreshore exposures. Morgan then indicates the level of the stone unequivocally as the lower portion of the upper blue/grey clay and silt: " The lower bed is of a much looser and more porous substance, not so close, firm and consolidated, and particularly remarkable for being perforated by a great number of perpendicular holes, resembling at first sight the work of worms or insects, but on more careful examination proving to be the hollow stems of reeds which once grew there, and which may now be extracted. It was out of this lower bed that this stone was washed."

Morgan's first mention of the find (1882 p. 1) " was by the action of the tide, washed out from the lower part of the bank," refers of course to the exposure described above (and similar to that between Magor and Cold Harbour Pills) but has been taken by later authors to mean sea bank in the sense of sea wall. This is not Morgan's meaning and he associated the Stone with the wall for the perfectly intelligent reason that it was found nearby and commemorates a linear construction. We now know that the level of the stone continues inland under the sea wall as far as the levels extend — conclusive evidence that the Stone has nothing to do with the present sea wall, quite apart from the historical evidence — but Morgan made a reasonable deduction at the time. The really relevant circumstance is that while he had every possible reason to associate the stone as closely as he could with the wall, he does not, but ascribes it to a very much lower level. To the author this is good evidence for the veracity of Morgan's account despite the corollary that his original deduction was wrong.

The Stone, when inscribed by the Romans, was found a few yards to the east at Goldcliff; no other coastal exposures of Lower Lias occur within twelve miles, and Morgan was almost certainly correct in assuming the stone, a crude boundary marker, was picked up and worked on the spot. The implications of this are considerable. Regardless of the exact archaeological interpretation, (Boon (1967) suggests it marks the boundary of the Legionary farmlands extending south from Caerleon), it clearly implies a dry enough surface on which it was feasable to indicate some sort of boundary, probably in the latter part of the 3rd century.

Summary and conclusions

The Neolithic skulls clearly indicate the presence of man in the area at that time. This is quite possible if we accept a pause in the Flandrian transgression during Neolithic time, represented by accumulations of peat approaching O.D. or just above. The nature and extent of human occupation must be purely speculative until further evidence is forthcoming. The Roman remains also indicate settlement on the Level at a time when sea level must have been lower than at present, but in themselves they are not sufficient to date the renewal of the transgression, or demonstrate its magnitude, with any great precision.

When considering Roman settlement, as indicative of contemporary sea level, the nature of settlement is an important question. Even in a swampy condition the level could have been economically important, and it is worth recalling the extensive pre-drainage medieval use of the

resources of the Somerset Levels, for fishing, wildfowling, small timber, fuel, reeds and rushes etc. (Williams 1970 26–32). Although unfortunately none of the finds from the Level indicate definite occupations, one of them, the Goldcliff Stone, surely demonstrates something about the contemporary surface, for its very existence implies a surface solid enough to maintain it and clear enough to render it visible — an unlikely condition in a swamp. It is of course perfectly reasonable to suppose the Roman Century was constructing a drain in the face of a deteriorating drainage situation (Boon 1967).

The range of dates so far obtained for Roman pottery agrees with those from similar situations in the Somerset Levels (Cunliffe 1966) but it must be remembered that the stratigraphy of that area is much more complex. Peat development, drainage patterns, and the distribution of alluvium show differences and facile comparisons should be avoided. Only tentative conclusions are therefore possible, but there is certainly a basis for suggesting that significant Roman occupation of the Levels continued from the 1st to the latter part of the 3rd century and that some time later a rising sea level deposited up to 12 feet of estuarine alluvium on settlement levels. The figure of 12 feet does not necessarily imply a general sea level rise of equal magnitude nor is there yet any evidence for dating exactly the onset of this renewal of the Flandrian transgression or its termination.

The discovery of a Roman settlement surface at an undisputed stratigraphical horizon with some indication of the occupation of the settlers, would do much to answer these outstanding questions. The importance of closely observing temporary exposures is obvious.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A Spencer Steel Works. Survey by Le Grand Adsco, 1964. British Steel Corporation

B Newport Ore Terminal. G. Wimpey & Co. Ltd., 1965. British Transport Docks Board

C Newport Main Drainage Scheme. The Cementation Co. Ltd. 1963. County Borough of Newport

D Treatment Works, Nash. The Cementation Co. Ltd. 1967. County Borough of Newport

E Spencer Steel Works, site investigation. The Cementation Co. Ltd., British Steel Corporation

F Eastern Access Road, Spencer Works. Le Grand Adsco., 1963 Monmouthshire County Council

G Eastern Area Joint Sewerage Scheme. G.O. Technical & Concrete Services Ltd. 1964. Magor & St. Mellons and Chepstow R.D.C's

H Magor Disposal Works. G.O. Technical & Concrete Services Ltd., 1964 Magor & St. Mellons & Chepstow R.D.C's

I Uskmouth-Melksham transmission line. G. Wimpey & Co. Ltd., The Central Electricity Generating Board

SUDBROOK, RUNSTON AND PORTSKEWETT: A NOTE ON THE ANGLO NORMAN SETTLEMENT OF GWENT IS-COED

By JEREMY K. KNIGHT

Sudbrook, Runston and Portskewett form an interesting group of small early Norman churches in the extreme south east corner of Monmouthshire, between Chepstow and Caerwent. Only Portskewett remains in use, Sudbrook being an overgrown ruin, whilst Runston, standing amid the ruins of its village, deserted in the eighteenth century, is in the care of the Department of the Environment, who have consolidated and preserved its remains.

There is abundant good building stone in the area. Runston stands on the belt of Carboniferous limestone that runs from Magor north eastwards to Tintern, whilst Portskewett (just off the limestone) and Sudbrook are on the Triassic sandstone that provided the Normans with stone for building their early hall-keep at Chepstow Castle. In addition to building stone, the area has rich agricultural soils which have attracted farming communities from Neolithic times onwards.

William FitzOsbern was established at Chepstow very soon after the Norman conquest (probably only a few months after the battle of Hastings) and built the nucleus of Chepstow Castle before his premature death in 1071. In 1075 his son lost his lands for rebellion and his conquests in Gwent passed to the Crown. By 1086, when the Domesday Survey was compiled, there was already a castle at Caerwent, which, with its strong Roman walls, was an obvious point for settlement by folk close to still hostile territory. The earthen mound of this castle can still be seen at the south east corner of the Roman town and it may well have been the work of William FitzOsbern. Durand the Sheriff (of Gloucestershire) was also established at Caldicot by 1086, but Domesday says nothing of a castle there. Durand was the heir of Roger de Pitres, a friend and colleague of William Fitz Osbern. Within ten years of Hastings, then, the south east corner of Gwent was firmly under Anglo-Norman control. There is not a great deal of dateable architectural detail in the three Norman churches, but the blocked south door at Portskewett looks very early and it is reasonable to associate the three with the late eleventh century Anglo-Norman settlement of Gwent Is-Coed.

Portskewett, where Harold Godwinson (later King Harold) was building a hunting lodge in 1065 on a site which twelfth century tradition regarded as a seat of the pre-Norman kings of Gwent[1], existed before the Norman conquest, but Runston is one of a group of small settlements in the Monmouthshire coastal plain with names ending in the Saxon termination —ton, a farm or hamlet[2]. The bulk of these fall within the area of the known pre-Domesday settlements of Chepstow, Caerwent and Caldicot and of the three early Norman churches. The only exceptions are three which lie further west, at Bishton and at Whitson and Porton near Goldcliff. The latter are probably to be associated with Robert de Chandos, who had a castle at Caerleon by the time of the Domesday Survey and who founded Goldcliff Priory in 1113. His lands later passed into Welsh hands and it is therefore unlikely that these placenames are any later than his time. Apart from this little western group, all these evidences of early Norman

settlement—castles, churches and—ton settlements—lie on the limestone belt or on the equally fertile strip of the Mezozoic beds to the south. It is with these considerations in mind that we can turn to the archaeological evidence for the Anglo-Norman settlement at Sudbrook.

The Pre-Roman Iron Age promontory fort was excavated in 1934-6 by the late Dr. V. E. Nash Williams[3]. The massive triple defences had been built on the site of an already existing settlement, for much pottery and occupation material was included in the make-up of the banks. Occupation continued well into the Roman period, for there is plenty of first-second century pottery and an early writer recorded a coin of Septimius Severus and it is not wholly impossible that the fourth century mortaria and flanged bowls from the site represent the latter part of an occupation continuing throughout the Roman period rather than a reoccupation in late Roman times of a long abandoned site[4].

The material evidence for the medieval settlement at Sudbrook consists of the ruins of the church and a medieval building and pottery found by Nash-Williams. The building is rectangular and divided into two rooms, corresponding to the hall and chamber of the normal medieval house. The chamber is half the length of the hall and since the section shows no sign of stone rubble, the walls would merely have been low foundations for a timber-framed superstructure. There was a hearth in the hall side of the dividing wall and the proportions suggest that the house was of three bays, i.e. with a roof truss or cruck couple mid way along the hall and a second on the line of the dividing wall. The general form and construction of the building show that it is no earlier than the fourteenth century. The pottery covers the period from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries and includes vessels from the Ham Green kilns near Bristol and a type of twelfth century rouletted jug traded along the Severn Channel coasts, probably from a kiln in the Gloucester area.

Most of Nash-Williams's work was concerned with sectioning the defences of the fort, and only a very small part of the interior was excavated. The single medieval house would not have stood alone and was undoubtably a part of the medieval village of Sudbrook. Behind the inner bank of the fort on the west side was a broad quarry ditch, dug to provide material for the Iron Age defences. The medieval house, at right angles to the bank and quarry ditch, was entered from the area of the latter and it seems probable that the silted up quarry ditch acted as a roadway for a number of houses aligned along its edge. The gap in the northern tip of the inner bank may well have been made to provide access between these buildings and the church, along the line of the eastern defences. There was extensive medieval occupation north-west of the church and the levelling of the area between the inner and outer banks on this eastern side may well indicate more medieval occupation between the church and the gap at the northern tip.

To sum up, the pottery indicates medieval occupation between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries and the excavated house belongs to the end of this period, or slightly later. There is accumulating evidence from excavations that the houses of the twelfth and earlier thirteenth centuries were of light timber framing with no stone built bases and resting only on light sleeper beams. Such houses would leave no trace when they fell into decay and are difficult to locate without extensive archaeological stripping of a kind that Nash-Williams had no need to use at

Sudbrook. Any future excavator will however need to take into account the probable presence of early medieval timber structures above the Iron Age and Roman levels, as well as the more substantial later medieval houses.

After the beginning of the fourteenth century, the population of Britain began to decline, perhaps under the influence of a worsening climate, which may have reduced crop yields and therefore food supplies. There were serious and widespread outbreaks of epidemic pestilence, often associated in peasant communities with the failure of food supplies. Locally, this decline is seen most dramatically at Trellech, which failed to recover from a burning in the Welsh wars, though such events had usually been followed by fairly rapid recovery in earlier days. A series of documents from Trellech chart, in detail, its decline between the end of the thirteenth century and the early fifteenth. The same trend led to the abandonment of a number of small villages and hamlets in the coastal plain of Gwent Is-Coed. Runston is a special case, deliberately depopulated in the early eighteenth century by local landowners to dislodge the villagers, who had a bad reputation as smugglers, sheep stealers and poachers[5]. The date of abandonment of the other settlements, at St. Bride's Netherwent, Penhow, Dewstow and Herberdeston (Heston Brake) is uncertain, but at the first three there are clear remains of houses of late medieval type and their abandonment can probably be safely associated with the declining economic conditions of the later middle ages.

NOTES

[1] Anglo Saxon Chronicle *sub anno* 1065. Life of St. Tatheus Ch. 9-10. (*Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae*, ed A. W. Wade-Evans (Cardiff, 1944), 277-9). The Life, dating from the second quarter of the twelfth century, is of course no evidence for the time it purports to write about—the fifth and sixth centuries. It is however valuable as a record of what people believed to be the case at the time it was written. There is not room here to discuss in detail the geography of the story, but Portskewett is almost certainly the place where King Caradoc Vreichvras is said to have built his palace and the spring referred to in the story is probably that north west of the farm—a sufficiently marked natural feature to have attracted the comment of Coxe in words that almost echo those of the Life (*An Historical Tour through Monmouthshire* (1801) p.24). Harold may well have established his palace (where he intended to invite Edward the Confessor for the hunting) on the site of that of the vanquished Welsh kings of Gwent.

[2] For ton (or tun) see Ekwall *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Oxford, 3rd ed. 1951), 459-60. Most of the Gwent examples seem to be compounded with personal names, presumably those of early Anglo-Norman settlers. Thus *Whitson* (ST380 834), Wydeston in the Book of Llandaff, Wyteston in 1279 (I.P.M. Gilbert de Clare), is perhaps Hwita's Ton. *Heston* (Herberdeston) is clearly Herberd's Ton. (ST 524888). *Bishton* (ST 392874), a property of the see of Llandaff, is the Bishop's Ton, replacing a Welsh name, Llancadwallader, which may have been difficult for the tongues of the Normah settlers. *Langstone* always has a final 'e' in medieval documents and is the Long Stone, and not a Ton name.

[3] *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1939, 42–79.

[4] For a re-assessment of the Roman pottery from Sudbrook see Dr. Grace Simpson in *Dinorben* by Willoughby Gardner and H. N. Savory (Cardiff, 1964), p.218.

[5] Octavius Morgan and Thomas Wakeman, *Notes on the Ecclesiastical Remains at Runston, Sudbrook, Dinham and Llan-Bedr* (Newport, 1858), p.10.

SUDBROOK VILLAGE

By DAVID H. WILLIAMS

Introduction

In the foregoing article Mr. Jeremy Knight has adduced the evidence establishing the presence at Sudbrook of a medieval village within, and in close proximity to, the Iron Age Camp. But that village has all but disappeared, its former church lies in ruins, and because of the late nineteenth century construction of the Severn Tunnel, and more latterly of the pulp mill, Sudbrook today presents a very different picture from the village of medieval times. Lawson Lowe, writing in 1886, put the matter very well: " The works in connection with this tunnel have materially altered the surroundings of the camp. The parish of Sudbrook, which had from some unknown cause become depopulated, had many years ago been merged into that of Portskewett, and only a short time since not a single habitation was to be seen in the vicinity of the camp, which presented a singularly solitary aspect. Now all this is changed, and close by the camp a busy, populous village, sadly wanting, by the way, in everything that is picturesque, has sprung into existence."[1] For those who agree the pity of it is that the modern village " was *temporarily* erected "[2] in connection with the works for the tunnel. But it is not the modern village we are concerned with; this article seeks to trace something of the character of the medieval village and of its decline. Relevant records and references are however very few indeed, and so no adequate history can be written.

The Medieval Village

Sudbrook, or *Southbrook* as it was more commonly known until the nineteenth century, stood in close proximity to the Severn Estuary, in part near to the fifty-foot high stretch commonly referred to as Trinity Cliff (after the dedication of the ruined church). The medieval Sudbrook had, apart from this church, several of the features which we would expect to be associated with a nucleated village in an area of Monmouthshire where Saxon and Norman influence had been strong, —a manor-house, several cottages, a green, a mill, and paths leading to other nearby settlements. It was however perhaps a not too closely-knit village and may have had two foci. The evidence previously referred to suggests a region of settlement around the church, but the manor house and green (with cottages indicated both by documentary evidence and surface irregularities still plainly visible in the ground) was some half-mile away, and well inland. This division into two apparent parts *may* suggest a migration away from the storm eroded coast at some unknown stage in Sudbrook's history. If this is so then the movement occurred after the establishment of the church, and possibly quite early in the medieval period. But there is no certainty of this.

The *parish* comprised roughly the area covered by the eighteenth century survey of Southbrook Farm Estate by Aram[3] (and reproduced in fig. 1 in simplified form), together with land now lost to the sea. The whole settlement is probably of twelfth and thirteenth century development, declining rapidly as we shall see by the early eighteenth century. The *manor* of Sudbrook finds its first mention with the name of John as lord of Sudbrook in 1245[4] (and again, possibly his son, in 1271)[5], and there followed in immediate succession Simon, lord of Sudbrook

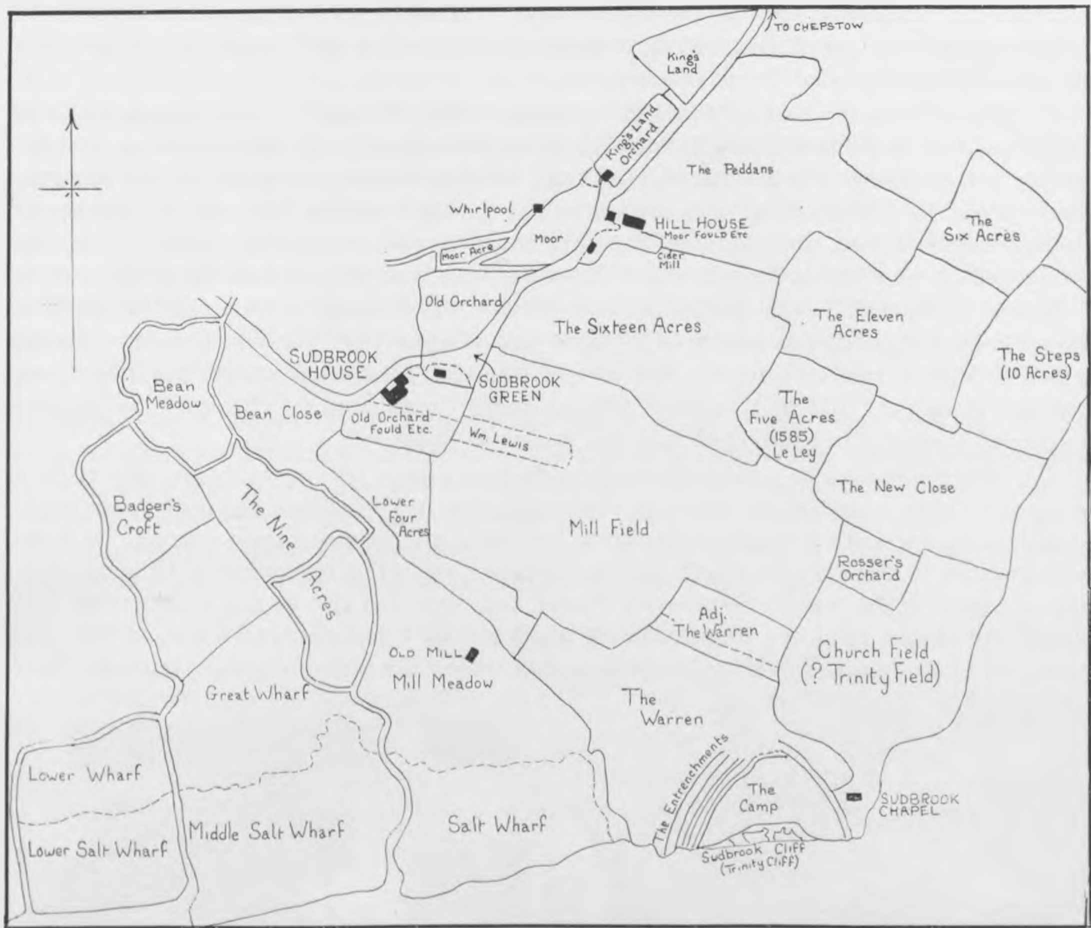

FIG. 1. Aram's Plan of Sudbrook Village, 1777 (after) (Scale 1in. = 1 mile)

(*circa* 1280)[6], and David, lord of Sudbrook (in 1297)[7]. In 1330, Walter of St. Pierre was lord of Portskewett and Sudbrook, and later the manor became the property of members of the Kemeys and Herbert families[8].

The *Green* first finds specific mention in 1412, when it was referred to as " the king's way called the Green,"[9] but the probably associated Green Ditch dates from at least *c.* 1280[10]. The Green was obviously, as is so often the case, simply an enlargement of the track which led from Sudbrook to Chepstow which finds frequent mention in later records — something of both is still discernible today. Other paths led westwards from the Green to Caldicot Mill, south-westwards to Sudbrook Mill (the South Lane), and southwards to the church (the Church Lane)[11]. The track leading from the Green towards Chepstow was not only a highway, but also an important boundary; it contained a mear-stone, " which stone," it was said in 1655, " divideth

between the lordship of Caerleon and this manor"; a survey of 1677 mentions not one but "three mear-stones (parting between the said lordship of Caerleon and the lordship of Chepstow) in a lane leading from Sudbrook to Chepstow."[12]

The *mill* was in existence certainly by about 1280 A.D.[13] when it was granted by Simon Southbrook to Sir William Derneford, and the relevant manuscript (as also a later one of 1439)[14] makes it clear that it was a water-mill with the associated pond and leet. In 1695, one John Jenkins was the miller, living in a cottage with a garden[15]. About 1711 there is mention of Sudbrook-pill running northwards to the mill, and of a new cut for the mill-leet[16]. The mill seems to have been still in operation in 1720, and at sometime prior to 1741 the mill-house was inhabited by Thomas Jenkins, probably a son of John[17]. A survey of the manor in 1755 mentions its existence, but another document of the same year refers only to "the *site* of a water grist mill called Sudbrook Mill and the soil and ground whereon the mill *did* stand"; in 1765 it was referred to as the "old mill," and in 1766 as being "now in ruins."[18] Clearly by the mid-eighteenth century the grinding of corn had ceased in Sudbrook.

How many *dwelling houses* were in the village we cannot tell; probably not very many. A survey of 1755[19] describes the manor as containing some ten dwellings, but thirty years earlier there was mention of two ruinous tenements, one being a Crossway Farm — though there was still an entity of that name in 1755[20]. The manor house was still in being in 1721 (it was perhaps the precursor of the present Southbrook Farm), and there was also at this time another farm called Hill House, ruins and foundations of which remain[21]. But on Aram's map of 1769 only some five or six detached dwellings are shown. Again there is a hint of declining settlement here.

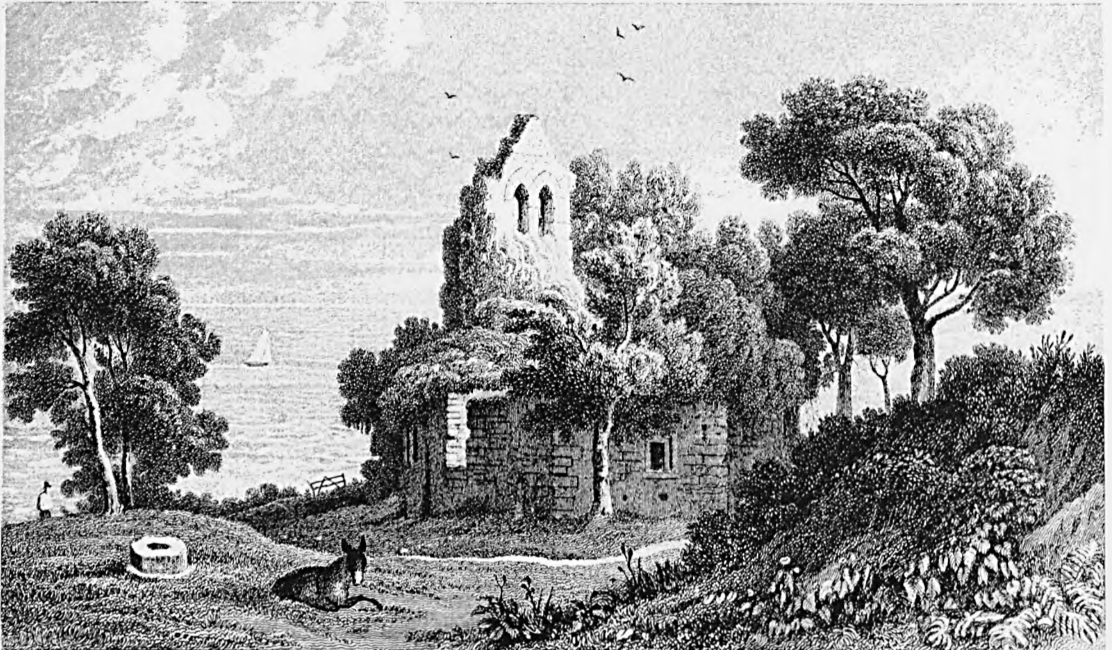

PLATE I. "Sudbrook Chapel on Caldicot Level," 1829. Engraved from a drawing by Henry Gastineau.
By Courtesy of Newport Museum and Art Gallery.

The Church

Sudbrook Church (Plate 1), perched for some time on the cliff top, was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and this itself is indicative of Anglo-Norman influence locally, for the feast of the Trinity was celebrated in England from the mid-twelfth century on, but in the Church at large was not to be so for another two hundred years. Assuming that there was no previous Celtic dedication here, this also helps to date the church of Sudbrook. The architectural evidence agrees (fig. 2); the nave walls being of twelfth century date, the chancel being added in the fourteenth century, and the south porch in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century[22]. At present the church forms an attractive but dilapidated ruin with an ivy-covered belfry for two bells. Some of its features which Wakeman and Morgan described in 1858 are no longer to be seen, but the base of the old churchyard cross may still be viewed in the ruin[23]. Since the early part of this century it has been protected by iron railings.

Nothing is known of the history of the church in the Middle Ages, save that in 1388 William Merch (or Meerth) was ordained on the title of Sudbrook, and was still resident there in 1412, when he was described not as rector or vicar but as 'chaplain'; however it may be unwise to read too much into this[24]. Sudbrook was certainly a parish with a clerical rector in 1535 when Roger Gunter occupied this position[25]. A little earlier, in 1519, a priest, Thomas Kemeys, had left 6d. to the church of the Blessed Trinity of Sudbrook[26].

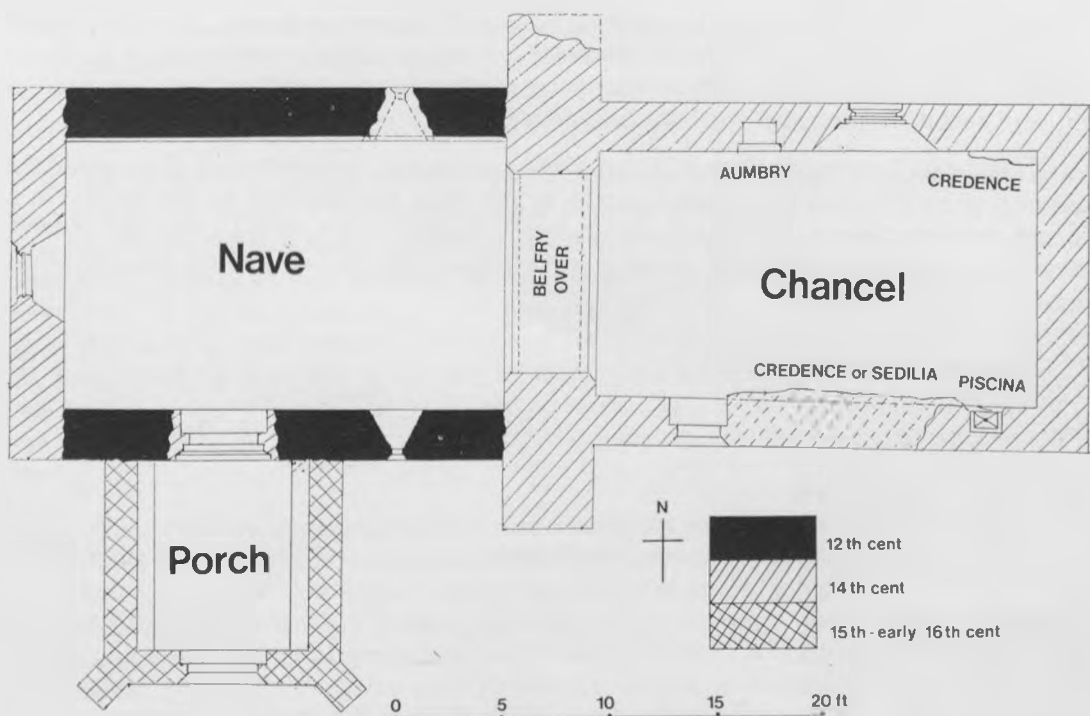

Fig. 2. Plan of Holy Trinity Church, Sudbrook.

All our knowledge of the later history of the church points to a steady decline. In 1560 the then rector, John Williams was resident[27], and so too were his immediate successors apparently. The church was still functioning in 1638 when Morgan Hughes bequeathed it two shillings, and in 1643 when Barham, his wife, left it 3/4d.[28] Then in February, 1646, one afternoon, Allan Boteler, a royal messenger (of Charles I), hid himself and his horse for a few hours in the church porch[29]. But at the Restoration shortly thereafter, in 1660, Sudbrook rectory was united with Portskewett and still so remains[30]. The church was declining, perhaps because of a decreasing population, but appears to have been for some time in a reasonable condition, a wedding being held in it in 1674[31], and when Camden wrote (*circa* 1695) no mention was made of any serious dilapidation, though this was shortly to follow.

In 1720 the church was " now fallen down," and in 1757 it was referred to as " the decayed church " of Sudbrook[32]. But although united with Portskewett it still had technically a separate parish, and so in 1757 there was yet mention of the " right of patronage to the rectory of Sudbrook."[33]

In its ruined state it was still for a short time the scene of burials. J. Evans touring S. Wales in 1803 noted of the church that " the walls are entire, but the roof fallen in . . . on removing some of the rubbish, we found inscribed stones of as low a date as 1745."[34] But the best- and last-known funeral there was that of an old mariner, Blethin Smith, in 1757. He desired in his will (1755), " to be buried in the eastern end of the chancel of the decayed church of Sudbrook as near the wall as may be, attended by six seafaring men as bearers, my coffin covered with the ensigns or colours of a ship, instead of a pall, the inscription to be verses 23, 24, 25, 26 of Psalm 107." A brass plate, with an inscription to the memory of Blethin Smith was fixed to the wall above his grave, but has long disappeared[35].

In 1800, Archdeacon Coxe said that divine service had been performed there within the memory of persons then living, and a person he met there told him that he had assisted at a funeral (possibly Smith's) there forty years before[36]. Another visitor, William Thomas, in 1839, plotted the remains of the church, showing part of the churchyard wall and the position of the ancient cross[37].

Clergy of Sudbrook[38]

Rectors		*Others known*	
		1388–1412:	William Merch (Meerth), ' chaplain.'
–1535	Roger Gunter		
1560	John Williams		
1590	John Griffiths (*also rector of Caldicot*)		
–1596	William Taylor		
1596–	Roger Jones		
1611–1620	William Jones		
1621–	Josiah Girdler		
1629–	David Williams	1628:	William Hulton described as " sometime curate of Sudbrook."
(thereafter united with Portskewett).			

The Economy and the Field System

The agriculture of medieval Sudbrook was largely based upon one large common-field which was divided into many small strips. This was " the field of Sudbrook " of which we first find mention in 1412,[39] where William Meerth, the chaplain, granted to Richard Mulgran of Sudbrook one cottage and seven acres of land. The cottage lay between a water pond and the Green; the land lay in Sudbrook-field and was divided into several dispersed parcels; two of the acres lay between the land of a William Sabyn and the Green Ditch, and three lay between named acres — the Bern Acre and the Head Acre. There is no evidence of any enclosure, and one and a half centuries later, in 1569, there is still reference to " the field of Sudbrook."[40] But shortly afterwards, in 1585, comes the first reference to enclosure, when there is mention of " a close called Five Acres in length between lands called *le buttye acre* on the west, *le lawnde* on the east, and *le ley* on the south."[41] There is then an appreciable gap in available evidence until 1634 when there is still talk in terms of " acres,"[42] — the head acre, berrow acre, briary acre, middle furlong, and others, but with no specific reference to enclosure, although, as we shall see, it must have been marked towards the end of this century.

There is no further mention in the early eighteenth century (in 1709)[43] of " the field of Sudbrook," but of a major division; now there is reference to " Churchfield *alias* Trinity Field " and of the Mill Field, and in 1727 there appear to have been several common fields — but they were still common fields[44]; so it was possible in 1709 for William Jones to buy a 2¼ acre parcel in Church Field from Thomas Hitchings, and for Jones's freehold lands in 1731 to be split into seven different parcels; he had then a four-acre portion called New Close (a clear evidence of recent enclosure), three separate parcels in Trinity Field (totalling up to 4 acres), and two separate portions in Mill Field (totalling 1½ acres), together with ½ acre in the parish of Caldicot.[45] Still, too, old names survived; the Five Acres, for example, were long known as such.

In the Sudbrook-field of 1428 there was no enclosure, but each man's bounds were known by " meares and marks."[46] Two centuries later however things were obviously quite different. The court-baron (of Portskewett, Sudbrook and Harpston) in 1654 laid down that " all tenants *shall fence* and make up their respective bounds *and fences* in the wheat field, and in the field for Lent corn." A similar injunction of 1711 repeated that tenants in the common fields " shall fence and make up their respective bounds and fences on the wheat field yearly by the feast of St. Luke," and the same was to be done by March 25th for fields sowed to " Lent grains."[47] All this seems clear evidence that by the mid-sixteenth century there was locally (i) division of the common field; (ii) enclosure; (iii) two harvests per year, though not of course on the same land.

Other evidence of enclosure at this time include the mention of several hedges. Not only mear-stones separated the lordships of Caerleon and Chepstow in the lane leading to Chepstow from Sudbrook, but elsewhere this boundary was indicated (in 1677) by hedges. There was then " a hedge between the lands of William Harcomb in the lordship of Caerleon, and the lands of Morgan Walter in the lordship of Chepstow "; also there was " a hedge between Trinity Field, the lordship of Caerleon, and the lands of Morgan Hughes, in the lordship of Chepstow." In 1741, too, there is reference to two acres of land in Church Field as being hedged in[48]. But most

interesting evidence of contemporaneous enclosure comes in the presentation of Blethin Smith at Portskewett court in 1720, for stopping up a footpath leading from Sudbrook to Southfield (in Portskewett), and he was ordered to remedy rights of way by putting up stiles[49].

The medieval pattern was rapidly passing away; in 1755 a survey of the manor of Southbrook described it as consisting of ten messuages, 6 gardens, 160 acres of land, 40 acres of meadow, 70 acres of pasture, 5 acres of furze and heath, but the manor included lands lying in the parishes of Portskewett and Caldicot[50]. This survey may have been preparatory to the establishment of the Southbrook Farm Estate which Aram surveyed in 1777, and which was valued at £136 in 1781[51]. Enclosure was complete.

Little else can be said of the economy of Sudbrook; there was an orchard at the decayed Crossway Farm in 1721, and Hill House in 1727 had a cider mill, while a not unprofitable source of income to some was the coastline[52]. The lord of the manor had long been entitled to the kelps (a sea-weed) of the local cliffs, when in 1587 Thomas Lewis let to a Bristol soap-maker for 21 years at 6/- per year, " all his kelps on the rock under Trinity Cliff, namely from the new pill to Sudbrook's pill, from the low water mark to the full sea mark."[53] Later on, Morgan Lewis of St. Pierre was to lease to John Hoggard of Black Rock the fishing in the river Severn from St. Pierre's pill to Sudbrook pill. Salmon were amongst the fish sought after[54].

Coastal Erosion at Sudbrook

The reason, or reasons, for the depopulation of medieval Sudbrook occur nowhere in known contemporaneous records. Agricultural changes, enclosures, and the evolution of Sudbrook Farm Estate, may all have played a part, but the degree of coastal erosion was probably also a very considerable factor. It was first drawn attention to in Camden's *Brittania* (1695 edition), where there is made mention of " Sudbrook, the church whereof, called Trinity Chapel, standeth so near the sea, that the vicinity of so tyrannous a neighbour, hath spoiled it of half the Church-yard."[55] Coxe's plan of the Camp at the close of the eighteenth century shows the church building as being little more than ten yards from the sea[56], while in a publication of this Association of 1858 it is described as being " upon the very brink of a cliff, and half-a-mile from the nearest habitation."[57] Lowe, writing in 1886, was able to tell that " a few years ago it was not uncommon to find fragments of coffins and human remains lying upon the beach,' and by now, nearly ninety years later, the church might well have been lost to us but for the fact that " part of the area lost by erosion was made good at the time of the construction of the Severn Tunnel in 1873-86, when debris from the tunnel was dumped around the south-east corner of the Camp."[58]

The Decline of Medieval Sudbrook

This is perhaps best summarised in the following table:—

Century	Church	Mill	Field System	Enclosures	Residences
12th	Nave built				
13th		*1280* — grant to William Derneford.			
14th	Chancel added				
15th	South Porch added	*1439* — in use.	*1412* — " Sudbrook Field "	*1428* — " meares and marks."	
16th			*1569* — " field of Sudbrook." *1585* — a close called Five Acres.		
17th	*1621* — an institution *1660* — united with Portskewett	*1695* — John Jenkins is miller.	*1634* — " head acre," " berrow acre," etc.	*1654* — " fences." *1677* — " hedges."	
18th	*1720* — " fallen down." *1757* — a funeral in ruins.	*1720* — " mill." *1755* — " site of mill. " *1766* — " in ruins."	*1709* — " Church-field," " Mill Field." *1765*: a number of fields. *1777*: Southbrook Farm Estate.	*1720* — a footpath stopped up.	*1721* — a ' ruinous tenement,' a ' decayed tenement.' *1755* — 10 messuages.

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ST. TATHEUS OF CAERWENT: AN ANALYSIS OF THE VESPASIAN LIFE

By JEREMY K. KNIGHT

The Life of St. Tatheus of Caerwent is preserved in a manuscript in the British Museum known as Vespasian A XIV[1]. Part of this manuscript, written *c.*1200 A.D., almost certainly at Monmouth Priory, consists of a series of lives of Welsh and Irish saints, including that of Tatheus. The life is virtually our only source of information on the traditional founder of the pre-Norman monastery at Caerwent and is clearly important to any discussion of the post-Roman history of the Roman town.

Tatheus is a form of the name of the apostle Thaddeus. The name was popular in Ireland, where it occurs for example in the ninth century Martyrology of Oengus and, in the form Tatheus, in an inscription on the shrine of the Book of Dimma, commemorating the donor of the shrine, Thaddeus O'Kearball, King of Eile[2]. This agrees with the tradition contained in the life that St. Tatheus was Irish and one may compare his settlement at Caerwent with that of the Irish monk Fursa, whose monastery at the Roman fort of Burgh Castle, Suffolk, founded in *c.* A.D. 633, has recently been excavated[3], or with the settlement of the Irishman St. Cybi within the deserted Roman walls at Holyhead. There is no firm evidence for the date of St. Tatheus and we shall see that the tradition contained in his life that would equate him with the fifth century King Caradoc Vreichvras is of little value.

In considering the life of Tatheus, or of any 'Celtic' saint, we should dismiss from our minds any modern conceptions of strict historical accuracy. The life was written some five or six centuries after the time when its subject probably lived and was written with little, if any, earlier written material to draw on. Much of what is contained in it, particularly its miracles, was hardly intended to be regarded as historical in any modern sense. Most of the miracles were borrowed from the lives of other saints or from the Bible, but to the medieval writer and to his readers, this did not matter. The life was written in honour of the Saint, a man of God, who was capable of working miracles and who proved his sanctity by so doing. To deny this ability was to deny the scriptures and if his miracles had been forgotten through the carelessness of later generations of men, then it was up to the biographer to put this right. To impose on this any modern concepts of historical truth is an anachronism. The question posed by the life is not so much whether its contents are historically true, but rather what earlier traditions and writings were available for the author to draw on and whether any of these can bring us nearer in time to St. Tatheus than the existing life.

The Text of the Life: I. The Settlement at Caerwent

The present life is closely related to the life of St. Gwynllyw (Woolos) preserved in the same manuscript. One need go no further than the opening phrases of the two lives to see this. The Life of St. Tatheus begins " *Rex quidam Hibernie, regum illius insule nobilissimus ...... habuit filium unicum.*" That of St. Gwynllyw " *Nobilissimus rex, Gluiisis, Australium Britonum ...... genuit filium.* This and other verbal parallels show that one life must have used the other as a model. We shall see that it is more probable that the life of Tatheus copied that of Gwynllyw than vice versa.

Chapters one to three draw on the tradition that Tatheus was an Irishman. He is represented as the only son of King Tathalius of an unspecified part of Ireland, the similarity of whose name to that of his son suggests that the author had no genuine genealogical material on which to draw. A youth of holy life, Tatheus is visited in a dream by an angel who tells him to abandon his earthly inheritance and to cross to Britain as a hermit. A close verbal parallel to St. Gwynllyw's similar dream shows that the latter is still being followed as a model[4].

Tatheus crosses the sea with eight disciples and lands in Gwent. With his safe landing the author could make no further use of his Irish origin. The next episode (Chapters 4–6) deals with his arrival at Caerwent. A local man, we are told, had prepared a bath for himself "as was his custom on the sabbath." When the strangers arrived weary with travel, he hospitably offers them his bath and subsequently entertains them. In the meantime Tatheus's boat has been left unattended. Someone is sent to tie it up and finds on arrival a stag holding the cable. The stag is brought to Tatheus and those present are at first, understandably, reluctant to be so ungrateful as to kill it for food, until the beast itself lies down and offers its throat for the knife. Caradoc Vreichvras, " King of both the Gwents " (i.e. Gwent Uch Coed and Is Coed) hears of this and sends for Tatheus. Tatheus refuses to go to him, whereupon Caradoc comes to Tatheus and gives him land at Caerwent ' near the City, between the high road and the river.' Tatheus then founds a church (' *templum* ' or ' *oratorium* ') in honour of the Holy Trinity ' with the advice and consent of the Bishop of Llandaff.'

Unlike the first section, which was virtually copied from the Gwynllyw life (assuming for the moment that the latter was written first), this is an original piece of story telling by our author. Each event follows logically from that before it and the purpose of this chain of events is evidently to get Tatheus settled at Caerwent by Royal grant and with episcopal blessing, but if the story itself is original, many of the themes used in it are not, for they recur in the lives of other saints. This sort of borrowing is common enough and certain stock miracles often appear in the lives of a large number of saints, but the present parallels go beyond this. The passages referring to the churches of the Holy Trinity in *Tatheus* and *Gwynllyw* are paraphrases of each other and there is an oratory of the Holy Trinity in the life of Illtud, chapter 7, which also has a tame stag in chapter 8. St. Tatheus's twelve canons recur in the life of St. Cyngar and Tatheus, Gwynllyw and Illtud are all said to found their churches with the consent and blessing of the Bishop of Llandaff, in two cases specified as St. Dubricius. There is another significant link between the Gwynllyw life and the life of St. Cadoc, for both saints are visited by angels and told that the next day the site of their church (in Cadoc an oratory of the Holy Trinity) will be revealed to them, in one case by a white boar, in the other by a white ox.

Many of these parallels have already been pointed out by Professor Christopher Brooke in an appendix to his article *The Archbishops of St. David's, Llandaff and Caerleon on Usk*[5] and he has shown how the themes relate this group of lives to the works of Caradoc of Llancarfan, a writer active in the second quarter of the twelfth century. We have two lives ' signed ' by Caradoc– one of the two versions of the life of Cadoc and the life of St. Gildas and Father

Grosjean has also attributed a third life, that of St. Cyngar to him[6]. Professor Brooke suggests that the life of Illtud was also written by Caradoc or by a member of his school and draws attention to the links between the products of the school of Caradoc and the lives of Gwynllyw and Tatheus. Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the final chapter of his *History of the Kings of Britain*, written about 1135–40, refers to Caradoc as ' my contemporary ' and implies that he was by then a recognised authority on Welsh history. To summarise these links and those in the earlier passage of the life we may say that the lives of Gwynllyw and Tatheus are almost certainly by the same hand and that the writer was either a pupil of Caradoc of Llancarfan or was at least strongly influenced by his work. There is some confirmation that the two Gwent lives are by the same hand and that this hand was not that of Caradoc in a stylistic trick which they contain, for in both ' church ' is rendered alternately by ' *ecclesia* ' and ' *templum*,' except in the final chapter of each, where ' *ecclesia* ' is used exclusively[7]. There can be little doubt that this is a personal mannerism of the writer, used to avoid repetition but dropped when the writer was nearing his goal. It is not a rhetorical trick, which might be used by a number of writers and appears to be absent in the other works of Caradoc and his school.

The third section of the life (chapters 7–10) sees Tatheus's grant extended to include the whole city of Caerwent, following a miracle involving some horses belonging to the king and a miraculous cow belonging to the saint. The king abandons his royal seat at Caerwent to Tatheus and rides without bridle or halter " wheresoever God might lead him." The horse halts within sight of the Severn, held by a miraculous golden fetter, and creates a spring with his hoof. The story is a common enough piece of folklore, but its main interest for the modern reader lies in that it preserves the tradition of the site of what was believed in the twelfth century to be the royal seat of the kings of Gwent. The name of what is probably the same place, *Lisacors*, occurs in a posthumous miracle of St. Gwynllyw. The identity of the site is still a matter for debate, but in the writer's opinion, a good case can be made out for Portskewett[8].

The Text: II. The Disciples of St. Tatheus

We now return to the miraculous cow (chapter 11). It is this time stolen by robbers sent by St Gwynllyw, at this time still an unregenerate robber-king. It is already cut up and boiling in the pot when St. Tatheus arrives in pursuit of it and Gwynllyw plays a savage practical joke on him, seating him on a hidden cauldron of boiling water covered only by rushes. The rushes are miraculously hardened and the king repents and restores the cow, which is brought back to life. The story derives from the life of St. Cadoc, as does the following story, which tells how the young Cadoc, whilst a pupil of Tatheus (whom the Cadoc life calls Meutheus), carries fire in his cloak. The trap set for Tatheus and the resuscitation of the cow are embroideries of the story by the writer of *Tatheus*.

There are two versions of the life of St. Cadoc, one written by Lifris between 1095 and 1104, the other by Caradoc of Llancarfan in *c.*1120–50[9]. Professor Brooke[10] considers that the two Tatheus stories are probably based on Caradoc rather than on Lifris and if he is correct the Tatheus life cannot have been written before 1120 at the earliest (a date supported by other

evidence). The respective sections in all three lives are paraphrases one of another (except for the embroideries in *Tatheus*) but the *Tatheus* wording has echoes of Caradoc which are particularly close.

Both the Cadoc lives call St. Cadoc's teacher Meutheus and the writer of the Tatheus life evidently assumed that Meutheus and Tatheus were one and the same person, but since Tatheus is undoubtably the correct form of the name, it is very possible that the equation was a wrong one and that before this identification was made there was no connection between St. Cadoc's teacher and the Caerwent saint.

The Cadoc episode is the first of three sections dealing with followers of St. Tatheus. The others deal with local saints of Gwent Is-Coed, Machuta of Llanvaches and the hermit Tecychius. The story of the martyrdom of Machuta is really an attempt to explain the place name Merthyr Maches (Llanvaches) understood in the twelfth century to mean " the (grave of the) martyr Machuta," but really meaning " the martyrium of Machuta," a martyrium being in this context the grave of a locally venerated person, whether or not that person died by violence. The misunderstanding of the nature of the cult of Machuta is itself something of an indication of its antiquity. St. Tecychius was a hermit, said to have been a disciple of Tatheus, whose chapel stood on a tiny islet at the mouth of the Wye, now literally in the shadow of the Severn Bridge. The story of how Tatheus created a well at the request of Tecychius is a close précis of a similar miracle of Gwynllyw[11] and it is more reasonable to assume that the Tatheus version is abridged than that the Gwynllyw version was laboriously expanded phrase by phrase. This suggests that where the Gwynllyw and Tatheus lives correspond, Tatheus is copying Gwynllyw rather than vice versa and that the Gwynllyw life is therefore the earlier.

The Text: III. The Final Chapters

Chapters 15–16 relate two miracles involving animals. These, illustrating the powers of the saint over the forces of nature, are common in saint's lives and need not detain us, except that one, the story of a tame wolf that guards the communities' pigs echoes an episode in the life of St. Brynach[12], the patron of Nevern in Pembrokeshire, where a tame wolf guards the saint's cow, which is stolen by Maelgwyn Gwynedd, King of Gwynedd. Like Tatheus's cow it is cut up and boiled in a pot, but is brought back to life by the prayers of the saint. The episode has so much in common with the Tatheus life that one can only conclude that either it is based on Tatheus[13] (for the Brynach life is a late one and any borrowing must be by the Pembrokeshire life) or that both are independently based on an Irish original.

The Final chapter (17) of the life of Tatheus begins with a brief account of the death of Tatheus and then passes on to a final eulogy– a peroration " . . . Tatheus . . . . whose festival today we celebrate with special affection . . . . was the father of all Gwent . . . . the defender of a woodland country . . . . receiving strangers and giving them hospitality . . . . . After his death he was buried in the floor of the church and his seven disciples . . . . . were present at the burial of their master."

Discussion: I. The sources of the Life of Tatheus

We have already seen that the subject matter of the life of St. Tatheus is taken from various sources which originally had nothing to do with the Caerwent saint and that it tells us very little indeed of any historical St. Tatheus or indeed of any traditions of the saint that go back beyond the present life. The basic tradition that Tatheus was one of the large number of Irish missionary monks who came to Britain with their followers in around the seventh century is historically credible and can probably be safely accepted as historical, but his life is as far removed in time from the actual man as we are from the Wars of the Roses. When we have summarised our author's sources– in earlier lives of saints, in folk tales and in original narrative based on the tradition of the school of writers to which he belonged, we will be able to turn to problems of date and of authorship. But we shall be talking about the twelfth century, not about the seventh.

CHAPTERS	SOURCE
1–3 Youth and coming to Caerwent	*Gwynllyw* 1–3 used as model
4–7 Settlement at Caerwent	Original composition in tradition of Caradoc of Llancarfan. Verbal links with *Gwynllyw* 5
7–8 Miraculous Cow and King's horses	Hagiographical commonplace
9–10 Migration of King Caradoc	Common hagiographical tale, based on local topography
11–12 Meutheus episode (theft of cow and tale of youth of St. Cadoc)	*Cadoc* 1 and 7 (Lifris) or 4 and 8 (Caradoc) and (?wrongful) equation of Meutheus and Tatheus.
13 St. Machuta	local topography (Llanvaches)
14 Tecychius	paraphrase of *Gwynllyw* 9 and local topography.
15–16 Animal miracles	Hagiographical commonplace and folktale
17 Final eulogy	Original composition.

II. The date of the Lives of Tatheus and Gwynllyw and their purpose

We have seen that the lives of St. Tatheus and of St. .Gwynllyw are almost certainly by the same hand and that the life of St. Gwynllyw was probably written first, but the two are probably not far apart in date and the question of the dates of their composition can probably be treated as a single problem.

If the author of the lives did use, as seems probable, Caradoc of Llancarfan's life of Cadoc as one of his sources, this would indicate a date after 1120 and the references to the Bishop of Llandaff in both lives also points to a *terminus post quem* of 1120, for the title does not seem to have been used before that date and Dr. Kathleen Hughes has also argued on these grounds that the life of Gwynllyw is no earlier than 1120[14].

This accords well with the close links between the two Gwent lives and the works of Caradoc of Llancarfan, for Caradoc is referred to by Geoffrey of Monmouth (born *c.*1100) as his contemporary and when Geoffrey published his *Historia* in 1135–6, Caradoc was already a recognised authority on Welsh history. Even if the lives were written by a younger pupil of Caradoc, their composition is not likely to have taken place much later than about 1160, which suggests a broad dating of 1120–60 for the two lives.

Further evidence for the date of the two lives is found in the history of St. Gwynllyw's church at Newport. Following the Norman Conquest, it came into the hands of the great Benedictine Abbey of St. Peter's at Gloucester (today Gloucester Cathedral), being granted to Gloucester by Robert de Haya in 1094–1104[15], but Gloucester's right to the church was later challenged by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, the secular lord of Newport and prolonged litigation followed. The dispute was several times brought before the court of Archbishop William of Corbeil (1123–36)[16]. Earl Robert challenged the validity of the grant to Gloucester and seized possession of the church. He established there a priest named Picot, by name a Frenchman, but who claimed in the litigation of 1155–6 to hold the church by " monastic right " (monachatu)[17], presumably meaning that he claimed to have inherited the rights of the native pre-Norman monastery of St. Gwynllyw. He retained possession of the church and in 1146 we find him, described as " Chaplain of St. Gunlei " disputing rights of burial and of tithe with his neighbours, the monks of Bassaleg[18]. After the death of Archbishop William, the see of Canterbury remained vacant for three years and during the anarchy of the reign of Stephen there can have been little point in disputing the rights of the all powerful Earl of Gloucester. On the accession of Henry II, the dispute was renewed in the court of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury and in 1155–6, the church was finally adjudged to the Abbey of Gloucester[19].

Dr. Kathleen Hughes has shown the important part played by the abbey of Gloucester in the compilation of the collection of saints lives preserved for us in Vespasian A XIV. One of the lives of Dubricius contained in the collection is by Benedict, a monk of Gloucester, and St. Peter's Abbey also held, between 1115 and 1136, Llanbadarn Fawr, the principal church of St. Padarn, whose life also occurs. The possession may have given Gloucester the opportunity to collect together the other lives of west Welsh and Irish saints in the manuscript. Dr. Hughes concludes that it is almost certain that some time before the Vespasian manuscript was written, the acts of certain Welsh saints were collected together at Gloucester. This seems to have taken place in the 1130s[20]. It is worth looking at the Gwynllyw life with Gloucester's dispute over the church at Newport and her interest in Welsh hagiography in mind. Both were active in the 1130s and it is possible that they may have left some trace in the life.

One of the most striking features of the life of Gwynllyw is that it is divided into two parts, roughly equal in length[21]. The first part is the life proper, the second a series of posthumous miracles of St. Gwynllyw belonging to the eleventh century. All but two tell broadly the same story—how various lay magnates, including three successive kings—Harold, William I and William II, had at one time or another interfered with St. Gwynllyw's church and with the property of his clerics and how in each case divine retribution had followed. In several cases, the magnate himself is absolved from direct personal blame and the story sometimes tells how

he hastened to make restitution when he learnt of the wrongs done to the saint. Of the remaining two stories, one tells how a certain poet who had written verses in Welsh in honour of St. Gwynllyw was saved by the saint when caught in a flood on the coastal levels. The other, the final story of the life, tells how the saint intervened to help one of his canons to win a lawsuit over a disputed piece of land. The moral of this final tale is obvious—that St. Gwynllyw would intervene to help his servants when their right to the property of his church was threatened. Like a number of other details of this series of posthumous miracles[22], it seems to carry an echo of the lawsuit over the most important piece of land of all—the church of St. Gwynllyw itself, which had also been seized by a powerful lay magnate. The Earl of Gloucester was too powerful a man to be threatened too harshly with divine retribution, but it is made clear that the rights of the church of Gwynllyw had been respected by an impressive list of lords and kings and whilst the saint was quite capable of defending his property by supernatural means, it was quietly hinted that when the Earl learnt the true facts of the case, he might well be willing to right the wrong that the saint had suffered at his hands.

The litigation fell into two parts, the one in the time of Archbishop William of Corbeil, (1123–36), the other in 1155–6, in the time of Archbishop Theodore. If, as seems probable, the life was written with the lawsuit in mind, perhaps even as a kind of pamphlet setting out Gloucester's case, it follows that its date must fall within one of those periods. After 1156, the arguments put forward would in any case have been pointless, for Gloucester had won its case.

Of the two periods, there is little doubt that the former is to be preferred. Dr. Hughes has shown that in the 1130s Gloucester were compiling a collection of lives of certain Welsh saints, the nucleus of the collection known as the *Vitae Sanctorum Wallensium* in which the lives of Gwynllyw and Tatheus have come down to us. It would be surprising if they did not include the patron of a major church over which they were at that very time engaged in a lawsuit in the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The careful references to the rights of the see of Llandaff, perhaps included to enlist Llandaff's support in their dispute, would have had more point in the 1130s, when the title Bishop of Llandaff was only of ten years standing than twenty years later, whilst the close relationship of the two Gwent lives to the works of Caradoc of Llancarfan, already a recognised authority on Welsh history in 1135–40, argues for a date in the 1130s and against one as late as 1155–6.

The two lives seem then to have been written in the 1130s by an author connected with Caradoc of Llancarfan and writing in the interests of the Abbey of St. Peter's at Gloucester. The life of Gwynllyw was written first, probably before 1136, and the life of Tatheus shortly afterwards. Unlike the earlier life it was not written to promote a cause, other than that of the sanctity of its subject, but was designed to be read, presumably in Caerwent church, on his patronal festival, as the life itself makes clear[23]. The writer seems to have had little in the way of earlier source material, but we can probably accept as historical the basic tradition contained in the life—that of a monastic missionary saint of Irish origin who founded, in the sixth century or later, a small monastery within the walls of the Roman town of Venta or Gwenta.

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[1] The text of the Tatheus life is printed (with translation) in A. W. Wade-Evans *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae* (Cardiff, 1944), 270–87. For a detailed study of the manuscript see Kathleen Hughes, *British Museum MS. Cotton Vespasian A XIV* (" *Vitae Sanctorum Wallensium* "); *its purpose and provenance* in *Studies in the Early British Church* (ed. N. K. Chadwick, Cambridge 1958), 183–200.

[2] R. A. S. Macalister *Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum* (Dublin, 1949) II, No. 931.

[3] *Medieval Archaeology* III, 299 (brief interim report on the excavation of Burgh Castle).

[4] De Visione Angelica. In nocte proxima vox angelica alloquitur sopientum (*Vita Sancti Tathei* 2).
De Visione Angelica. Interea, nocte quadam . . . . . vox angelica alloquitur sopientes continuo (*Vita Sancti Gundleii* 3).

[5] *Studies in the Early British Church* (ed. N. K. Chadwick, Cambridge 1958), 233–4.

[6] P. Grosjean *Analecta Bollandiana* LX (1942) 35–45. The text of Caradoc's life of Cadoc follows. The Gwynllyw life is printed in *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae* 172–193, the Illtud life in op.cit 194–233. The life of Gildas, edited by H. Williams is in *Cymmrodorion Record Series* III. 1899 and that of Cyngar (ed. J. Armitage Robinson) in Journal of Theological Studies XX, (1918–19).

[7] *Vita Gundleii* (T = templum, E = ecclesia. Reference is to chapter and to the line in Wade-Evans's printed text). T.(5, 8). E.(6, 17). T.(8, 6). E.(10, 10). T. (11, 13). E.(12, 20). T.(13, 12). E.(13, 21, 24, 25). T.(13, 32). E.(14, 3, 9, 11 and 16). *Vita Tathei* T.(6, 9). E.(13, 21). T.(13, 24). E.(15, 4; 17, 21).

[8] *Vita Gundleii* 16 " The court of Lisacors in lower Gwent " where a visitor receives " a Royal entertainment." If the horse had followed the Roman road from Caerwent to the shore of the Severn, via Crick and did not go cross country, he would come in sight of the Severn at Portskewett, where Harold was later to build a hunting lodge for King Edward the Confessor (*Anglo Saxon Chronicle* C, D, *sub anno* 1065), conceivably on the site of *Lisacors*. The spring is probably that rising into the pool west of Portskewett church, in the confines of the present farm buildings. Coxe (*Historical Tour Through Monmouthshire*, 24) noted " Portscwit . . . . . Church . . . . . near which a transparent rill bursts from the ground with a considerable body of water."

[9] For a textual study of the lives of Cadoc see H. D. Emanuel in *National Library of Wales Journal* VII (1951–2) 217–27.

[10] op. cit. in note 5, 234.

[11] *V. S. Gundleii* 9; V. S. Tathei 14.

[12] *Vita Sanctii Bernachii* 11–13 (*Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae* 1–15).

[13] This is by no means impossible, since the Tatheus life is in fact known in other manuscripts than Vespasian A XIV, e.g. a manuscript in the Bibliotechque Royale at Brussels from the Abbey of Rouge-Cloitre (Belgium), containing summaries of a group of thirteen lives of Anglo Saxon, Welsh and Cornish saints, including Saint Thatei (sic) of Caerwent, Cadoc, Gundlei (Woolos) and Dubricius. Maurice Coens *Un manuscript perdu de Rouge-Cloitre. Analecta Bollandiana* LXXVIII (1960) 53–83. Manuscripts containing the life were evidently circulating and one could have been copied by the author of the life of Brynach.

[14] op.cit. in note I, p.192, n. 3.

[15] J. Conway Davies (ed) *Episcopal Acts Relating to Welsh Dioceses* II (1948), 612(L.13).

[16] *Episcopal Acts* II, 648 (L. 133).

[17] *Episcopal Acts* II 648 (L. 135).

[18] *Episcopal Acts* II 637 (L. 100).

[19] *Episcopal Acts* II, 647–50 (L. 133–140).

[20] *Studies in the Early British Church* 190–3.

[21] Part I (chapters 1–10) occupies five pages of the printed text; part 2 (chapters 11–16) slightly over five pages.

[22] E.g. Ednywain of Gwynedd, who (chapter 14) breaks into the church of Gwynllyw, steals the chalice and vestments and dresses up in the latter before the altar. The startled clergy find " a stranger in the church, clothed . . . . . in ecclesiastical attire." For his sacrilege, Ednywain is punished with feeble mindedness. The whole episode reads like an oblique attack on the priest Picot, who had occupied the church and claimed to do so by " monastic right."

[23] " Tatheus . . . . . whose festival today we celebrate with especial affection " (*Vita*, chapter 17). The festival of St. Tatheus fell on December 26th. (E. T. Davies, *An Ecclesiastical History of Monmouthshire* I, 30). The *clas* of Caerwent survived at least to the Norman Conquest, for shortly before 1063, the " five priests of Caerwent " witnessed a document allegedly of Gruffydd ap Llewellyn (E. T. Davies, op.cit. 51) and the existence of the life may hint at their survival into the second quarter of the twelfth century.

GOLDCLIFF PRIORY

By DAVID H. WILLIAMS

Introduction

There is today no account readily accessible to the public, and indeed to many scholars, of this Benedictine house which stood on rising land by the Severn Estuary for much of the Middle Ages. Exactly ninety years ago Octavius Morgan published an account of Goldcliff in the former series of papers of this Association[1], while in more recent years the priory has found detailed description in the works of at least three prominent monastic historians. The purpose of this present essay is to collate the information so far published, together with such new material as it has been possible to find, and through the *Antiquary* to make it freely available,

The coastal site of the priory is worth remembering at the outset (Fig. 1); it subjected the possessions of the house to the ravages of the sea much to its detriment on at least two occasions, while on the other hand fishing and the spoil to be obtained from wreck of sea worked to its advantage. As regards the priory buildings nothing today remains above ground of any substance, though a cellar in the present farm-house dates in part at least from the priory period. The priory church has long since disappeared but fortunately there is extant documentary evidence to show that, as in the cases of Monmouth and Brecon Priories, the nave served as the parish church for the layfolk[2]. When Camden visited the site in 1606 some remains of the priory still existed[3], but much later (1882) when Octavius Morgan wrote, all had gone. Very recently (1971) a trial seismological survey was carried out on the site, and it is hoped that in the not too distant future excavation will reveal something of the priory plan. For the meantime however we must content ourselves with the interesting observations of Octavius Morgan. He observed how " in very hot and dry seasons the foundations of the walls of some chambers may be seen," and added how he himself " happened to visit this spot in the month of May, the daisy season, and there saw the lines of all the old walls clearly marked out on the uneven ground on the top of the hill by the daisies, which grew abundantly over the foundations of the old walls, whitening the surface, while on the turf which formed the remainder of the hill scarcely a daisy was to be found, and so clear was the demarcation that a rough plan of the buildings might be made."[4]

Goldcliff was a dependent priory of the Norman abbey of Bec-Hellouin, with a French prior throughout its history; it was commonly thought of therefore, both in the law of the land and otherwise, as an ' alien priory,' and the implications of this will be noted later. The Benedictines of course were the ' black monks ' of the Middle Ages, but the monks of Bec, and consequently their dependent priories, had the especial privilege of wearing white habits, a feature exactly paralleled today by the modern Benedictine foundation of Prinknash and its dependent priory at Farnborough whose monks wear white habits, unlike the black ones worn at Belmont, Downside, Ramsgate and elsewhere. At the outset of this essay therefore, I thought it of interest to emphasise — and certainly for me it was the most significant fact to rediscover in my researches — that in their day the monks of Goldcliff would have worn white habits, unlike the black monks at Chepstow, Monmouth and Abergavenny. There is added proof that this was indeed the case, for in the troubled declining years, an ousted prior, Lawrence de Bonneville, petitioning Pope Eugenius IV for reinstatement specifically drew that pontiff's

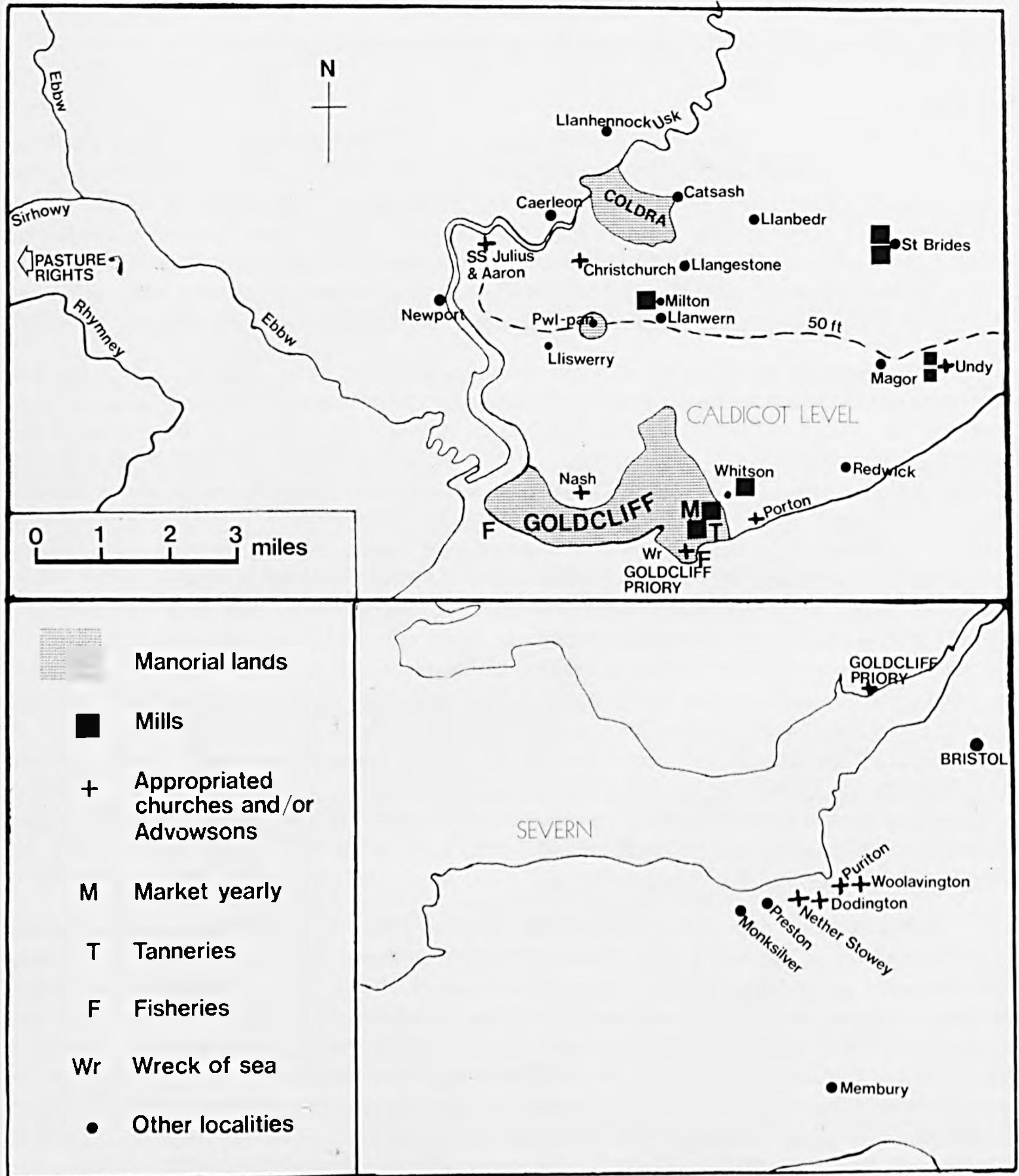

FIG. 1. Goldcliff Priory: localities mentioned in text.
(*Based on William Rees, " South Wales and the Border in the 14th Century"*).

attention to the fact that monks of a dependent house of Bec where " a white habit is worn," had been replaced by monks of Tewkesbury " wearing the black habit of that monastery."[5]

Foundation and Patronage

The priory of Goldcliff was established in or by 1113, with Robert de Chandos as founder, a Norman lord, whose ancestral lands lay near the mother house of Bec. It was the third conventual priory of Bec to be established in Britain, acknowledging its dependence on that house with an annual payment or *apport* of one pound[6]. The priory was dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene — possibly the dedication of a pre-existing church at Goldcliff; de Chandos giving to the abbey of Bec " the church of Saint Mary Magdalene of Goldcliff with its lands and tithes, and the chapel of Nash, ... that there they should form a community to serve God, and the glorious servant of Christ, Mary Magdalene."[7] This dedication is reflected in the few extant seals of the priory; the best preserved (Plate 1) showing the scene in the garden early on the first Easter Day, with Our Lord appearing to Mary Magdalene who is kneeling and holding a box of precious ointment[8].

Robert de Chandos died in about 1120–23, and was buried on the south side of the choir of the church at Goldcliff (the only other recorded burial was that of Iorwerth ab Owain in

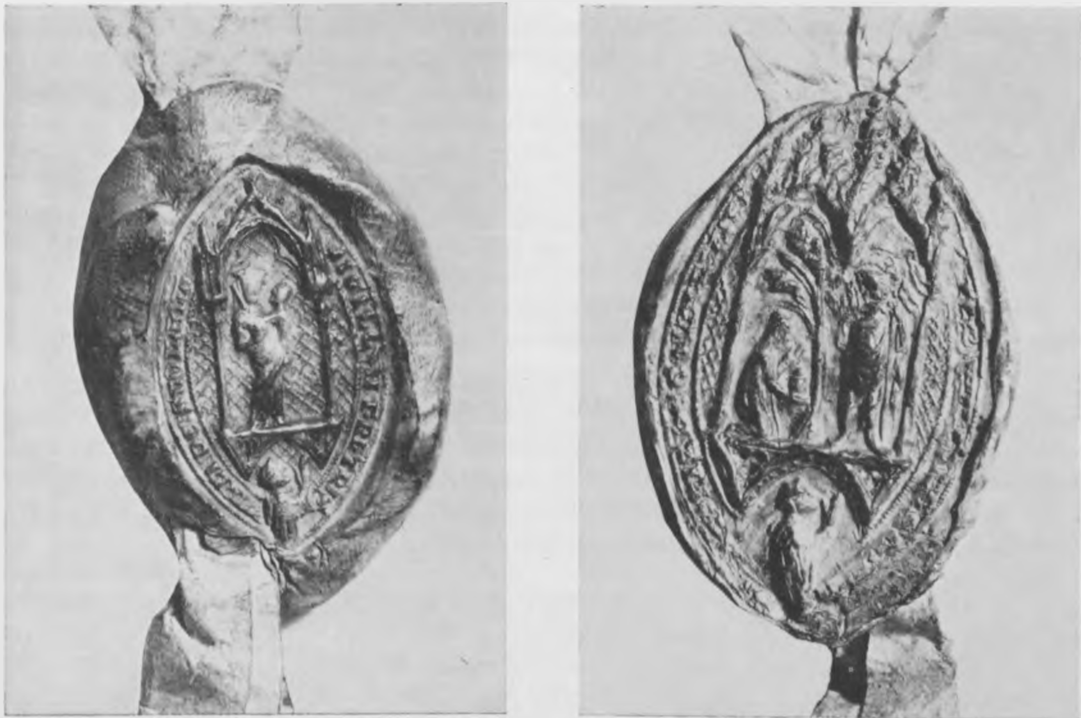

PLATE 1. Goldcliff Priory: seal of Prior William de St. Albino, A.D. 1340 (*left*) name of Prior; (*right*) Easter scene. *By kind permission of the Public Record Office.*

about 1174)[9]. After de Chandos's death the patronage of the priory passed eventually into the hands of William the Marshal, thence to the de Clares; it was claimed at one time by Philip de Columbers (1321, asserting his descent from de Chandos), and later by Richard, duke of York (1424–60, by virtue of descent from the de Clares)[10]. It is difficult now to assess the motives which made the right of patronage important, or to know how far, if at all, a patron might have been able to bring weight to bear in appointments. After all, the prior was a 'dative' prior, i.e., given by the abbot of Bec, appointed by him from amongst his monks, and not elected by the resident community. After nomination by the abbot a new prior would present himself to the patron, and then to the diocesan bishop. But one patron at least, Gilbert de Clare (in 1289), claimed to have exercised his rights asserting that the then prior of Goldcliff had been removed once by the abbot, but sent back at his request[11].

Shortly afterwards the wars with France meant that new priors presented their credentials to the king, and there is plenty of evidence as to the procedure. Ralph de Runceville, becoming prior of Goldcliff in 1313, "was presented to the king by the abbot of Bec, as by the letters patent of the abbot to the king appears, from whom the king admitting that presentation has accepted fealty and to whom he has restored the temporalities,"[12] the monarch holding the latter while the priory was vacant[13]. The king then sent the letters of the abbot of Bec to the bishop of Worcester, as keeper of the great seal, commanding him "to proceed in the business according to the law and custom of the realm."[14] The next stage was, as the prior of 1290 put it, to be "presented to the bishop of Llandaff and admitted as prior, and to have the spiritualities of the priory entrusted to him." A similar account (of 1439) exists, and so a few years later, in the mid-fifteenth century, the Register of Tewkesbury claimed that "for 318 years no prior was admitted to the priory of Goldcliff, except previously he had presented himself to the king, and had been licensed by the king, and admitted, inducted, and instituted by the bishop of Llandaff or his archdeacon."[15] More likely however, some have thought, initial presentation was to private patron until 1295, to the crown thereafter. The crown benefited financially; it charged Philip Gopylers 40 marks for restoration of the temporalities in 1328[16].

The Community

Goldcliff was a conventual priory as distinct from a monastic cell; in other words it endeavoured to maintain sufficient monks to faithfully perform the daily liturgical worship which was of the essence of a Benedictine community. Perhaps we get a glimpse of this when prior Lawrence de Bonavilla (*c.*1441) told how one attack upon the house took place when he "and the monks were in their church in divine service, about midnight." There is no other evidence by which to test the spirituality of this house[17].

All the priors were Frenchmen as witness their names, and it was said of William de St. Vedast long after his death that he had been "a Frenchman." Many of the monks too were undoubtedly from Normandy—some are described as "monks of Bec,"—and when there was a dearth in the community (1410) it was to Bec that prior German sent for a fresh supply[18]. As the Llandaff episcopal registers (and ordination lists) are no longer extant it is impossible to ascertain the proportion of Welsh and English monks in the community; indeed there is record

of only one ordination of a Goldcliff monk—Richard Frageron, in Chedworth church, Gloucestershire (1301). The community was at times a sizeable one with 25 monks in 1295, and eight towards its close. It also supported secular chaplains to assist it in carrying out some of the priestly work; there were four of these in 1297[19].

The most travelled member of the community was probably the prior. He was expected to attend regularly the annual chapter held at Bec in midsummer, and with other alien priors had frequently to present himself to the king's council during the French wars. We can glimpse a little of his travels; in May, 1292, he stopped off at Cottisford (Oxon.) (a possession of Ogbourne Priory), and two bushels of oats were provided for his horse; in the spring of 1294 he was going abroad; in early summer of 1313, prior Osbert was travelling to Bec, not to return; in 1347 we find the prior visiting his Devon manor at Membury, and on legal business at Chepstow assizes in 1415[20]. The only prior of any real note was prior William (*c.*1190–1219); he served archbishop Hubert Walter as judge delegate in an appeal to Canterbury, and was also a commissary in a Llandaff ecclesiastical case. He was the only prior to gain high office, perhaps because of his abilities in these and other unknown duties; at any rate, described as "a provident and honest man," he was consecrated bishop of Llandaff in 1219. He died ten years later[21].

A series of *corrodians* were resident at the priory during the time of royal patronage, and two of them appear to have been reasonably local men. In 1305, Geoffrey de Lantressan, " who was maimed in the king's service," was sent to Goldcliff (the previous year he had been detailed for Tintern). In 1316, Thomas de Marteleye, " who long served the king" was " to receive the necessaries of life " at the priory. Upon his demise, Thomas le Foyar (*Fuer*) of Dean was sent (1340) to take his place; however, he is granted instead (1343) the corrody at Goldcliff which Geoffrey de Hurst, now deceased, enjoyed, and (in 1345) John Seys is sent there in de Marteleye's place. Two years later the community granted Seys seven marks of the rent from the demise of Membury manor; 3 marks was on account of " good service done by him to them " and the other four marks were the annual value of the corrody he enjoyed in the priory. Seys had died by 1375 when Richard de Careswell, " the king's sergeant," took his place; John de Banham replaced Careswell (at the latter's request) in 1386; Banham was deceased by 1403 when Agnes Henyver replaced him, and then her place was apparently taken in 1407 by Thomas Ringwood, " yeoman of the king's robes " and his wife, " during their lives and the life of the longest liver." All the foregoing suggests that so far as royal corrodians were concerned, there was no heavy burden to Goldcliff—two at most[22].

Early History

The history of Goldcliff for the whole of the first half of its existence is an almost complete blank. There is only mention of economic matters (referred to later), of a dispute (*c.*1143) between the monastery and the bishop of Llandaff, of the doings of prior William (already noted), and of the recall in 1265 of prior Jean du Plessis to be prior of Bec[23]. Perhaps this absence of information reflects a period of peace and prosperity for the priory; it is to be hoped so, for the second half of its history was at times very troubled.

The Late Thirteenth Century

The great ecclesiastical valuation of 1291, the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, was for Goldcliff a reflection perhaps of its former better days at a time when it was already beginning to know severe financial difficulties, the king having made mention of the priory's poverty the previous year. But the monastery had another problem on its minds at this time—deteriorating relations with its patron, earl Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester and lord of Caerleon, who was also troubling Llantarnam Abbey. In 1289 de Clare held the liberties of the priory for a year or more " asserting that the prior and monks had abused these liberties to his detriment". The prior brought the case before the King's Bench (1291), pleading that he held his possessions in chief by gift of Hywel of Caerleon and should not be distrained to appear in the earl's court at Caerleon concerning the advowson of Undy church. But de Clare who had claimed suit of court from the prior as his tenant in Undy and elsewhere, argued that he could not be compelled to answer the prior as the latter was only " a bailiff of his abbot and not a legal person." This objection to the prior's suit was over-ruled, the earl having by some of his previous actions already recognised him as a legal person, and the prior arguing that " he and his predecessors had given lands, gifts, and annual pensions, and freed villeins, and no act of theirs had been revoked by any abbot of Bec. He had a convent in his priory and a common seal, and he presented clerks to churches in the patronage of the priory." While the case was pending before the king, the bailiffs of the earl in Newport and Caerleon continued to distrain the community to answer before the said earl, despite an order from the king not to do so pending the hearing of the prior's case. The four offending bailiffs were ordered (1291) to appear before the king for contempt. The case, suspended for a time, was cut short by de Clare's death (1295), but the following year (1296) the prior found it necessary to proceed in the king's court in a plea of trespass against one Alexander of London, clerk[24].

The French Wars

Hostilities with France commenced in 1295, and with relatively short intervals, lasted for the remainder of Goldcliff's life. From the outset a succession of monarchs took into their hands, for reasons of security and finance, the temporal possessions of the alien priories, and stringent regulations concerning the latter were laid down. " All foreign monks dwelling thirteen miles or less from the sea, or by waters bearing ships to the sea, were to be removed and sent to their manors twenty miles at least away, or to other houses of the same order and language." A guardian was to have charge of each priory, the monks were to be confined to the precincts, were to send no letters or messages, with allowance of 1/6d. per monk for food each week, and 10/- a year for clothes and shoes. " As soon as the number of monks to be removed was known they were to be sent at the cost of their houses with their beds and books to the places ordained for them, and if they were found going about the country afterwards, they were to be arrested"[25].

Goldcliff which had 25 monks in 1295, had five removed allegedly " for lack of sustenance " in 1296, and a further five in 1297, leaving fifteen in the community[26]. There is no mention of the appointment of a guardian, but generally its prior was allowed, as many alien priors were, the keeping of the priory, holding the lands and goods not in his own right but of the king and rendering therefrom a heavy annual payment to the Exchequer. This varied in

Goldcliff's case with the prosperity of the house—£100 in 1295, £71 in 1298, £79 in base coinage in 1300 (of which £26–6–8 was remitted), £66–13–4 in 1324, dropping sharply then to £10 in 1337, and rising a little to £20 in 1342–49 and standing at £17–6–8 in 1377. It was forbidden (1337) to pay the annual tribute to the mother house. The position may have been eased a little for prior German (1406) who was allowed to hold the priory's manor of Membury without rendering anything to the king, but he had to maintain the houses and buildings and support all charges[27].

Taken first into the hands of the king in 1295, Goldcliff was again taken from 1324–7, 1337–60, 1369–1400, and from 1403 on[28]. On the outbreak of war in 1369 stringent measures were again enforced concerning the alien priories; " the sureties who were called in by the priors gave pledges that the prior would stay continually in his house, maintain the ancient number of monks and servants, find chaplains for chantries and repair the buildings; and also that neither the prior, his monks or servants would pass out of the realm, reveal state affairs or secrets to foreigners by letter or by word of mouth, or send away money and jewels."[29] These strict security conditions probably represented an ideal, and for Goldcliff were seemingly short-lived; prior German was granted the keeping of his priory in 1377, if not in 1369[30].

The taking of the alien priories into the king's hands had other implications. It meant that for nearly half its history Goldcliff could not exercise its right of patronage to those churches of which it possessed the advowson; a host of references exist showing the king as performing this right, the priory " being in the king's hands by reason of the war with France."[31] For a time at least the advowsons which had been assumed by the crown (1342) were ordered to be administered by one of the king's yeomen (1344)[32]. The other implication was for the prior himself; on at least four occasions the prior of Goldcliff with fifty to sixty other alien priors had to present himself before the king s Council—in January, 1342, at Westminster—touching custody of the priory and relevant financial arrangements; on August 2nd, 1345 in London, " to speak with the council and inform them upon things that will be fully set forth to him there "; on June 25th, 1347, on pain of deprivation, and again in January, 1403[33].

The Fourteenth Century

This opened with litigation (1304) brought by the priory against earl Ralph of Gloucester and Joan his wife, " of some things touching their freehold "[34]; and with Philip de Columbers, who claimed the patronage of the priory, standing in the way of the appointment as prior of Ralph de Runceville. Prior Ralph had been presented to the king in August, 1313; in the autumn of that year an inquiry found that de Columbers was descended from the donor (de Chandos) of the Devon and Somerset lands of the priory. Not much later (June, 1314), prior Ralph had to complain that although the king had commanded the temporal goods of the priory to be restored to him on his admission to office, Philip de Columbers and a number of other men had trespassed on the priory manors of Preston, Monksilver and Membury, " not withstanding the king's seisin thereof, levied divers issues to the sum of £30, felled trees, took 23 oxen (valued at 40 marks), and other goods, and forcibly hindered the escheator so that he could not deliver seisin to the prior". Little else is known of the priorship of de Runceville, save for the papal nomination in his time of Adam Brette of Trellech, a " poor clerk," to one of Goldcliff's livings[35].

Prior Ralph's time at Goldcliff ended with his dismissal by the abbot of Bec in 1318, and the nomination in his place of brother William de St. Albino. Prior William was admitted by the king on June 10, 1318, but Ralph refused to accept his deposition claiming that he had not been canonically removed and was still prior. Consequently on September 9th, the king suspended de St. Albino's presentation to the priory, but Runceville's appeal failed and on July 18, 1319, prior William had the temporalities of the priory restored to him[36].

Ralph de Runceville in this period " disobeying his abbot and resisting the king's mandate " held the priory for half-a-year and during that time, probably with his connivance, four men " broke the treasury of the priory, and took and carried away the chalices and other silver and gilt vessels, with other goods, and the muniments, used the seal of the priory for sealing divers writings and quit-claims, alienated divers lands and tenements, granted pensions and corrodies, and charged the priory with divers debts." One of the four men was William Walsh of Llanwern who at this time gained a lease of the priory mill at Milton, and shortly after this troubled spell (1320) prior William acknowledged the indebtedness of the priory to Philip de Columbers to the tune of £63–13–4[37].

But peace apparently did not come easily; for a few years letters of protection were issued to the prior, and in April, 1321, at his request, the Earl of Norfolk was appointed keeper of the priory. Prior William was personally assaulted however by seventeen Welshmen at Morburne within his liberty of Goldcliff; they imprisoned him locally for seven days and afterwards took him to Usk Castle, keeping him there until he paid them 100 marks. They also led away the priory's horses and cattle at Morburne, Nash and Coldra, and stole other goods. A further document of the same month (May, 1322), names only ten miscreants, but gives some additional detail as to how they " broke a chest secured with four locks wherein the prior's seal was kept." (These troubles may have been a hang-over of the dispute with Runceville and in prison prior William will doubtless have reflected that prior Ralph had been similarly treated two or three years before being imprisoned for several weeks, by a band of men including one Roger de Wallington. He was temporarily excommunicated for the offence, and absolved only on condition of making satisfaction and doing penance). Nor does William le Walsh immediately disappear from the scene; just as earl Gilbert thirty years before, Walsh attempted to prosecute the prior and his tenants in the lord's court of Lebenydd and Caerleon " although the prior was a lord of the Marches, and ought not to answer except as a lord of the Marches."[38]

The sea features next in the life of the priory, simultaneously with the troubles of 1318–22, it was taking its toll of the monastic lands in Gwent. The survey of the alien priories drawn up on the start of hostilities in 1324 explained as the reason for the low value of £66–13–4 currently rendered to the king by Goldcliff, "because its possessions in Wales are in large measure submerged by the water of the sea."[39] Exactly one hundred years later the sea was again to be recorded as doing a great deal of damage.

In 1331 the taking of ship-wreck (which had been worth an assessed 2/– per annum to the priory in 1291), was the cause of a protracted dispute. Four justices were appointed (March, 1331) to investigate the complaint of Robert Gyene of Bristol, " king's merchant," that when a

ship he and others had chartered at Bordeaux to carry wines and other goods to Bristol, " was driven ashore at Goldcliff by the violence of the sea," and " not withstanding that those in the ship escaped alive to Clevedon," when twenty tuns of wine (worth £100) and other goods were washed ashore at Goldcliff, Nash, Clevedon, Walton, and Portishead, a number of men " carried the wine away "; they included prior Philip Gopylers of Goldcliff and Thomas de Bec, one of his monks. Gyene was pursuing his complaint in December, 1331, but in March 1332, the case was stopped as an irregularity was discovered on the appointment of the investigating justices. Another merchant, William de Upton, a taverner of Shrewsbury, attempted to resume it in March 1334, and a further plea of November that year adds for good measure the name of abbot Geoffrey of Bec in first place in the list of culprits,—but this was probably a legal cover. In any event the days of Philip Gopylers at Goldcliff had ended a few months before, and the outcome of the case is unknown[40].

Gopylers' priorship was interrupted for one brief year, (February 1332 – January 1333), by an interloper, a monk of Tintern—William Martel. Tintern of course was Cistercian, Goldcliff a Benedictine house, which makes the comparative ease of Martel's intrusion all the more surprising; however both were " white monks." The king admitted Martel to the rule of the house (Feb. 1332), noting that he was " a monk of Tintern Abbey, claiming to have been appointed prior by apostolic authority." Further, " although he has not brought the apostolic letters of presentation nor letters from the abbot of Bec or the Pope, as is customary, yet the king at the request of certain magnates of the realm has taken his fealty." It was a put-up job, and resulted in a brief priorship which was disastrous for Goldcliff; the gentleman of Somerset behind the affair was Sir John Inge, who now stood surety for payment of the prior's entry fine of 40 marks; he was to do very well out of the deal. Not long before (1320) he had been one of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the depredations at the priory by William le Walsh and others, and again (1322) into the prosecution of the prior in the lord's court of Lebenydd and Caerleon[41].

Martel in four short months completely wasted the possessions of the priory, and of the few seals of the house extant, half are impressions he caused to be made in so doing. On March 24, 1333, he demised the priory's Somerset manors (Preston and Monksilver) to John Inge, who was to pay a red rose for the first ten years of his tenure and £20 annually thereafter. In the next month Inge was the favoured recipient of Membury manor (Devon), again " paying a red rose yearly." In 1337 when William de St. Albino sought redress, it was stated the three manors had been leased to Inge for £50 p.a.; it being noted that Martel had " made himself prior by false and forged sealed letters." In 1337, too, the priory was found to be now only worth £10 yearly to the crown, as only the manors of Goldcliff and Coldra remained to it, " all other manors and lands belonging thereto being demised to divers persons for life by William Martel, late prior."[42]

William Martel was however soon found out; less than half-a-year after he became prior brother Peter le Counte, the subprior, was given temporary guardianship of the priory (June, 1332). On inquiry it was found that the papal bull upon which Martel had based his claim to the priory was a forgery; because of this and " the wastes committed by him in the possession of the priory," the king ordered the restoration of Philip de Gopylers as prior in February of the following year. It is perhaps worth noting that an earlier Martel benefited from the priory; in

1318 prior Runceville was permitted to lease the rectories of Woolavington, Puriton, and Netherstowey (Somerset) to " John Martel, our dear clerk," but his action was later found to be uncanonical[43].

The history of Goldcliff for the remainder of the fourteenth century is largely a blank. This therefore is a suitable point to repeat Marjorie Morgan's summary of the state of the house—as indicated by its valuation at the several outbreaks of hostilities with France. As we have already seen matters fiscally improved a little later:—

" 1295 — £100 – 0 – 0
1324 — £66 – 13 – 4 — reduced on account of floods
1337 — £10 – 0 – 0 — reduced on account of the dissipation of the property by William Martel."[44]

Economically thus, the priory was decimated in less than fifty years by floods, improper rule, and undoubtedly some of the other troubles described before.

The Fifteenth Century

The long continued hostilities with France, and the consequent restrictions upon movement probably helped to account for the lengthy period as prior of brother German de St. Vedast—who ruled the house for half-a-century from 1367 until his death in 1418. But the wars also meant a steady depletion in the numbers of monks at Goldcliff where it was being found difficult to maintain the customary services. The same was true at Cowick priory (Yorkshire), and the priors of the two houses in 1410 requested an additional supply of monks from Bec. Eight came, and personally appeared before the king in Chancery in July that year and took the oath. Cowick and Goldcliff were fortunate: the other dependent houses of Bec were being suppressed and " except in the priories of Cowick and Goldcliff, no white monks of Bec remained in England, when Henry V became king (1413)."[45]

The other current difficulty was the continued coastal erosion, and in 1424 the prior described the attacks of the sea to the king. The priory walls were on the point of being destroyed, and " half of the parish church of the said priory has been destroyed this year by the sea." The prior was permitted to take stone-cutters and labourers to repair the walls, paying them reasonably for their work and food. Such permission was necessary as " there are such customs in Wales that no labourers will leave the lordships wherein they dwell to do any work, so there is a great dearth of labourers."[46] This destruction, or the later suppression of the house or both, necessitated the building of a new parish church for the layfolk of Goldcliff well inland from the sea, but of course (as in 1606) still to suffer from it.

The closing years of Goldcliff constitute a somewhat complex story, and surrounds in part the person of the last, or perhaps penultimate, prior appointed by Bec, brother Lawrence de Bonneville. In the autumn of 1439 he was legal prior, successfully appealing for the restoration to the monastery of its Devon manor of Membury. But shortly afterwards he was summoned to Bec on a charge of misappropriating the priory's revenues. He refused to go, and was excommunicated by his abbot who complained to the commissioners of the alien priories. The archbishop of Canterbury consequently presented John Twining, a monk of St. Peter's, Gloucester,

to the priory, and his position was ratified by the king in September, 1441. A few months previously however (March 1441) Tewkesbury Abbey, using its cellarer, John Abingdon, as proctor, began to negotiate before the bishop of Llandaff for the annexation of Goldcliff as a cell of its monastery. (One telescoped summary in the public records incidentally wrongly terms Abingdon prior of Goldcliff; he may have become such but there is no proof of it). The annexation was approved by the crown in December 1441, by the pope in July 1442, and ratified again by the king in March, 1444, " to the end that the said priory might be appropriated in perpetuity to the said monastery." The annexation however was not to take effect until the death or resignation of prior John Twining, and when it did become effective the abbot of Tewkesbury had to maintain at Goldcliff a prior and two monks, there to celebrate divine office for the king, the priory founders, and other personages[47].

How long Twining remained prior is uncertain,—probably not later than some time early in 1442; he was alleged by his predecessor, Lawrence de Bonneville, to have doubted his right to the priory and to have " transferred it, as far as in him lay, to the abbot and convent of Tewkesbury." Bonneville complained bitterly to Pope Eugenius IV concerning his own deposition and the annexation of the monastery to Tewkesbury. He told how John Twining with a hundred or so lay accomplices attempted to eject him from the priory, but "was prevented "by the resistance of Lawrence and the monks and other persons of the priory." However, on another occasion, about dawn, Twining, now with the official of Llandaff, was more successful; his men (detailed by Sir William Thomas) broke into the priory, kept Bonneville and the monks without food all day, broke the doors and windows, and did much other damage (to the extent of more than 100 contemporary gold coins); then at night they set prior Lawrence on a horse "and led him by the bridle like a thief" to Usk Castle where he was imprisoned for five days, chained by one foot; thence he was taken and imprisoned for a week in Abergavenny Castle, whilst John Twining assumed control of the priory, making financial extortions from its tenants. But despite threats Bonneville refused to resign, he was allowed to return to the priory (with, he claimed, the king's licence), but for fear hid in the priory church for three days and nights; his enemies, led by Sir Thomas Herbert, saying that if he refused to resign " they would make him resign, with violence, even if he were on the high altar of his priory." In another petition to the bishop of Bath, Chancellor of England, Bonneville claimed to have been prior of Goldcliff for thirty-one years (this was an exaggeration); he mentioned his " supposed resignation" arguing that he had never resigned, and claimed that the entry of his resignation in the register of the bishop of Llandaff had been forged by the late registrar. He again describes his eviction by Twining, but now " about midnight," and his subsequent imprisonment at Usk[48]. As we have seen, he was the second known prior of Goldcliff to be held in confinement in that castle.

Bonneville also told in his papal petition of the annexation of Goldcliff by Tewkesbury Abbey. It was an event by no means peaceful; rather the eight monks of Bec living in the priory " were violently expelled " by Sir Thomas Herbert and a crowd of armed men, and " thereby caused to wander about England." Lawrence claimed that the king through his Chancellor had intervened upon his behalf, but that the only result of this had been two further periods of imprisonment in Llandaff. The pope (1445) therefore ordered the archbishops of Canterbury and the bishops of Worcester and Hereford to restore Lawrence to the priory, to test his allega-

tions, and if found to be true to excommunicate Sir Thomas Herbert and the other offenders. How effective the papal ruling was cannot be ascertained; one unsupported source suggests that the monks of Tewkesbury were expelled from Goldcliff by the Welsh in 1445, but that they returned in 1447[49]. Thereafter Goldcliff was shuttled to become the property of Eton College in 1451, restored to Tewkesbury in 1462 (and confirmed to it in 1464–5 by a lost papal bull), and then in 1467 it was finally bestowed upon Eton. A little later (1474–5) its properties were split; those in Gwent were granted to Eton, and those in Devon-Somerset to the dean and chapter of Windsor[50].

Because of the uncertainty surrounding the period 1445–50, no precise date can be given to the final termination of Goldcliff as a dependent priory of Bec. Whether monastic life continued in 1451–62 is unknown, and it certainly will have ceased in 1467. Somewhere in the closing troubled days of the 1440s, a monk of Bec, Hugh de Morainville, was sent by his abbot to Goldcliff, and it is possible he was prior there in 1445–47. We know that " he stayed two years," and one record terms him " late monk *alias* prior of Goldcliff," and we learn that " on being expelled therefrom by the abbot of Tewkesbury " he stayed for some time with Nicholas St. Loo in the diocese of Bath and Wells, " where he duly and with decency performed his priestly office . . . . . so far as the bishop knows." The said bishop (1455) of Bath and Wells requested " all persons to receive him kindly, treat him favourably, and hold out helping hands to him." Perhaps as an alien monk, at loose in the English countryside, the crown took a different view of him; at any rate two years later (1457) it was found necessary to grant him a pardon " for all treasons, felonies, offences, and other trespasses and misdeeds."[51]

Economic History

The *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, already referred to as being compiled in 1291, gives us a broad picture of the exonomic position of Goldcliff. It was now the richest of the Benedictine priories in Wales, something like 5/12ths of its income was derived from tithes and other perquisites of appropriated churches, and of its landed possessions the value of those in Gwent was practically quadruple that of its three manors in Somerset and Devon, at this time at any rate; F. G. Cowley has calculated that in Gwent its property comprised some 1,220 acres of arable land, and 125 acres of meadow[52].

Its early benefactors were Robert de Chandos who gave the monastery the land of Goldcliff with the tithes appertaining, with moorland stretching towards the Usk, all his uncultivated marshland stretching northwards to Pwl-pan, and all lower Nash towards the Five Fisheries. He also gave the priory his whole manor of Pwl-pan, part of his wood of Wastadcoit (abutting on Catsash and the river Usk), the tithes of his lands in Wales and the tithes of his mill at Caerleon; de Chandos also settled on Goldcliff its three Somerset-Devon manors—Membury, Preston and Monksilver, and they received other lands in SW England, as in the Mendips, (of which no more is heard), and the advowsons of several churches, both there and in Gwent. Morgan ab Owain gave the house 200 further acres in the moor of Goldcliff, together with other lands and a mill called Bide; Hywel ap Caerleon gave, amongst other grants and confirmations, a manse and two burgages in Caerleon, pasture rights on the hills between the Rumney and the Sirhowy for 40 cows with their calves and 100 sheep with their lambs, the right to take timber

in his forest of Wulench, the tithes of the pannage of Wastadcoit, of honey in the wood, a mill at Undy, and the tithes of his mills at Caerleon and Lliswerry. Other gifts included 40 more acres in Goldcliff moor, and ten of meadow in Redwick; they had too free warren in their Gwent manors. Several fisheries accrued to them, including at least three pools in the Five Fisheries (near the Usk mouth), another across the Usk by St. Nigon, and certain other fishing rights. All sorts of other liberties were at least in theory enjoyed, including the grant of de Chandos that the prior should have a court at Goldcliff, and wheresoever he felt expedient, but not judgement of life and limb. The various properties and rights were confirmed to the priory in the reigns of Henry I, of king John, and at great length by Edward I (1290)[53].

Little is heard thereafter of some of the Gwent lands, but if the reference to animals in the *Taxatio* attributed to Goldcliff (and there is some doubt) does indeed relate to it, then the house had in Gwent in 1291, 4 mares, 64 cows, and 120 ewes. Several other points of interest are revealed by the valuation, the chief perhaps being the ownership of some eight mills (it had more in SW England), together with tanneries at Goldcliff. The mill at Milton was a water-mill, the nature of the others is unspecified; possibly, some were windmills. The Gwent lands were later generally referred to as the manors of Goldcliff and Coldra, and they were jointly valued at £10–11–4 in 1337, and before August, 1332 Coldra had been at least temporarily demised to Michael Minyhot, who finds mention later[54].

Membury manor, in Devon, given by de Chandos, was worth £7 in 1291; it was first demised for £20 p.a. in 1331 to John de Usk, clerk, and then in 1332, as previously noted, to Sir John Inge. Inge came to the rescue of the priory with a loan of 100 marks in 1340, the then prior agreeing to drop the claim for return to his hands of the manor; by 1377 Membury was demised by prior German de St. Vedast who in 1406 was himself allowed to hold it for life. The last prior was deprived of this enjoyment, but had it restored to him shortly before his downfall. In 1474, with the Somerset lands, it finally passed to the dean and chapter of Windsor. An extent of 1337 showed the manor as comprising 100 acres of arable (worth 50/– per acre), 12 acres of meadow, a water-mill, and various rents and perquisites. The manors of Preston and Monksilver were leased to Nicholas Wedergrave in 1327 for £20, and then to Inge in 1332. The troubles on all three manors in 1313–4 have been noted; other troubles at Preston in 1340 stemmed from the archdeacon of Taunton and others. The only other note of interest is that in 1279 a jury found that the prior exercised his right in the manor of Preston of impounding stray animals[55].

Trade was facilitated by the grant of earl William of Gloucester (*d.*1183) of freedom from toll of all kinds, " that they may sell and buy," in Bristol, Newport and Cardiff, together with a messuage outside the walls in Newport. They held land in the mid-thirteenth century in Baldwin Street, Bristol, and had two holdings there recorded in the Tallage Roll of 1312. In 1290, Edward I granted them the privilege of holding a fair in the manor of Goldcliff for eight days starting on July 21st, the vigil of St. Mary Magdalene, their patronal feast[56].

Appropriated churches were a source of wealth,—the rectorial or greater tithes pertaining to the priory. Goldcliff had the advowson and profits of the Somerset churches of Puriton, Nether Stowey, and Woolavington, together with the advowsons of Monksilver and, for a time

at least, the chapel of Dodington. Nether Stowey was the subject of an agreement about 1235 between Goldcliff and the dean and chapter of Wells; a pension of four marks had been granted (13th Cent.) out of Woolavington to the Master and Brethren of St. John, Bridgewater. Puriton, Nether Stowey and Woolavington had been farmed uncanonically in 1318 and were then described as sequestrated churches; previously (to 1317) they had been in the keeping of one William de Osgodby, clerk. In 1321–2 the prior of Goldcliff lost his turn of presentation to Puriton by lapse; in 1335, the bishop of Bath and Wells " exercising our visitation " caused the prior to exhibit his title to the three churches, and in 1337 the vicar of Woolavington had appealed to the Court of Arches, against the prior of Goldcliff, regarding the augmentation and assignment of his vicarial portion; he lost his case[57]. In Gwent, Goldcliff had the advowson of the parish church in the nave of the priory, and of Christchurch, Caerleon (called " Christchurch in the Wood " in 1349); Robert de Chandos had also given them the church of SS. Julius and Aaron, and Hywel ap Caerleon had given them Undy church, though neither were attributed to the priory in 1291, and in 1409 Undy was granted to the bishop and chapter of Llandaff by Goldcliff, with insistence that the poor of the parish be provided for as hitherto. Porton, granted to Goldcliff in the twelfth century, had its appropriation confirmed in 1245, but no more is heard of it after 1354[58].

It only remains to briefly reflect upon some financial details of the house not so far met. In 1284 archbishop Peckham's injunctions said that in common with certain other houses he had visited, a central treasury of receipt should be set up at Goldcliff. Obviously there must have been some mismanagement here; other points he made (both for this house, and for Ewenny and Haverfordwest priories), were that money meant for the poor was to be safeguarded, and any food left over at meals should be given to the poor. By 1290, as we have seen, the priory was entering a period of financial strain, and when he granted them their privilege of an annual fair, Edward I to save the monks unnecessary expense made no charge, " because they are poor and are not sufficient for making fine."[59] There then follow the 1291 valuation—Goldcliff the richest Benedictine house in Wales, but then too the rapid decline previously noted. Further debts were acknowledged in 1332 (by prior William Martel, of £600 to Michael Minyhot to whom Coldra manor had been demised), and in 1334 (by prior Philip Gopylers, of £200, but this was cancelled upon payment. Both money-lenders were citizens of London, and Minyhot was a vintner). Other debts have been noted before. In 1332 the prior was absolved from excommunication for non-payment of the vicarial portion for the churches of Woolavington, Preston and Nether Stowey, and in 1341 he had to appear before the king for non-payment of a tenth. These are evidences, if further were needed, of the difficulties being experienced by the priory. Few other gifts that we know of came its way; there is however solitary mention of the bequest in 1438 by Richard Dixton of Cirencester of 20 marks to the priory in his will[60].

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Appendix I

PRIORS OF GOLDCLIFF

c. 1190 – 1219	William[61]	*bishop of Llandaff, 1219–29, when dies.*
1248 – 1249	Henry[61a]	
– 1263	Maurice[62]	
– 1265	Jean du Plessis[63]	*1265, becomes prior of Bec, but dies shortly afterwards*
ante – 1295	Walter[64]	
1297 – 1313	Osbert[65]	
1313 – 1318	Ralph de Runceville[66]	
1319 – 1327	William de St. Albino[67]	
1328 – 1334	Philip de Gopylers[68]	*1332, William Martel intrudes.*
1334 – 1336	Thomas Leone[69]	*relieved in 1336.*
1336 – 1349	William de St. Albino[70]	*relieved in 1349 " on account of his weakness "; he had twice been prior.*
1349 – 1352	Bertand Maheil[71]	*removed by abbot of Bec.*
1352 – 1357	William de St. Vedast[72]	*had keeping of Ogbourne Priory 1399.*
1369 – 1418	German de St. Vedast[73]	*prior for half-a-century; died Oct. 20, 1418*
1418 – 1441	Lawrence de Bonneville[74]	
1441 – 1442	John Twining[75]	*monk of St. Peter's, Gloucester.*
? 1445 – 1447	? Hugh Morainville[76]	*uncertain case.*

(*change-over of priors generally took place in summer months when travel was rendered easier, and priors visited Bec for general chapter*).

Appendix II

(a) **Numbers of Monks in Community**[77]

1113 —	(13)
1295 —	25
1297 —	15
1441 —	8

(b) **Names of known monks**[78]

1301 —	Richard Frageron
1332–3	Peter le Counte (subprior)
1331	Thomas de Bec (*alias* de Goldcliff)
1378	Peter of Bec. Thomas de Bronia, John de Vesenell, Ralph de Vilers, John de Malnyk
in 1378–99	John Cleevebeck

Appendix III **Taxatio Ecclesiastica,** *1291*

pages	*Gwent property*	£ s. d.	
281	at *Goldcliff, Frosum', Whitson:*		
	7 carucates land	10 – 0 – 0	
	100 acres meadow	2 – 10 – 0	
	fixed rents	21 – 6 – 8	
	villein payments	5 – 0 – 0	
	3 mills	2 – 0 – 8	
	customary work	6 – 2 – 6	
	wreck of sea, per annum	2 – 0	
	pleas, perquisites — fair and market tolls	13 – 6 – 8	
	pasture sold	10 – 0	
			60 – 18 – 6

		£ s. d.	
	Brought forward	60 – 18 – 6	
	in *Christchurch* parish:		
	3 carucates land	4 – 0 – 0	
	12 acres meadow	6 – 0	
	at *Christchurch, Caerleon, Coldra, Milton,* and *Kemeys:* customary work	4 – 4½	
	fixed rents	1 – 10 – 0	
	Milton — water-mill	1 – 0 – 0	
	Goldcliff — tanneries	10 – 0	
	St. Bride's — 2 mills	2 – 0 – 0	
	Abund (? Undy): 21 acres	4 – 4½	
	2 mills	1 – 6 – 8	
	Reneston — fixed rents	6 – 0	
	Landhumond (? Llanhennock): fixed rents	3 – 0	
	St. Peter's parish — (*? Porton* or *Llanbedr*):		
	7 acres land	1 – 1 – 0	
	Magor: from demise to abbot of Tintern —	5 – 0	
	13 acres meadow there —	6 – 6	
			74 – 1 – 5
	(Total is £73–13–5 in Taxatio)		
	Spiritualities:		
278b	Church of Goldcliff, with chapel	26 – 13 – 4	
	Churches of Christchurch and Porton	26 – 13 – 4	
			£53 – 6 – 8

(An entry on 284b, attributed in the footnotes to Goldcliff, credits its Gwent lands with 4 mares, 64 cows and 120 ewes).

Somerset-Devon property

	Temporalities:		
200, 204	Manor of Preston (*repeated*)	8 – 0 – 0	
200, 205b	Manor of Monksilver (*repeated*)	3 – 0 – 8	
152	Manor of Membury	7 – 0 – 0	
			£18 – 0 – 8
	Spiritualities:		
198, 200	Church of Woolavington (*repeated*)	6 – 13 – 4	
198, 200	„ „ Puriton (*repeated*)	8 – 0 – 0	
200	„ „ Stowey	4 – 13 – 4	
200	Pension out of vicarage of Puriton	2 – 8	
			£19 – 9 – 4
		SUM TOTAL	£164 – 18 – 1

REFERENCES

ABBREVIATIONS EMPLOYED:

AC	—	Archaeologia Cambrensis
BG	—	Transactions of Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society
Brad.	—	J. Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire* (1904–).
Charter	—	Calendar of Charter Rolls
Close	—	Calendar of Close Rolls
Dev. Tr.	—	Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association
Dugd.	—	W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1817–30 edn.)
FGC	—	F. G. Cowley, *Monastic Order in S. Wales* (Ph.D. (Wales) thesis, 1965)
Fine	—	Calendar of Fine Rolls
JCD	—	J. Conway Davies, *Episcopal Acts* (Hist. Society of Church in Wales)
Matthew	—	D. J. A. Matthew, *The Norman Monasteries* (1962)
MM	—	Marjorie Morgan (*Chibnall*), *The English Lands of the Abbey of Bec* (1946)
Papal	—	Calendar of Papal Registers
Patent	—	Calendar of Patent Rolls
Porée	—	C. Porée, *Histoire de l'Abbaye du Bec* (1901)
RG	—	Rose Graham, *Four Alien Priories in Monmouthshire* (in *Journ. Br. Arch. Ass.* xxxv)
SRS	—	Somerset Record Society

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[1] Octavius Morgan, "*Goldcliff*" (Monmouthshire and Caerleon Antiq. Assoc. 1882).
[2] Patent 1424/265.
[3] Octavius Morgan, *op.cit.* 12.
[4] *ibid.* 12.
[5] Papal ix. 472–5.
[6] MM 10–11, 21; FGC 17.
[7] Dugd. vi. 1022.
[8] *BM.* Seal lxvii. 55; cf. *PRO* E.42/342.
[9] JCD ii. 618; AC 1848/332, 334.
[10] MM 11, 29; *Rot. Parl.* i. 398, ii. 415; Dugd. vi. 1023.
[11] FGC 221, 224–5; MM 29.
[12] Patent 1313/12.
[13] Fine 1328/86–7.
[14] Patent 1313/12.
[15] MM 33; JCD ii. 618; *PRO* E.368/212. m. 56(44).
[16] FGC 224–5; Fine 1328/86–7.
[17] FGC 17; *PRO* C. 1. 12/195.
[18] MM 128; Patent 1410/193, and see Appx. II(b).
[19] *Cant. and York. Soc.* lii, p.947; Papal ix. 474; RG 112.
[20] RG 115; MM 21; Patent 1294/63, 1313/585, 1347/332; T. B. Pugh, *Marcher Lordships of S. Wales* (1963), 54.
[21] JCD ii. 672, 702–4.
[22] Close 1304/208, 1305/13, 1316/436, 1340/642, 1343/229, 1345/644, 1375/247, 1386/109, 1403/178, 1407/358; Patent 1347/332; MM 130–1.
[23] JCD ii. 635; MM 36; Porée 609.
[24] FGC 364, MM 29, 33; *Rot. Parl.* i. 82b; *Abbrev. Placit.* 227; Close 1291/197; Patent 1296/183.
[25] RG 111–2.
[26] RG 112; FGC 74, 254.
[27] RG 112; Patent 1295/176, 1406/142; Close 1300/345, 1337/175; Fine 1337/49, 1342/267 1349/136, 1369/13, 1377/26; Rymer's *Foedera* (Rolls S., 1869) i. 287; Dev. Tr. lxi. 372.
[28] Patent 1400/72, 1403/253; Close 1327/9; Fine 1369/13; Cal. *Memor. Rolls* (Mich. 1326–7) 56; RG 112–3.
[29] RG 113–4.

[30] Fine 1369/13, 1377/26.
[31] Far too many references to advowsons to enumerate here, but, e.g. Patent 1338/151.
[32] Fine 1342/270, 1344/367.
[33] Close 1341/358, 361, 1345/636, 1347/284, 1402/25.
[34] Cal. *Chancery Warrants* i. 212.
[35] Patent 1313/12, 1314/152-3; SRS i. 2, 172; Cal. *Chancery Warrants* i. 393; Cal. *Inq. Misc.* ii. 39–40, 376.
[36] Patent 1318/158, 1320/544; Close 1318/10–11, 1319/151.
[37] Close 1318/10–11, 1320/332; Patent 1319/376, 1320/544.
[38] Patent 1321/562, 576; 1322/106, 157, 163–4; 1323/276, 1327/197; Cantilupe Soc. *Reg. Ade de Orleton* (1317–27) p.132.
[39] PRO. E. 106/5/2.
[40] Patent 1331/139, 1334/68, 574; Close 1331/422, 1332/553.
[41] Patent 1332/244; Close 1332/433.
[42] Dev. Tr. lx. 163; lxi. 371; PRO. E. 42/342, E. 40/A.3215; FGC 376; Fine 1337/49, 1340/184; Close 1337/175.
[43] Fine 1332/316; Patent 1333/406; SRS i. 19; Brad. IV.ii.274.
[44] MM 121.
[45] Patent 1410/193; MM 128.
[46] Patent 1424/265.
[47] Dev. Tr. lxi. 372; Papal viii. 241–4; Patent 1441/2, 29, 1444/271; MM. 133.
[48] Papal ix. 472–5; *PRO*. C.1.12. 195, 196.
[49] Papal ix. 472–5; MM 133; Dugd. vi. 1021; *see also* J. G. Edwards, *Ancient Correspondence concerning Wales* (1935) 263.
[50] Patent 1451/457, 1462/93, 106; 1467/48, 62, 66; 1474/461, 1475/551; MM 133; Dev. Tr. lx. 166; Papal xii. p.xxxvi.
[51] SRS xiii. 248; Patent 1457/395; (the uncertainty of dates in this period is reflected by the apparent inaccuracy of those given in *Rot. Parl.* v. 47a, 307, 519, 577).
[52] FGC 97.
[53] Brad. IV.ii.272–274; Dugd. vi. 1022; *Rot. Chart.* 95; Charter 1290/358–361; *Abbrev. Placit.* 232; FGC 22.
[54] Fine 1337/49; Patent 1332/326; Brad. IV.ii.252.
[55] Dev. Tr. lx. 162–6, lxi. 371–2; Patent 1327/19, 1332/320, 1379/341, 1406/142; Close 1441/447; *Rot. Hund.* ii. 140; Cal. *Inq. Misc.* ii. 430–31.
[56] Brad. IV.ii.272–3; BG xix. 233; lvi. 170; *Abbrev. Placit.* 232; Charter 1290/358–61; Dugd. vi. 1022.
[57] SRS i. 19, 130, 201, ix. 248, 315, xxxii. 225; JCD ii. 716; Close 1357/364; Patent 1338/151, 1342/375, 421, 1349/276, 1372/193.
[58] Patent 1349/225, 336, 433, 1354/43, 1382/169, 1409/78; JCD ii. 725; Charter 1290/358–61; Dugd. vi. 1022; E. Owen, *MSS in BM relating to Wales*, iv. 922.
[59] FGC 236–7, 364.
[60] Close 1332/554, 1334/307, 1341/120; BG xi. 158; SRS ix. 105.
[61] JCD ii. 702–3. [61a] David Knowles and others, *Heads of Religious Houses* (1972), p.148.
[62] Close 1341/264.
[63] Porée 609.
[64] Close 1357/364.
[65] Patent 1297/270, 1313/585.
[66] Patent 1313/12, 1320/544.
[67] Close 1319/151, 1327/182; Patent 1327/197, 1328/255.
[68] Patent 1328/255; Fine 1328/86–7, 1334/415; Close 1327/182.
[69] Fine 1334/415; Patent 1334/12, 1336/279.
[70] Patent 1336/279; Fine 1349/136.
[71] Fine 1349/136, 1352/326.
[72] Fine 1352/326, 1399/18.
[73] Fine 1369/13, Dev. Tr. lxi. 372.
[74] Dev. Tr. lxi. 372; Papal ix. 472–5.
[75] Patent 1441/2; Papal ix. 1472–5.
[76] SRS xiii. 248; Patent 1457/395.
[77] Dugd. vi. 1021; FGC 74, 254 Papal ix. 474.
[78] Cant. and York Soc. lii. 947; Fine 1332/316; Patent 1331/139, 1334/68; Matthew 153, 157.

GRACE DIEU ABBEY: AN EXPLORATORY EXCAVATION

By DAVID H. WILLIAMS

Introduction

In the Centenary volume of the Cambrian Archaeological Association, A. J. Taylor wrote of Grace Dieu that " a small-scale excavation would probably suffice to enable the accurate location of the foundations, and to show whether extensive work would be required to recover the complete plan."[1] It has been my privilege to organise such a small-scale excavation, and while this has provided clues to the precise whereabouts of the abbey, it has also indicated that any major work is likely to be undertaken only with some difficulty.

A number of people have worked at the site or given advice, and I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to them all. A great deal of the heavy work has been done by groups of personnel from H.M. Borstal Camp, Prescoed, Usk, and, in two fortnightly periods of intense activity, by some members of Manchester Grammar School Archaeological Society. Some members of Monmouth Archaeological Society were of considerable assistance, particularly Mr. S. Clarke, while from time to time help has also been rendered in various ways by Mrs. Johns of Abbey Cottage, Mr. Cowles and family of Hendre Farm, and Father Byron of Monmouth. I am, too, extremely grateful to Mr. J. K. Knight for visiting the site on several occasions and tendering expert advice, and for writing the appended report on pottery found at the site; my thanks go also to Mr. George Boon for his report on the coins, and to Mr. Cefni Barnett for his preliminary identification of them, and to Mr. S. Locke for commenting on the lithology of the building stones. Last, but very far from least, go my thanks to the Hendre Estate for allowing me to excavate on some of the best pasture land in Monmouthshire, and to Capt. E. G. Prior, the estate agent, in particular, for his good offices at all times.

The Site

The precise site of Grace Dieu Abbey has been a matter for debate for well over a century[2], and the documentary evidence is conflicting, some of it suggesting a position to the west, and some a location to the east of the Troddi stream. This latter now seems the most likely. However, perhaps the *first* site (of pre-1233) was indeed located to the west of the Troddi (and so accounting for the yet continuing extra-parochial nature of Treurgan *alias* Parc Grace Dieu); while the post-1236 site, possibly to please the Welsh, moved to the east of this stream and thus into the parish of Llangattock-vibon-avel. All things considered, this solution to the problems of the two sites of Grace Dieu now seems the more feasible.

The excavation was concerned with trying to locate the precise position of the second site of the abbey, east of the Troddi. The assumed site, as marked by the Ordnance Survey, is set in a flood-plain currently subject to deep annual floods and with a water-table always near ground level even in the driest weather. The floods are very likely a post-medieval feature—in part at least; the result of (i) local deforestation upstream resulting in more immediate runoff of precipitation, and (ii) failure to maintain after the dissolution the several drainage channels used by the monks, traces of which are still visible today. This post-medieval flooding has

probably grown in severity, and at any rate has certainly laid down deep layers of silt, probably burying much of the medieval foundations at some depth, and suggesting that even oblique aerial photography may well prove to be of little assistance.

The assumed site (Abbey Meadow) today shows therefore hardly any sign of having building foundations of any kind, but when during haymaking, the grass is mowed extremely short, various slight ridges and humps are visible, especially in the north-east sector of the field. When flowering weeds are in evidence these too, it has been noted, may indicate a helpful pattern for any future work[3]. Aerial photographs so far consulted (four sets of vertical views) have not been much more useful, and the excavations at Grace Dieu in 1970–71 therefore not unnaturally took into account the surface irregularities mentioned when determining precisely where to dig.

The Excavation

Two squares (10ft. x 10ft., one of them later extended) and a trench (40ft. x 10ft.) were accordingly cut in the north-east section of the field, though the more southerly (and most promising) square was unfortunately affected by seepage of groundwater for practically the whole of the season.

In the southern square a broad, well-built, and regular wall, running in a roughly easterly direction, was uncovered at a depth of four feet. A less substantial structure surmounted part of this. But the depth of the foundation and its remoter position from the later residence, to be described below, make it extremely likely that this portion of wall is medieval in date and as such having some connexion with the abbey. Without further excavation, or other evidence to suggest something of the plan of the monastery, it would be hazardous to guess at this stage what it might represent.

The trench and the northern square revealed nothing more than the foundations of a residence occupied in the late seventeenth—early eighteenth centuries, the principal structures of interest including a raised pathway underlain by a 14in. layer of rubble surmounting a solidly built platform of re-used medieval dressed stone. The base of the rubble layer sealed a clay smoking pipe of *c.*1700 which lay on the platform. A fireplace and a stone walled latrine were also in the excavated portion of the residence, the latter, filled with silt, contained the only medieval coin so far found on site. The position of the fireplace, partly lying on the foundation wall, taken together with a considerable break in this wall which had been infilled with dressed and other stones, suggests the possibility that the lowest part of the wall in the north corner of the northern square was a previous structure incorporated into the residence.

Various finds—clay pipes, coins, pottery, etc.—all indicate that the residence was occupied from about 1670 to 1730. It is known that at the suppression of Grace Dieu two married couples were living in the gate-house and were allowed to continue in occupation for life; an Irish halfpenny of 1601 might belong to this period of settlement. There is a gap in the dateable evidence until about 1670, but as so far only a very small corner area of the residence has been excavated it would be unsafe perhaps to assume a break in settlement. The last resident may have been one William Watkins. There is no evidence of occupation after about 1730, and the pathway raised to meet increasing floods might suggest an abrupt ending to the settlement.

The residence was built partly of red brick, but mainly of local red sandstone, and much use was also made of worked stone, evidently of ecclesiastical origin, which could only have come from the nearby abbey, including fragments of door jambs, window structures, columns and capitals. Again they are largely of local red sandstone, but with some sandstone possibly originating in the Forest of Dean, where Grace Dieu had possessions. The most significant stone so far found was face down in the platform underlying the pathway leading to the residence. Some of the dressed stone can be attributed to the mid-thirteenth century, as one would expect, but there is a large portion of a capital in the grounds of Hendre Farm which is of much later date—late fifteenth century—which might be related to a period of benefaction to, and re-furbishing of Grace Dieu Abbey, for which there is some historical testimony.

Summary

1. A small-scale excavation in 1970–71 seems to have touched on the northern fringes of Grace Dieu Abbey, but much further work remains before any monastic plan could be drawn. Such further excavation would probably be hindered by problems of depth and water seepage.
2. Since the suppression, increasing flooding with consequent silting has done much to hide effectively such of the medieval foundations which were not robbed for building stone.
3. A residence, occupied in *circa* 1670–1730, stood partly on the excavated site in close proximity to the abbey.
4. Various surface features, and historic accounts, combine to suggest that the precise location of the abbey is probably between the site so far excavated and the junction of the Troddi with its tributary stream.

Specialist Reports

A. **COINS.** — Mr. George C. Boon (National Museum of Wales).

1. Edw. III. Canterbury penny, pre-Treaty series A, *c*.1351, much worn.
2. Halfpenny, Irish, 1601; worn.
3. Chas. II, farthing, 1672–5, or 1679; much worn.
4. Wm. III, farthing, 1695–1700; worn.
5. Wm. III, halfpenny, 1699.
6. Geo. I., farthing, 1719–24, probably 1719.

(Coin 1 was found at a depth of 13ins. in the silt-filled latrine; coins 2–6 were all located within an inch or two below the topsoil, and in close proximity to the pathway).

B. **POTTERY.** — Mr. Jeremy K. Knight (Department of the Environment).

The pottery associated with the post-dissolution occupation of Grace Dieu is typical of local deposits of *c*.1700 and its homogenous character suggests that the occupation it represents was of comparatively brief duration. There is excellent dating evidence from within the group of its date, for it contains sherds of Staffordshire capacity mugs with revenue stamps of William III (1688–1702), two wine bottle seals of 1723 and a stamped pipe of William Harper senior of

Broseley (1696–1736)[4]. Coins 3–6 (above) confirm the other dating evidence. In these circumstances, it would be superflous to discuss the dating of the individual pottery types within the group, but its character and composition is very similar to the group of *c.*1700 recovered from the town ditch of Abergavenny at 11, Neville Street in 1963 and published in this journal[5], and a fuller discussion of the pottery types represented will be found there.

The Grace Dieu group contains much material from the Staffordshire kilns which were later to become " The Potteries " *par excellence* and which had already captured a substantial share of the market. There are many sherds of capacity mugs, slip wares (including combed slip wares) and some salt glazed ware. Other imported wares include a little Bristol delft and sherds of German Westerwald beer mugs of early eighteenth century character. There are also many sherds of a late thin walled version of gravel tempered ware from North Devon. Local wares include plain and slip decorated brown-glazed wares and a thinnish brick-red ware with a glossy, polished looking, black slip coating. This last ware is also known from Abergavenny and from Tintern.

C. **STAMPED CLAY PIPES.** — Mr. J. K. Knight.

1—2. R. E. Bowls of Oswald type 6a (1650–90).

3—4. Rose and Crown and initials R.O. *North Herefordshire* kilns 1650–1700.

5—7. Broseley type 5 pipes, a distinctive type with a flat pear shaped base carrying the maker's name in a three line rectangular cartouche. The dates of the makers are known from entries in the Broseley church registers[6].

5. WILL/HAR/PER William Harper, Senior (1696–1736).

6. IO)HN/..M/... Uncertain. Possibly John James (1670–97).

7. ER on crude pear shaped stamp; ? local imitation of Broseley type.

NOTE: Since making the comments above on the likely effects of flooding, I have come across a note of a similar local case. As early as about 1520 it was alleged that " negligence in suffering to be unscoured the Middle-ditch, formerly on the land of the prior of Goldcliff " and then of the provost of Eton led " to the inundation of the lands of the manor of Llanwern, whose waters should flow to the Severn by that channel." (*P.R.O.* C.1 596/42)

REFERENCES

[1] " *A Hundred Years of Welsh Archaeology*," (Camb. Arch. Assoc. 1946), p.147.

[2] Monmouthshire Antiquary (1964), p.102.

[3] Noted by Mr. S. Clarke on Aug. 15th, 1971.

[4] Adrian Oswald, " The Archaeology and Economic History of English Clay tobacco pipes," in *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd series: XXIII (1960), 40–102.

[5] Monmouthshire Antiquary (1968–9).

[6] A. Oswald, *op.cit.*

NOTES

EXCAVATIONS AT COED-Y-BWNYDD, BETTWS NEWYDD — 1970 SEASON

The present campaign of archaeological excavations at Coed-y-Bwnydd is sponsored by the Coed-y-Bwnydd Excavations Committee and the Monmouthshire and Caerleon Antiquarian Association. The work is carried out by kind permission of the owners of the site, the National Trust, and the consent of the Department of the Environment. We are indebted to the Monmouthshire County Council, the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales, the Cambrian Archaeological Association and many local private subscribers for valued and generous contributions towards the cost of the work.

Sites C and D (Rampart Section and Occupation Area behind Inner Rampart)

A section three metres wide was cut through the inner bank and the area immediately behind: the cut through the other three banks and three ditches was two metres wide. This work was undertaken with a view to determining the construction of the ramparts, the relative chronology of the site and the location of occupation material representing the Early Iron Age history of the site, of which two major periods were revealed.

The primary phase was represented by a rectangular structure of sleeper beam construction (most probably a granary), three metres long and two wide. Associated with this structure was a burnt area which backed onto the earliest rampart. This was about two metres wide, of glacis construction and made of redeposited clay placed behind a plinth of undisturbed natural. This bank and its associated ditch were destroyed when the phase 2 defences were built. There is evidence from an examination of the extant defences of the site as a whole that the fort in the first stage was in fact univallate.

At a date subsequent to the abandonment of the rectangular structure a shallow quarry scoop was dug, destroying two sides. This probably relates to the quarrying for large stones found in the natural subsoil, which were used as a foundation for the yellow clay bank of phase 2. The material for the bank came from an enlarged first ditch. Although it is impossible to relate the history of the other three banks and two ditches to those of the inner defences stratigraphically, certain deductions can be made. Since the second ditch was recut at a time when it had silted up, it can be assumed that the outer ditch was dug simultaneously, since there is no evidence of recutting. This is supported by an examination of the southern defences of the fort: here the outer ditch and bank seem to be later additions to the other three banks and two ditches. It can therefore be suggested that there were three progressive stages in the construction of the defences—univallate, bivallate, and finally the multivallate defence seen today.

Associated with the phase 2 inner rampart is the building of a round house, recognised by a wall footing composed of large stones and a drip gully. Set between the stones were fifteen stake holes, most of which were of very small size and probably related to the wattle framework of the wall. Pieces of burnt daub were found in association with this foundation. The arc of the footing excavated indicated that the house was about nine metres in diameter. At the same time as the house was built a cobbled area was laid between the wall of the house and the rampart, a distance of about two metres.

Some of the bank material slipped and partly covered the house after it had ceased to be occupied. The inner ditch had silted up to a depth of nearly half a metre by the time the bank material filled up the rest of the ditch. There is some evidence to suggest deliberate demolition, represented by tip lines in the section of the inner ditch and the absence of an inner bank for two-thirds of the perimeter of the site, but it is not possible at present to establish when this was done. Such a project would entail a large and determined labour force for the clay which made up the banks sets like concrete and is very difficult to move. Either deliberate slighting at

the time of the Roman Conquest or agricultural improvements in mediaeval times are possibilities, but certainly prior to the mid-17th century since when the site has been lightly wooded.

Thus Coed-y-Bwnydd has produced a rectangular structure, unusual in the British Iron Age and found mainly in the Herefordshire Marches at such sites as Croft Ambrey, Credenhill. and Midsummer Hill, in stratigraphical relationship to the more usual round house type. Further, the sleeper beam technique of construction found at Coed-y-Bwnydd can only be paralleled in hillfort contexts at Midsummer Hill. The site therefore has great interest in relation to Iron Age house types, and it is hoped that excavations in 1971 in the area of the round house will produce more information on this subject.

ADRIAN V. BABBIDGE

THE INSCRIPTION ON CAERLEON BRIDGE

Built into the upstream parapet of Caerleon Bridge is a stone plaque with an inscription recording the building of " This Bridge " at the expense of the county by David Edwards and his sons William and Thomas, the work being completed in the year 1800. Before this stone causes any confusion, it should be placed on record that " This Bridge " is not Caerleon Bridge, but Newport. Until recently the stone lay outside Caerleon Museum, to which it had presumably been taken when the old Newport bridge was demolished. When the parapet of Caerleon bridge was rebuilt a few years ago the stone was built into it on the assumption that it was being restored to its original place.

Following the incident in October 1772 when the timber bridge at Caerleon collapsed during a storm, carrying Mrs. Edward Williams, the wife of a brazier of the town, into the Bristol Channel before she was rescued by a lucky chance, it was rebuilt in timber and drawn and described by Archdeacon Coxe in 1799[1]. In contrast, his engraving of Newport bridge shows it in active course of being rebuilt in stone and his description echoes the wording of the plaque, which he had probably seen. Five years later, another tourist, Edward Donovan, paused on the bridge to transcribe the plaque[2], thus clinching the identity of the stone now in Caerleon bridge. At Caerleon on the other hand, the new stone bridge was still only contemplated[3]. When it was finally built a year or two later, the builder was David Edwards, thus making the present error all the more plausible and misleading. Coxe's engraving of Newport Bridge shows it (though of five arches) to be similar in design to Caerleon and for that matter to Usk, another David Edwards bridge. The first opportunity should be taken to remove the inscription from Caerleon bridge and it might be suggested that an appropriate home for it would be Newport Museum.

David Edwards was the son of William Edwards of Caerphilly, the self trained builder of the famous Pontypridd bridge of 1751–5, a noteable Georgian tourist attraction and in its day the largest single arch structure in the world.

JEREMY K. KNIGHT

[1] *An Historical Tour through Monmouthshire* (1800) 100–1 (Caerleon); 45 and plate facing (Newport). Coxe's account of the adventure of Mrs. Williams follows his account of Caerleon Bridge. The story is also told, often with various (probably apochryphal) additions, by a number of other tourists.

[2] E. Donovan *Descriptive Excursions through S. Wales and Monmouthshire in the Year* 1804 *and the Four Preceding* (sic) *Summers* (London, 1805), 183.

[3] Donovan, op.cit., 173.

INTERIM REPORT ON EXCAVATION OF PART OF POUND LANE MOSAIC, CAERWENT

The excavation was undertaken for the Department of the Environment, in advance of the laying of a sewage trench in Pound Lane. When the area of the mosaic had been defined, it became clear that the sewage trench could be re-routed slightly to avoid it. The mosaic is in poor condition and will be covered to prevent further damage.

The uppermost layers were removed mechanically. They consisted of tarmac and road-stone. Below were the following layers:

1. Black humus with some rubble; finds included modern artifacts.

2. Rubble and black humus; in the southern half of the trench this layer was absent. Finds included modern artifacts.

3. Predominantly broken undecorated wall plaster interleaved with black soil; it contained much broken stone roof tile and subsidiary amounts of rubble, tegulae and imbrices. The layer cannot be regarded as sealed by layer 2 at any point.

4. At the bottom of Layer 3 the stone tiles were more complete; they were in places underlain by undecorated wall plaster in a slightly fresher condition than that in layers above. At the same stratigraphical level as these fallen or placed tiles was a much destroyed wall running skew to the walls of the room of which the mosaic formed the floor. This wall also overlay wall plaster in places. Accordingly it was thought that the tiles might have been re-used as flooring material. In favour of this hypothesis is the fact that in the South of the trench where tiles lay directly on the mosaic, the mosaic was not shattered as it might have been had the tiles fallen onto it. But the irregularity of spacing of the tiles and the fact that any such floor would have been composed part of rubble and part of almost clear mosaic makes it seem more likely that Layer 3 was used as a floor. This leaves layers 1 and 2 to represent an unsurfaced road in the top of which the stones of the skew wall would have been visible.

5. A thin layer of pea gravel no more than 3mm. thick. Layers 4 and 5 contained no finds.

There were three major intrusions. The most destructive was a robber trench for a boundary wall. It was dug between 1921 and 1935, according to local recollection. It contained a 1921 halfpenny. The other two intrusions contained no finds beyond a fragmentary sheep's skull; both cut Layer 2 but neither was observed in Layer 1. Their fill was black humus with some rubble. These two intrusions had removed the tegulae of the mosaic but had left the underlying fine white mortar.

The mosaic was found to be further disrupted not only by loss of tegulae but also by partial collapse into underlying cavities; perhaps through compaction of inhomogenous underlying material, perhaps because of an underlying hypocaust.

Plans, photographs and finds have been deposited with the Department of the Environment and will be published in the forthcoming report on excavations at Ponud Lane.

P. J. ASHMORE

A GOLD STATER OF ANTEÐRIG FROM TINTERN

While gardening at Upper Leytons, Tintern, in 1969, Mr. Ralph Hodges discovered a gold stater of the Dobunni. The find-spot, about 400 yds. north-west of Tintern Abbey, is thus about 300 yds. within Monmouthshire.

Obv. Tree-like ornament derived from the laurel-wreath of Apollo on the ultimate prototype, the gold stater of Philip II of Macedon (359–336 B.C.).

Rev. Disjointed three-tailed horse R., wheel below (relics of the two-horse chariot of the prototype); ornaments in the field; above, ANTEÐ, below, ꓤIC

Red gold. Weight 5.36 g. Dies 190° (fig. 1). Mack, no. 386.

This is a very good example of this coin, though the original crispness of detail has been worn away from the highest parts of the design. The red gold is typical of the coinage of the Dobunni. As far as the inscription is concerned, it appears to be composed of a name, probably abbreviated, Anteð, and a title, Rig, cognate with the Latin *Rex* and thus meaning 'King.' Anteð ruled in the early part of the first century A.D., perhaps about A.D. 15–30, or somewhat earlier.

The derivation of the tree-like ornament on the obverse is clear, but it is very doubtful whether the designer intended it to be taken as a version of the laurel-wreath of the prototype, a copy of which he probably never saw. On some British coins the same pattern is developed into a corn-ear, and this may even appear, as on the coins of Cunobelinus, in perfectly Romanised fashion. The Dobunni, however, never struck Romanised coins. Their own coinage is derived from that of their south-easterly neighbours, the Atrebates, and from the early strand of the Atrebatic coinage which ended when Romanised designs were adopted about 15 B.C. On the Dobunnic coinage, the motif may well have been intended as a coniferous tree, that is to say a symbol of longevity, such as we find, for example, held by the seated mother-goddess of Caerwent[1] or in the corners of one of the distinctly Celtic antefix-designs from Caerleon[2].

The frontier between the Dobunni and the Silures was almost unquestionably the Wye. The Silures did not strike coins of their own[3], and the scatter of Dobunnic specimens in south-east Wales may be explained on the basis of trade. Otherwise, British coins are very rare indeed in Wales, two of the Coritani from the Great Orme, Llandudno, and Penbryn, Cardiganshire, probably attesting a commerce in metals—in the first case, the copper of the Ormes, and in the second, perhaps the gold of Dolaucothi where, in primitive times, there would no doubt have been a good deal to be won by panning the gravels of the river and attacking outcrops of the auriferous quartz.

Dr. Derek Allen lists the following coins of Anteðrig from Wales[4]:

(2). Chepstow (Evans, *Ancient British Coins*, 1864, p.144)
(3). Dingestow (Savory, *Bull, Bd. Celtic Studies* XIII, p. 113).

The Dobunnic coinage enjoyed a very wide circulation in southern England, a fair number of examples having been found well outside the limits of the tribal territory; indeed there are a few strays from find-spots as far distant as Cornwall and Yorkshire. In Wales, an uninscribed gold piece was found at ' Dinas,' Breconshire, inscribed gold of ' Catti ' at Chepstow and ' Corio ' at Llanthony, and a silver piece was found at Whitton Cross Roman villa-site, Glamorgan[5].

The finder showed the coin at Bristol City Museum, who notified the National Museum of Wales and sent a cast. The coin was auctioned at Sotheby's on 24th June 1970, lot 163 (without mention of provenance), and was acquired by the National Museum for £740, something of a record figure for this type. The National Museum has had an electrotype made, which has now been given to Newport Museum[6].

GEORGE C. BOON

NOTES

[1] *Archaeologia* LXII (1910), 16, fig. 8; V. E. Nash-Williams, *Bull. Bd. Celtic Studies* XV (1954), pl. 6.

[2] V. E. Nash-Williams, *Arch. Cambr.* LXXXVII (1932), 62, fig. 11; G. C. Boon, *Isca* (National Museum of Wales, 1972), fig. 14c.

[3] For a remotely possible example, see Derek Allen, ' The origins of coinage in Britain: a reappraisal ' in: S. S. Frere (ed.), *Problems of the Iron Age in Southern Britain* (1960), 257, pl. 14 (from Weston-under-Penyard).

[4] *Ibid.*, 251.

[5] *Ibid.*, 246–256 *passim*; the Whitton Cross coin is a later discovery and has not yet been published.

[6] At the end of this note, I refer to the mischievous publication, in Council for British Archaeology, Group 2, *Archaeology in Wales* 1970, p.13, no. 16, of ' a few gold coins of Antedrigus ' found at a place known as The Ham (SO 535155), i.e. on the Monmouth–Hereford border. There is now known to be no truth whatever in this assertion, which is one of a number of false entries relating to Monmouthshire which disfigure this and the preceding issue of *Archaeology in Wales*. The Mr. M. P. Watkins, named as the originator of the information, is a respected Monmouth solicitor and knew nothing of the matter. It is understood that the culprit has now been identified.