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The seal reproduced on the cover is the Common Seal of the Augustinian Priory of Llanthony Prima, as used in 1316 and depicting the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan. (*Hereford Cathedral Archive 1169:* by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter of Hereford).

Cyhlluniwyd - Argraffwyd gan: Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru
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THE MONMOUTHSHIRE ANTIQUARY

Vol. X 1994

A PRE-NORMAN CROSS FROM CAERWENT AND ITS CONTEXT

By MARK REDKNAP, F.S.A.

In August 1992 Mr P. Blaydon discovered a fragment of cross-slab lying with a small group of freshly excavated stone against the graveyard wall of the church of St.Stephen and St.Tathan at Caerwent, Gwent *(ST 469 905)*. He promptly brought the find to the attention of Mr R.Brewer of the National Museum of Wales, who was at that time excavating at the site of the Basilica in the town, and the stone and its findspot were subsequently inspected by Mr Brewer and the author.

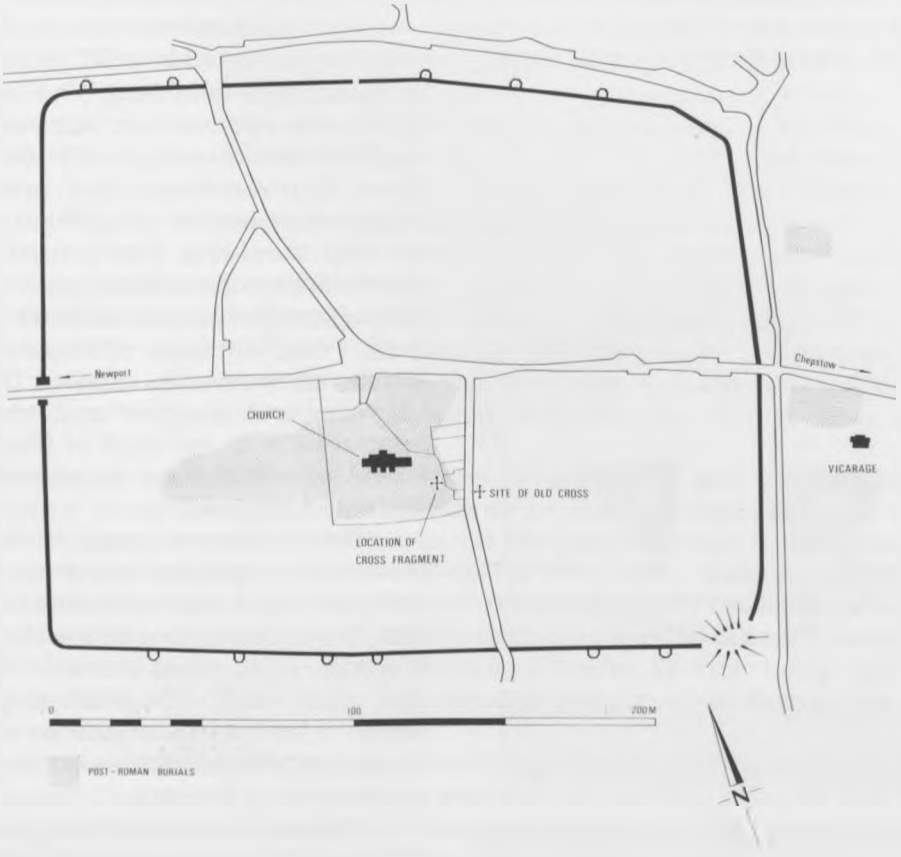


Fig. 1. Location map of the findspot, showing the approximate known limits of early medieval burial within the walls and outside the East Gate.

The findspot

The stone was found during the excavation of a new grave to the south-east of the present church, near to the eastern perimeter of the modern burial ground. The Ordnance Survey map records the site of a 'Cross' close to this spot, in the middle of the road approaching Great House Farm *(O.S. 6", Prov.Ed., 1918-1949)*, and the 1855 report on the excavations by the Caerleon Archaeological Association at Caerwent records that *'Anciently a cross stood here'*[1].This may refer to the site of a late medieval High Cross[2]. The weathered head of such a cross, bearing scenes of the crucifixion, with St. Mary and St. John, was recorded at Caerwent by Elizabeth Harcourt Mitchell *'at Mr. Till's, of the Great house in the village..'*. The head had been bought by him 'from a cottager who found it in her garden' (i.e. it does not appear to have been found at the Great House farm)[3].

The pre-Norman cross

The disc-headed slab is of local Sudbrook stone, and measures 0.44 m in height, 0.63 m in maximum width and 0.11 m in thickness. It is fractured on all sides except at the end of one cross-arm, the surviving edge of which is dressed to shape. One face only is carved with a cross, with an original width estimated at *c. 0. 65m.* The equal-armed ring-cross with slightly splayed arms carved in relief, is outlined by plain edge-moulding. The angular inter-arm spaces are sunken and roughly tooled to a depth of 30 mm, and there is no evidence for interlace, knotwork or similar decoration within the edge-moulding. The form of cross, which lacks bosses found on the cart-wheel/panelled crosses of South Wales, is of 'Anglian' type, similar to those which appear on the crosses from St Lawrence and Margam[4] and related in general form to the head of the Carew cross[5], all of which are dated to the late 10th or 11th century.

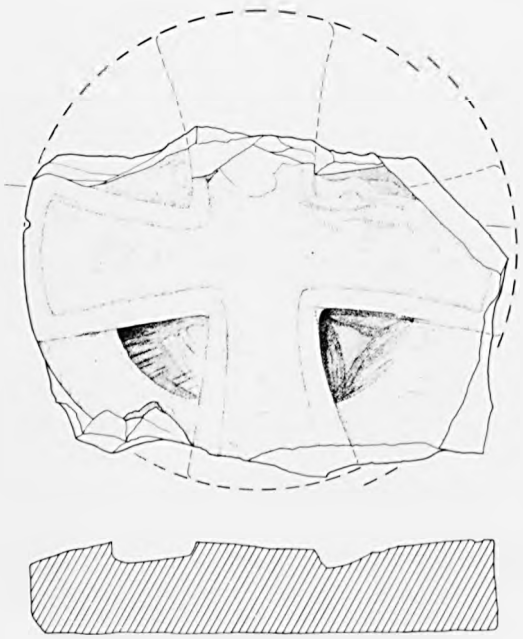


Fig.2. The pre-Norman cross fragment from the church of St. Stephen and St.Tathan, Caerwent *(scale 1:10)*.

The fractures suggest that the cross may originally have possessed a wide slab shaft, of a form related to the disk-headed slab cross defined by Nash-Williams *'with plain round disk-head and wide shaft'*. The shaft may have borne a vertical panel within a frame containing decoration, as in the case of an example at Margam.

The fractured edges suggest that the shaft of the cross may have been as indicated in Fig.2. However the heads of

some pillar crosses were poorly finished, such as the example from Neuadd Siarman, Llanynis, Brecknockshire [6]. While described as being of '*elegant workmanship*', this cross is incompletely finished at its head, leaving heavy rough projections (more usually found at the lower ends of crosses where buried e.g. Llanddewi'r Cwm, Brecknockshire [7]).

Discussion.

The stone is part of a form of cross associated with the commemoration of people, events or donations to the church, which are often found with other memorials within or close to ecclesiastical enclosures. The stone is incomplete, and was not found *in situ:* the findspot is likely to be the result of relocation through secondary or tertiary reuse of the stone within later grave fills. Nonetheless the cross-slab provides new evidence for the location of the pre-Norman monastic foundation at Caerwent, for which hitherto little structural evidence has been found.

The findspot lies within the postulated eastern perimeter of the early medieval intramural cemetery at Caerwent , which included at least two burials with radiocarbon dates centring on the late 6th/early 7th century (A.D.550+/- 70 *(HAR 5110)*, A.D.640, +/- 70 *(HAR5152))*, and possibly a Viking grave group[8]. The final size and form of the cemetery are unclear, many of its limits being defined by the limits of late 19th-/early 20th-century excavation and present boundary walls. The area to the south of the western part of the intramural cemetery was so full of bone (some 130 burials in Insula 12) that the work was stopped by Lord Tredegar and the area left unexplored[9]. At least 150 burials are recorded from this cemetery, some respecting Roman building lines and consequently believed to be of early medieval date. The cemetery appears to have catered for the local population, to judge from the age range and mixed nature of burial (possibly a reflection of the importance of the lay contribution to religious practice, being not necessarily confined to secular cemeteries). The report on the 1908 visit by the Cambrians to Caerwent church reports '*..a mass of stones from some Roman buildings, including ...a deeply incised cross*', though no further details are given, and the date of this stone remains unclear[10].

The presence of late Roman Christians at Caerwent[11] and suggestion of early post-Roman burial taking place at the site of the Round Temple some 80 m to the north of the Eastgate, and at the extra-mural Eastgate (Vicarage Orchard) cemetery, with its radiocarbon dates of *c.* AD 340-650 to 780-1040, indicate several other areas for Christian burial spanning the late Roman and early Christian periods. The 12th-century *Life of St Tatheus* has already been examined by others[12], and little can be added here: the story of Tatheus' grant by Caradoc ap Ynyr being extended to include the whole City of Caerwent[13] preserves a tradition of the Roman town as site of Tatheus' ecclesia/templum.

A *clas* or monastery in the town *(Urbs/ Cayr Guenti..Tathiu)* is documented in the Llandaff Charters by *c.* 950-1075, and was the meeting place in 955 for king Nowy and bishop Pater[14]. *Lectores* are mentioned for 980; witness lists for *c.* 1030-75 include representatives from Caerwent, presumably one of the dominant houses; abbots are mentioned *c.*1060 and 1075[15]. It is to this later period that the cross fragment belongs, and its style is further evidence for late Saxon influence in

Plate 1. Front view *(above)* and back view *(below)* of the cross fragment from Caerwent *(photo:* author).

Gwent[16]. While there remains little firm evidence, with the exception of the concentration of burial, for earlier ecclesiastical activity in the 5th or 6th century, this new find may represent a continuation of commemorative practice on or close to an earlier ecclesiastical focus, and lends weight to the suggestion that Tatheus' *clas* or *monasterium* lay in the vicinity of the present church. The most likely site for the erection of the cross is within the late monastic enclosure, which itself is likely to be a development of the early site. This is likely to have been provided with a cemetery, which initially may have served only for the burial of ecclesiastical brethren. On the basis of the new find and available radiocarbon dates it would appear that Caerwent possessed at least two burial grounds in the 6th-7th centuries[17]. The Eastgate cemetery may have served as a lay burial ground for a local population from an earlier date (possibly from the 5th century), and may have lacked a church. While a broad view of the development of the cemetery can only be guessed at from a few radiocarbon dates, one can consider the possibility that burial may have declined by the 11th century in favour of the intramural cemetery, which began as an ecclesiastical cemetery, and gradually served a wider population. At least one late 9th-/early 11th-century date is indicated in the Eastgate cemetery, suggesting that this area was still recognisable or known as a burial ground at this period. The progressive abandonment in Wales of graveyards in favour of churchyard burial and the development of hereditary allegiances to the church may be a pattern which occurred at Caerwent, so that by the 11th century (if not earlier) the church could regulate burial within the designated intramural site. The nature of its expansion beyond the present boundary wall remains obscure, and any pattern has been scrambled by intensive use into modern times.

It seems likely that the cross was erected on land near to its findspot, and supports the presence of a pre-Norman *clas / monasterium* on the site. In the absence of an inscription its executor remains unknown, but the form suggests that

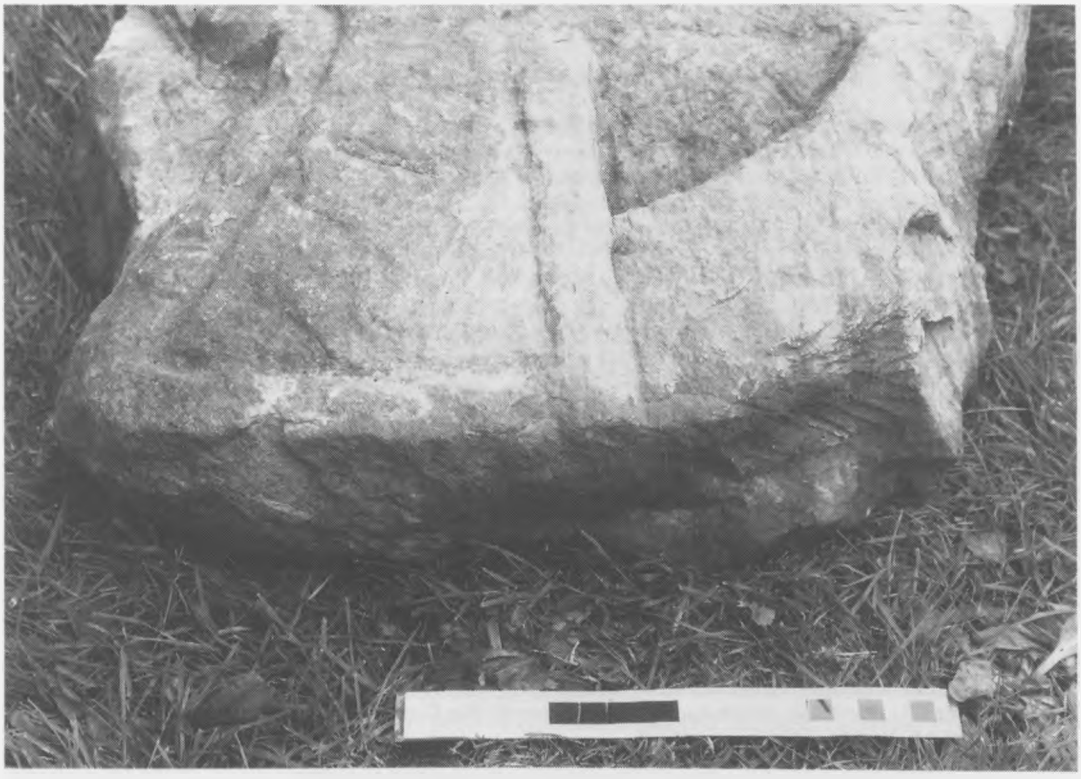


Plate 2. Close-up of pre-Norman cross fragment from Caerwent, showing fractured edge and tooling *(photo:* author).

it may have been erected as a memorial or as a commemoration of a land grant to the church.

Acknowledgements.

I am most grateful to the following for their assistance in the production of this short report: Mary Anne Constance for the line drawings; my colleague Richard Brewer for drawing the find to my attention; Mr Jeremy Knight, Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, and Mr Stephen Briggs, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales for information; Philip Macdonald for discussing his recent analysis of the Eastgate cemetery burials; Archdeacon Peter Woodman of the Vicarage, Caerwent, for permission to publish the find.

This Association is grateful to the National Museum of Wales for a grant in aid of publication of this article.

NOTES.

1. Morgan, O. 'Excavations within the walls of Caerwent', *Archaeologia* 36 (1855/6), 426 and Plate XXXIII
2. Such a stone base was recently found in a similar location during excavations at St.Mary's Church, Flint.
3. Mitchell, E.H., *The Crosses of Monmouthshire* (Newport, 1893). The Till family were auctioneers and collectors of Roman and other antiquities.
4. Nash-Williams, V.E., *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales* (Cardiff, 1950), no.398 and no.235.
5. *Ibid.* no.303.
6. *Ibid.* no.65.
7. *Ibid.* no.47 .
8. Knight, J.K., 'The Post-Roman Evidence from Caerwent' (forthcoming).
9. Hudd, A.E., 'Excavations at Caerwent, Monmouthshire, on the Site of the Romano-British City of Venta-Silurum, in the years 1911 and 1912', *Archaeologia* 64 (1913), 437-8 and Fig.1.
10. *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1909, 123. This is probably one of a group of incised stones now incorporated into the internal wall of the nave and the altar, which may be medieval grave markers of 12th-14th-century type.
11. Boon, G.C., 'The Early Church in Gwent, I: The Romano-British Church', *Monm.Antiq.* VIII (1992), 11-24.
12. Boon, G.C., 'Three Bones of S.Tatheus: Or, Duw yn anghyfiawn ni rann', *Monm. Antiq.* 4 (1981-2) , 2-5; Knight, J.K., 'St.Tatheus of Caerwent: An Analysis of the Vespasian Life', *Monm.Antiq.* 3 (1970-1) , 29-36.
13. Knight, J.K., 'The Early Church in Gwent, II: The Early Medieval Church', *Monm.Antiq.* IX (1993), 5-7; royal control over the use of land and occupation of waste land is suggested at a late date, though early evidence of this power is rare: Davies, W., *'Wales in the Early Middle Ages'*. Studies in the Early History of Britain (1982), 128-9.
14. Davies, W., *An Early Welsh Microcosm. Studies in the Llandaff Charters* (London, 1978), 61.
15. *Ibid.* 124; Knight (1993), op.cit., 7.
16. Mention of Caerwent in the Domesday Book has been taken to suggest the existence of a Norman Manor before 1086 : Courtney, P., 'The rural landscape of eastern and lower Gwent c.AD 1070-1750', University of Wales (U.C.Cardiff) PhD thesis (Cardiff, 1983), unpublished, 56.
17. This situation mirrored at some larger monastic sites, such as Iona. The Rheilig Odhrain may have served as a lay-burial ground serving the needs of royal and noble families, though archaeological investigation of the area has been restricted. Monastic burial may have occurred to the west of the abbey church around 'St.Columba's Shrine': Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Argyll, Vol.4. *Iona. An Inventory of the Monuments* (Edinburgh, 1982).

MEDIEVAL MONASTICISM IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

By DAVID H. WILLIAMS, F.S.A.

An abridged version of the Association's Public Lecture, given at Caerleon on November 6, 1993.

In his lecture on the Early Medieval Church in Gwent[1], Mr Jeremy Knight outlined the probability of a Celtic *clas* or community church at Caerwent, the presence of several canons or priests at St. Gwynllyw's (*St. Woolos*) Newport, the derivation of the place-name 'Bassaleg' from 'basilica', suggesting a possible *clas* there, and talked too of the flight of monks from Llancarfan to Mamhilad in 1022. The first concern of this paper is to consider whether medieval Latin monasticism in Gwent showed any continuity with the limited Celtic presence which preceded it. It is worth noting in passing that, with the exception of Llanthony in the Black Mountains, all the medieval monasteries of Gwent were in lowland situations; and that, save for Llanthony in the diocese of St. David's and Monmouth within the see of Hereford, all our abbeys and priories were in the diocese of Llandaff.

The Augustinian Priories

Gwent had two Augustinian foundations. Llanthony, the 'church by the Honddu', arose out of a hermitage established by 1103 in the Black Mountains by William de Lacy, a kinsman of the lord of Ewyas. That hermitage, tradition has it, was founded at a ruined chapel dedicated to St. David; but the chapel was in ruin, so there was no direct connection at Llanthony between Celtic and Norman monasticism[2]. Like many groups of hermits in the early twelfth century, the hermits of Llanthony decided to adopt a more formal and coenobitical religious life, and so by 1118 had become Augustinian canons[3]. The fighting and lawlessness of the Border meant that they had to set up a refuge on the outskirts of the cathedral city of Gloucester - the priory of Llanthony Secunda, which became a separate entity about 1205. It soon outstripped its Welsh sister-house, which in 1481 was subjected to it as a cell. Henceforth, only a prior and four canons were maintained at Llanthony Prima[4]. The other Augustinian priory, in existence by 1270 and perhaps very much earlier, was dedicated, like Llanthony, to St. John the Baptist. It was described in 1355 as being sited "near" the church of St. Cynfarch (*St. Kingsmark*) just outside Chepstow[5]. St. Cynfarch was a Celtic place of worship by the early seventh century, and in monastic days was leased by the canons from the chapter of Llandaff Cathedral[6]. The priory by St. Kingsmark may have replaced a Celtic *clas* - but it seems unlikely, though it stood near a Celtic site. It was perhaps little more than a cell of St. Augustine's Abbey, Bristol[7].

The Alien Priories

Five of the Benedictine priories of Monmouthshire were 'alien priories', cells of abbeys in the northern parts of France, the abbots of which appointed the priors and also sent and recalled monks to serve in them[8]. They owed nothing to the ancient


Llanthony
(c.1118)
Llangua
(c.1110)
DIOCESE OF
ST. DAVID'S
R. Honddu
Llanfair
Cilgoed
R. Monnow
DIOCESE OF
HEREFORD
Abergavenny
(by 1100)
Grace Dieu
(1226/1233)
Monmouth
(by 1080)
DIOCESE
OF
LLANDAFF
Mamhilad
Aberthin
Usk nunnery
(c.1155)
R. Wye
Tintern
(1131)
Llanderfel
Llantarnam
(1175/79)
R. Usk
St. Kingsmark
(by 1270)
Chepstow
(by 1071)
Malpas (c.1122)
R. Ebbw
R. Rhymney
(c.1101)
Newport
(1377)
Caerwent
Bassaleg
St. Woolos
Mynachty
St. Gwladus
0
5 miles
Goldcliff
(by 1113)
KEY:
Celtic
Augustinian
Benedictine
Cistercian
Cistercian (cell)
Austin Friars
Uncertain
County boundary
Diocesan boundary
Land over 600 feet
DHW/CW 1993

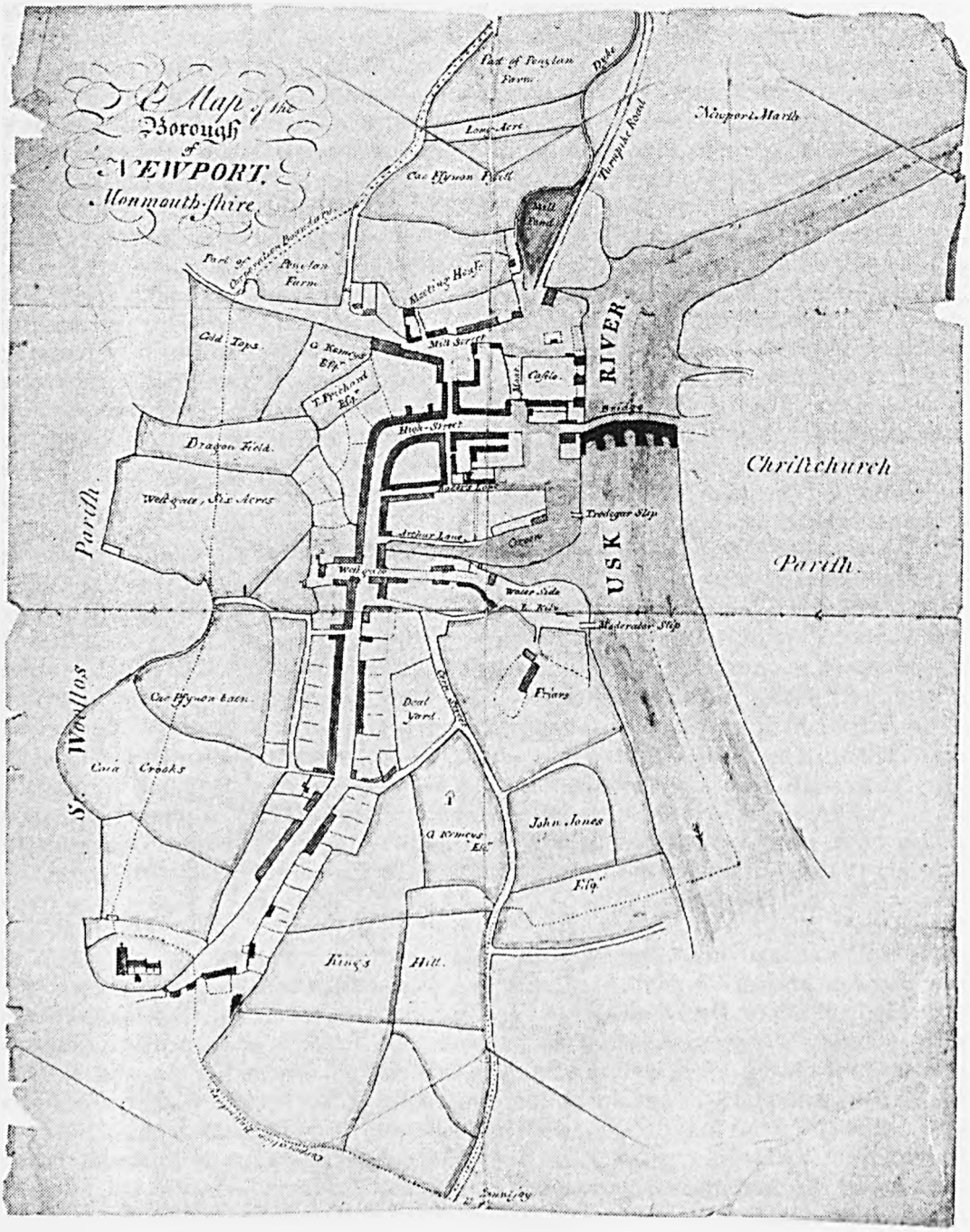
Celtic Church. The first to be founded was Chepstow Priory, given to Cormeilles Abbey by William FitzOsbern, a great ally of William the Conqueror. Next perhaps was Monmouth Priory, granted to the abbey of St. Florent near Saumur, by Withenoc, lord of Monmouth, who almost immediately became a monk at Saumur himself[9]. Abergavenny Priory was given to the abbey of St. Vincent near Le Mans by Hamelin de Ballon who had conquered Upper Gwent. The small priory of Llangua was perhaps the gift of Roger FitzOsbern (William's son) to Lire Abbey[10]. Lastly, the priory of Goldcliff was founded for the abbey of Bec by Robert de Chandos who was later buried in the monastic choir at Goldcliff[11]. Benedictines were normally 'black monks', so-called because of the colour of their habit, but the monks of Bec, for especial reasons, wore white habits. So, therefore, did the monks of Goldcliff, and there is documentary evidence that the colour of the habit at Goldcliff remained white throughout its existence[12]. All these alien priories were founded by Norman-French invaders, and long remained very much under the command of their French superiors, but during the Hundred Years War this created severe problems. In its aftermath both Llangua and Goldcliff were suppressed. Abergavenny, Chepstow, and Monmouth, became more or less independent[13].

Other Benedictine Priories

It is possible that Bassaleg Priory, founded as a cell of Glastonbury, was the site of a former *clas* community or a 'minster church' on, or close to, the burial place of St. Gwladys[14]. The site of the medieval priory is, however, not absolutely certain. It stood presumably by the present and heavily restored parish church, but there is a tradition of a monastic establishment by the River Rhymney[15]. This may have been a grange of Llantarnam Abbey rather than the site of Bassaleg Priory. North of Newport was Malpas Priory, founded by Winebald de Ballon (Hamelyn's nephew) as a cell of Montacute Priory in Somerset[16]. Lastly, there was the nunnery at Usk; the only known nunnery in medieval Gwent. A mid-twelfth century De Clare foundation, all its later benefactors were Anglo-Norman or English. The nunnery, as Leland pointed out, lay within "a flight shot of the Castle"[17]. Indeed, most of the Benedictine priories of the county stood within the protective shadow of a Norman castle.

Vocations

So far as nearly all the foregoing priories were concerned, not only did they represent an almost complete break with the monastic past of Gwent, such as it was; they also did not on the whole act as recruiting grounds for local vocations. The few names known of the canons of Llanthony in the late-fourteenth century include only one man of Gwent: Nicholas of Caerleon (in 1385)[18]. The other canons were all English: as Adam of Elmley (Worcestershire), John of Wellington, Walter of Adforton and John of Yatton (all villages in Herefordshire)[19]. The canons of St. Kingsmark included (in 1355) Richard of Tidenham from across the Wye in Gloucestershire; others had English-sounding names: Henning and Pynnock[20]. Only in 1401 was the prior a Welshman, by the name of Eynon. It is possible that he was put in at the behest of Glyn Dŵr, for he made trouble for the monks of nearby Tintern, and before 1402 was out he had lost his job[21].



Newport, Gwent (late 18th century), showing the site of Austin Friars. *(NLW, Dept. of Maps and Prints, Tredegar 923).*

Many, if not most, monks of all the Benedictine priories came perhaps from their mother-houses. This was especially true of the 'alien priories' for the best part of three hundred years. As late as 1410, when there was a shortage of monks at Goldcliff, the prior did not have a recruiting campaign to seek local vocations, he simply wrote to Bec Abbey in Normandy for a fresh supply[22]. It must be said (so far as we can ascertain from the fragmentary evidence available) that the Augustinian and Benedictine foundations of medieval Gwent owed next to nothing to Celtic monasticism; there had been a clean break. Worse still, their personnel were drawn very largely from without the county. Only at Usk nunnery was there a more local intake, for Adam of Usk noted (in 1404) that he was related to some of the sisters. He added that at Usk: *"only virgins born of noble ancestry are received"*; in other words, there was class distinction[23]. In retrospect, we can see that as having been wrong; it left little room for a call from the Holy Spirit to a peasant girl to test her vocation. In the feudal context of the times it was probably accepted as both normal and correct.

The Austin Friars, Newport

Leaving aside unsubstantiated claims of no worth for a Carmelite friary in Newport[24] and a Dominican house in Usk[25], there was only one friary in medieval Gwent; that of the Austin Friars (the Friars Hermit of St. Augustine) in Newport. It was founded in 1377 by Earl Hugh of Stafford, in his capacity as lord of Newport, and whose kinsman, Ralph, had founded a similar friary in Stafford in 1344[26]. The friary in Newport lay (as Leland put it) *"by the quay (key) beneath the bridge"*[27], and its site took up quite a large portion of land to the north of what was Llanarth Street[28]. At its foundation it will have had a prior and twelve friars, but as by the very nature of their vocation friars were frequently on the move, we cannot ascertain what influence they had so far as recruitment was concerned upon the local populace.

When in 1541 chambers within the friary were leased to Maurice Baker[29], and when in 1543 the site was granted to Sir Edward Carne[30], the Crown deeds and subsequent Ministers' Accounts[31], referred to it as a house of the Friars Preacher, in other words, Dominican friars, not Austin friars. This ascription has led some writers to talk of two friaries in Newport, the Austin Friary and the Dominican Friary -the latter seen by Bradney as being where Octavius Morgan, our former President, built his nineteenth century residence, 'The Friars'[31A]. This seems to be an unlikely surmise, and there is no other evidence for a Dominican house in Newport. In the years following the Suppression of the monastery, when many grants of former religious houses were being made, it was easy for mistakes to occur and be perpetuated. A notable example came when (on March 1st, 1536) Dr John Vaughan, in Wales to arrange the dissolution of monastic houses, wrote from Brecon to Cromwell: *"there is a house of Blackfriars, called the priory of Monmouth, in Wales...."*[32]. This was an error at the highest level, for Monmouth Priory was Benedictine not Dominican. The will of Morgan John of Bassaleg written in 1530 left bequests to: *"the Grey Friars of Cardiff, 5/-; the Black Friars of Cardiff, 5/-; the Friars of Newport, 20/-"*[33]. Had there been more than one friary in Newport the will would certainly have made it clear to which the bequest was granted. Nor can there have been an earlier change of occupants, for the deed of surrender (September 8th, 1538)

makes it clear it was a house of Austin friars[33A].

The Cistercian Abbeys

There is no evidence of any connection between the three Cistercian abbeys and earlier Celtic sites, though five centuries before the foundation of Tintern, King Tewdric became a hermit and lived *"amongst the rocks of Tintern"*[34]. The Cistercian abbey at Tintern was founded in 1131 from the monastery at L'Aumône in Normandy, but within a generation its community would have consisted largely of local men. Llantarnam Abbey, founded about 1179 by a Welsh lord of Caerleon, Hywel ab Iorwerth, as a daughter-house of Strata Florida in Ceredigion, was the only monastery in Gwent to be for centuries undoubtedly Welsh in membership (and, like its mother-house) nationalistic in sympathy. Not so poor little Grace Dieu Abbey, founded in 1226 and burnt to the ground only seven years later by the Welshry. Its first site lay to the west of the Troddi brook, the refounded abbey to the east thereof[35].

For the Cistercians local recruitment was the norm. So the monks of Llantarnam included Welshmen like Hywel ap Gruffydd (1399) and John ab Hywel (1405), and men of Gwent as Stephen Went (as in Wentwood; 1425) and David of Newport (1426). Its penultimate abbot was a Blethin of Malpas. Of the hundred or so monks of Tintern known by name, at least five came from Bristol, four from the Forest of Dean, and four from Monmouth. It was a Border house, but its monks also included John Went and Richard of Magor (a parish where the abbey owned much property). Grace Dieu, too, was a Border monastery. Its monks included not only Robert of Chepstow and Nicholas of Stanton from within the county, but also Robert of Newent in Gloucestershire[36]. To sum up, the Cistercians, more than any other Order represented in the county, were rooted in the populace and summed up their aspirations, be they Welsh or English.

Monastic Life

There were monks in Gwent noted for their holiness of life, especially Abbot Henry of Tintern (1148-57) who had 'the gift of tears'; in other words, shed actual tears when mindful of the Passion of Christ set against his own shortcomings[37]. There were men of scholarship: a monk of Llantarnam studied at an Italian university (1398)[38]; an Austin friar of Newport, John Gregory, preached about 1404 a notable sermon on the Passion[39]; even the priory at Malpas could boast (in 1466) a prior (Burghill - named after a Herefordshire village), who was a doctor of theology[40]. Scholarship was not wanting, nor in the earlier years were scribes. Glanmor Williams has pointed out that more medieval manuscripts survive from Llanthony Prima than from any other Welsh monastery - though in its latter years many found their way to the Gloucestershire abbey of Llanthony Secunda[41]. The Welsh Llanthony's scriptorium produced at least two very fine cartularies[42]. Even Llantarnam could afford to give a twelfth century copy of the Homilies of St. Gregory to the newly founded Cistercian abbey at Hailes (Glos.) in 1248[43]. Several religious of Gwent were considered of sufficient ability and stature to be appointed to bishoprics: a prior of Llanthony to Hereford (1132), a prior of Goldcliff to Llandaff (1219); and, much later, a prior of Monmouth and a prior of St. Kingsmark doubled-up as suffragan bishops in the see of Hereford[44].

By the later thirteenth century the spiritual condition of some houses left much to be desired; it cannot have been easy to be a good monk or canon, to keep the Rule and to fulfil one's vow, when numerous fellow-monks couldn't have cared less. In this connexion, the words of Psalm 18 are very apposite: *"With the holy thou shalt be holy, with the froward thou shalt learn frowardness"*. We must remember, however, that in between the recorded years of grave lapses in spiritual standards there may well have been long periods of stability and general holiness of life which, by their very nature, find no mention in official records. It was only when trouble loomed and action was necessary that public attention was attracted.

In 1284 Archbishop Peckham held a metropolitical visitation of Wales in the wake of Edward I's Conquest. He did not inspect the Cistercian abbeys because they were exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, but he did visit the nunnery at Usk. He found that some of the nuns were breaking enclosure, leaving the convent without permission. He also visited Llanthony Priory and rebuked its canons for lying, defamation, bawdy laughter, foolishness, and generally bad behaviour[45]. In 1320 the bishop of Hereford was deputed to inspect Abergavenny Priory. He deposed the prior, Fulk Gastard, and upbraided the monks for evil living, associating with women of bad character, and for playing at dice when they should have been in church[46].

There were enemies within. One prior of Llanthony, Nicholas Trinbeye, resigned early in 1376 because three of his own canons had set upon him, gouged out his eyes, and even killed his brother. The assailants were punished by excommunication, a forceful weapon then[47]. Fifteen years later one of them sought and gained rehabilitation. Indeed he later became prior himself[47A]. He alleged that Prior Trinbeye had provoked him, *"had injured him"* - but the prior had perhaps done no more than have him justly flogged[48]. Prior Trinbeye was well thought of, and in 1371 had been appointed one of two Visitors of the Augustinian abbeys in the dioceses of Hereford, Worcester, and St. David's[49]. His repentant assailant also excused his deed by saying that *"he was young at the time"*. A reminder that whilst many medieval religious were truly called by God to their state of life, there were those who entered upon their vocation for the wrong reasons (as parental pressure) or mixed motives (security, status), often whilst immature (and not grasping fully the consequences). As the years passed by the discipline and the celibate state irked them, they became discontented and trouble-makers. Given their presence in a community, it was easy for others to be led astray: *"With the holy thou shalt show thyself holy, with the wicked thou shalt show thyself perverse"*.

The Glyn Dŵr Revolt

There were enemies without, not least in the years of the Rebellion. Adam of Usk (in 1404) told how Usk nunnery had been beggared economically *"owing to the burnings and spoilings caused by the wars"*[50]. Much of Tintern's farm property was destroyed by the rebels, and the roofs of Woolaston Grange and even of the abbey cloister itself may have been damaged[51]. Nearly a century later some of its buildings were in a state of disrepair, possibly a hang-over from the Revolt[52]. Abergavenny Priory was set on fire, and some of the monks went home to France. As their service books (which had been brought from France) were destroyed, the pope some time later gave them permission to follow the Sarum Use in worship[53]. The threat to

Llanthony meant that its canons acquired a property in Hereford where they could keep valuables[54]. The friary at Newport was destroyed but rebuilt[55]. Only one monastery in Gwent supported the rebels and that was the Cistercian abbey at Llantarnam. Its abbot was slain in battle as he urged the Welsh troops on as they attacked Usk Castle in 1405[56]. The priory at St. Kingsmark may briefly have been forced to adopt a Welsh stance (supra). Apart from damage to buildings, the rebellion may have awakened a restlessness on the part of the peasantry, and a resentment against established authority. Such may be reflected in the intermittent problems Tintern suffered in the 1440's: two affrays outside the abbey gate, a robbery in the abbey, a theft in its brew-house, the stealing of a river boat by night, and even the diversion of its mill leat[57].

The fairly immediate response of several monasteries in the wake of the damage and dilapidations caused by the Revolt, was to appeal to the pope to grant indulgences (mitigating the time spent in purgatory in the hereafter) to those people who visited the monasteries concerned and gave alms for their repair. Such indulgences often tell much about a monastery, its buildings and its life. Adam of Usk's petition on behalf of Usk nunnery (in 1404) shows that it had a chapel dedicated to St. Radegund as a place of pilgrimage[58]. The indulgence given to pilgrims to Tintern (in 1414) tell of a miraculous statue of Our Lady in the Galilee chapel or porch at the west front of the church, the foundations of which may yet be seen[59]. Llantarnam Abbey (folowing an accidental fire)[60] and Monmouth Priory (because of dilapidations)[61] had already been granted indulgences in 1398. Monmouth then claimed to have many relics of the saints, a piece of the Holy Cross , and a portion of the Holy Shroud. The writer takes no issue with the doctrine of indulgences properly understood, indeed he has made use of them himself; but the veracity of claims made by some religious houses during and after Glyn Dŵr's revolt must be judged in the context of their pressing need for ready cash.

The Dissolution

To quote St. Paul's First Letter to the Christians of Corinth: *"Then cometh the end!"*. Those abbeys and priories which had escaped suppression in the mid-fifteenth century came to a close between 1536 and 1539. The last monasteries of Gwent to be suppressed were Newport's Austin Friary in 1538[62] and Malpas Priory in 1539[63]. Did their monastic life deserve to be so extinguished?; was the hand of Henry VIII too heavy? There was life left in some of the houses. The abbot of Llantarnam in 1533 assisted the Mayor of Newport to stop violence escalating in the town between the Morgans of Pencoed and the Herberts of St. Julian's[64]. More than that, plans were afoot for building improvements to the abbey church[65]. At Tintern, Abbot Wyche summoned by Cromwell to wait on him in London, put God first. He wrote that he would come, but only after keeping *"this high feast of Our Blessed Lady"* (her Nativity on September 8th, 1534)[66]. On the other hand at Monmouth Priory the Council of the Duchy of Lancaster drew attention to a deplorable state of affairs. Its last prior leased out the conventual buildings before its suppression and fled to the sanctuary of the Knights Hospitaller at Garway[67].

It must be remembered that the reports of the Commissioners sent out to dissolve the religious houses were perhaps by no means as fair and just as they could

have been. When Dr. Vaughan wrote to Cromwell from Brecon *(March 1st, 1536)* he hadn't been to Gwent, but he relied on hearsay evidence; he made up his mind before seeing for himself. He wrote: *"I hear by the common people that the houses of monks in Wales, also Tintern, are greatly abused"*. The stand of Abbot Wyche suggests differently. There was also an element of self-seeking. Dr. Vaughan later wrote to Cromwell, *"Help me to have one of the abbeys"*. He got first Grace Dieu, and later Whitland Abbey in Dyfed[68].

The facts certainly suggest that there was a case for reform and renewal. Only Tintern had a sizeable community left (thirteen monks); Llantarnam had six, Abergavenny had five, Chepstow but three, and Malpas but two[69]. The fact that the surrender of the Austin Friars at Newport was signed by but one friar, and he was described as not prior but *"vicar there"*, suggests that its conventual life was all but extinguished[70]. Was wholesale dissolution the answer? Taking Wales as a whole there were 75 Cistercian monks in 1536; ten of their abbeys could have been converted into schools, colleges, hospitals; but three - Tintern, Neath, and Strata Florida, could have had the remaining monks divided amongst them, and Cistercian life at least could have continued to flourish. Within this county one Benedictine priory might similarly have been retained. Efforts at renewal, not outright suppression, should have been attempted.

A great deal has been written regarding medieval monasticism in Monmouthshire of which this paper can give but an insight. There remains a considerable amount of research to be accomplished. There is scope for excavation and/or geophysical survey at sites such as Llangua (to try to determine its site) and Grace Dieu (to recover its plan), let alone the pressing need for excavation of a Cistercian grange - Llanfair Cilgoed springs to mind. Definitive and detailed histories of the priories of Abergavenny, Chepstow, Llanthony Prima, and Monmouth, await a writer. It is to be hoped that a new generation of archaeologists and historians will undertake these tasks.

(The writer is very grateful to Mr. Colin Williams, formerly of the Department of Archaeology and Numismatics, the National Museum of Wales, for kindly preparing the map which accompanies this article).

NOTES

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19. *Cal. Patent Rolls* 1383, p.267; 1396, p.32; 1398, p.430; 1400, p.283.
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57. Ibid. II, 252, cf. I, 71.
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MEDIEVAL CONVERTS FROM JUDAISM IN THE WELSH BORDERS

By JOAN GREATREX

A few Jewish converts *(conversi)* in thirteenth century England are known to have found their way to the Welsh Marches. Evidence of their wanderings has survived on the dorse of several membranes of the Fine roll of Henry III for the year 1255.

For the background to this episode we must look back some twenty years before this date, when Henry established a *Domus Conversorum*, which was a semi-monastic community for converts in London on the site of what is now the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane. The king seems to have been genuinely concerned to bring his Jewish subjects to the Christian faith, although he was at the same time extorting large sums from them to help finance his politics at home and abroad. By the 1250's his ambitious and extravagant schemes had drained the royal coffers and alienated many of the magnates and church leaders; it is probable, too, that by this time the London *Domus* was becoming overcrowded, partly no doubt as a result of the desperate plight of many Jews who had been reduced to bankruptcy and were forced to choose between starvation and conversion. In 1255 Henry sought to obtain some financial relief by a drastic increase in his practice of demanding corrodies of food and lodging for *conversi*, of which demands there are a few examples earlier in the reign. Such corrodies had long been regarded as an exercise of the royal prerogative, and especially as a means of pensioning off old retainers and servants.

In this single year *(1255)*, however, about 125 religious houses in all parts of the country were ordered to find accommodation for over 150 convert men, women and children. The first series of royal writs were issued in January, requiring the abbot or prior to whom they were addressed to take in the bearer or bearers who presented themselves at the monastery gates. This forced extension of monastic hospitality, not surprisingly, aroused objections and some downright refusals by more than a few religious houses, which were already hard pressed to accommodate the king's previous demands on behalf of his retired officers, in addition to the places required for their own lay advisers and officials. Robert Windour and Isabella, his wife, were among those who were provided with these writs. They were sent first to the Cistercian house at Abbey Dore where they were turned away; Isabella was then provided with a second writ for herself alone, again addressed to the abbot of Dore. It seems likely that the unfortunate couple objected to being separated, a fate suffered by many convert families at this time, and so they petitioned for a third writ which was addressed to the Augustinian canons at Bridlington, Yorkshire, who we hope made provision for them both after all their wanderings.

Two other converts, possibly brothers, named Ingram and Thomas, were provided with a writ directed to the prior of Llanthony Prima, where they presumably found rest. Another, Edith of Gloucester, had more difficulty. The first writ issued on her behalf sent her to the community of Benedictine monks at Little Malvern, but a few months later she was provided with another writ addressed to the Cistercian abbot of Tintern. Neither of these communities appear to have responded to Edith's needs or the king's commands. However, she seems in the end to have made Little

Malvern her final destination, where she would have been nearer remaining relatives and friends in the Jewish community at Gloucester.

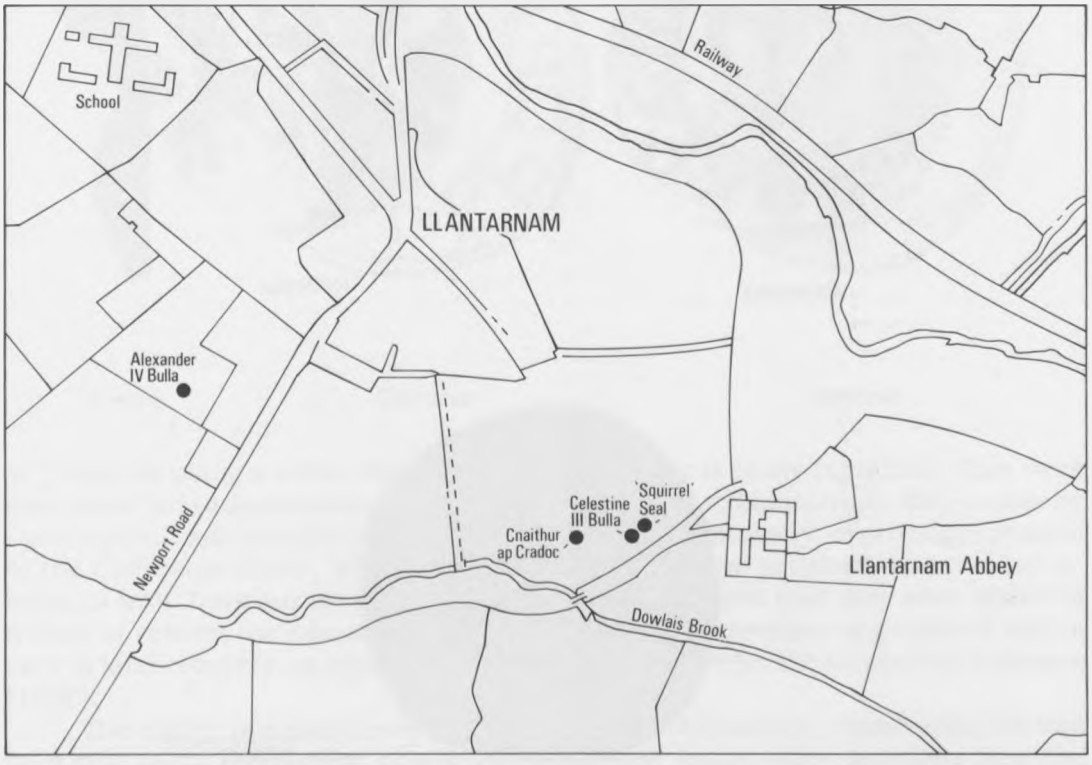
The reason for the difficulties encountered by these and many other *conversi* should not be taken as evidence of a lack of monastic charity; the objections were directed against the increasing burden of the royal exploitation of monastic resources, which greatly reduced the monks' capacity to exercise the charity that begins at home.

NOTE

The Fine roll for 1255 is Public Record Office (Chancery Lane) C/60/52.
Some of the entries referring to the *conversi* have been printed in: Adler, M., *The Jews of Medieval England* (London, 1939) 342-346, but there are inaccuracies.
For further information, see: Greatrex, J., 'Monastic Charity for Jewish Converts: the Requisition of Corrodies by Henry III', *Studies in Church History* 29 (1992) 133-143; Stacey, R.C., 'The Conversion of Jews to Christianity in Thirteenth-Century England', *Speculum* 67 (1992) 263-283.

GWENT SEALS: VI

By DAVID H. WILLIAMS, F.S.A.



Seal Matrix of Cnaithur ap Cradoc.

(Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust 188/093 (032).
Date: Mid- to Late 13th Century. *Find Spot:* NGR: SH 309929.

Physical Characteristics: A circular lead matrix, 24 mm. diameter; 8.9 gm. in weight. A fleur-de-lis shaped raised projection on reverse for handling purposes. (Analysis by the Royal Mint shows the metallic composition to be: Lead, 98.393%, Iron, 1.380%, Copper, 0.227%)[1].

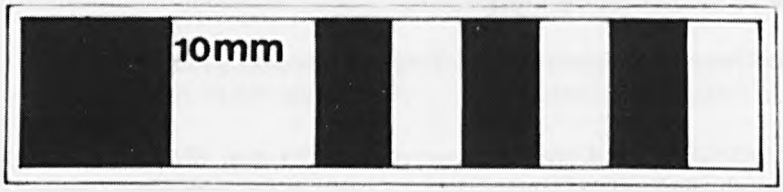
Motif: A simple fleur-de-lis, a common device of the period. (Other seals of similar size and shape with varying fleurs-de-lis have been found in Gwent near Llanfihangel Gobion (*NGR: SO 349094*) in 1991[2], and in Usk in 1968[3]. Other matrices with a fleur-de-lis ornamentation upon the reverse have been located in the Cowbridge[4] and Haverfordwest[5] areas. Both are of much the same period as the Llantarnam matrix.

Legend: **+ S' KNAITHO AP CRAD** (Lombardic Capitals)

Obverse

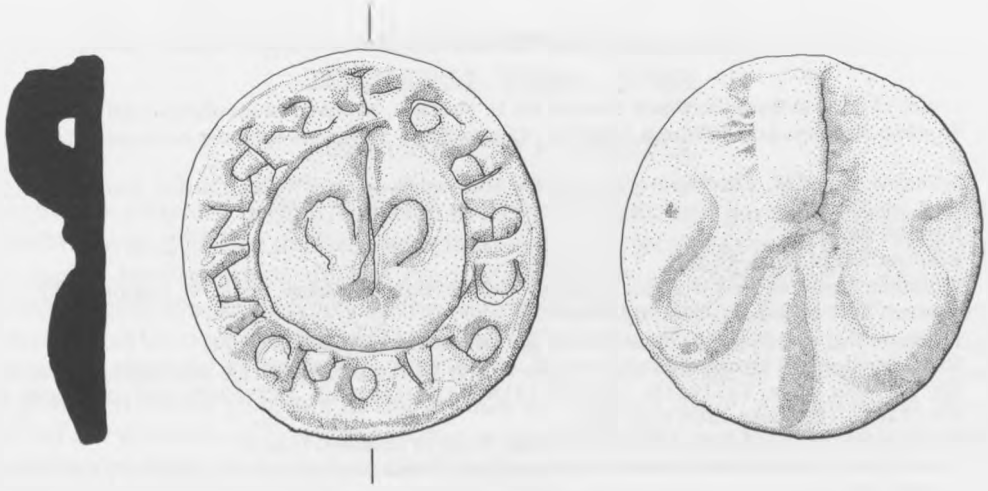
Reverse

Impression



The matrix was found on April 21st, 1993, during excavations conducted by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust in advance of the construction of the Llantarnam by-pass. The immediate context of the find was a silty layer adjacent to the medieval building complex of Llanfihangel Llantarnam, perhaps the result of the flooding of a low-lying area[6]. The weight apart, this might suggest that the matrix had been carried by water for a short distance.

Most interestingly, the matrix was discovered extremely close to the find-spot of a lead *bulla* of Pope Celestine III (1191-98; *NGR: SH 310929*) and of a personal seal depicting a squirrel, and not far distant from the location of a *bulla* of Alexander IV (1254-61; *See Map*)[7]. Both papal seals were unearthed in 1985 by Mr K.L. Morgan



Profile Obverse Reverse

of Cwmbrân using a metal detector. Their occurrence is easily explained. They were once attached to documents addressed by the pontiffs to Llantarnam Abbey close by - perhaps to confirmatory charters, requested by the monastery, of privileges general to the Cistercian Order. With time the parchments have perished, but the *bullae*, being of lead, have survived. Their find-spots may suggest that they were stolen in a theft or raid on the monastery, or hidden as the Suppression approached with a view to later recovery, or, more simply, just thrown out after the monastery's closure (1536).

The matrix of Cnaithur ap Cradoc is more problematical. Presumably he was on a visit to the monastery, or staying in its guest-house when travelling near-by, and lost his seal. This was quite common[8]. The style of the somewhat crude Lombardic Capitals of its legend suggests a date somewhere within the second half of the thirteenth century. The name of 'Cnaithur', both as a Christian name and as a patronym, appears to have been common in thirteenth century South Wales[9]. It occurs frequently in varying forms in the charters of Margam Abbey between about 1180 and 1247[10]; rarely thereafter[11]. As a patronym it occurs further north quite late; in Radnorshire in 1335[12]. In Gwent it occurs several times in the Subsidy Roll of 1292 - particularly within the lordship of of Abergavenny[13]. One of the free-men who that year paid their fifteenth to the king was *Knayth ap Cradok*[14], and it is quite possible (though not proven) that the matrix found at Llantarnam was his.

(The Editor is indebted to the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust for the illustrations; and to Mr Tony P. Daly of the Department of Archaeology and Numismatics, National Museum of Wales, for preparing the map).

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5. Ibid. 60 (W. 412).
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13. Jones, Francis., 'The Subsidy of 1292', *Bull. Board Celtic Studies XIII* (1950) 215-228; but also in the lordships of Whitecastle and Caldicot (p. 215). Bradney, Joseph., *History of Monmouthshire* III : *The Hundred of Usk* (London, 1923) 218, gives the name in the form 'Cynaethwy', a descendant of Adam Gwent (in 1270).
14. Francis Jones, op. cit. 228.

THE HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS OF GWENT, I: MEDIEVAL TO ca. 1720.

By ELISABETH H. WHITTLE

The county of Gwent is relatively rich in historic parks and gardens, including those of the Tudor and Stuart periods, which are the main focus of this article. This density can partly be explained by the county's position and topography, since it is a predominantly lowland county on the eastern border of Wales. The wealth, ambitions, contacts and interests of some of the leading families of the county were also factors in this abundance. At the top end of the social scale the earls of Worcester created the grandest Tudor gardens in the county at Raglan Castle, and later the Morgans laid out the grounds of Tredegar House in spacious baroque style. But fashions and ideas filtered down to more humble families, and Gwent possesses many remnants of modest walled and terraced Tudor and Stuart gardens of the gentry. The Tudor and early Stuart period was one of rural prosperity in Gwent; there was much new building, accompanied in some cases by gardens. Parks and gardens of the period were not evenly distributed throughout the county: there is a notable absence on the less densely settled, poorer land of the highland ridges of the western uplands and the Trellech ridge, and on the coastal plain of the Levels.

The simplest type of garden of this period is the walled court, or bailey, attached to so many of the more substantial farmhouses. This did little more than separate the house from the farmyard, and may never have been much of an ornamental garden. Sycamores were much used to provide shelter. Good examples of ancient specimens can still be seen at Coldbrook and The Argoed. The previous house at Ty Gwyn, Llantilio Pertholey, was surrounded by a grove of ancient sycamores until the end of the nineteenth century. Larger gardens were created by the addition of a number of walled enclosures, added in an *ad hoc* manner, with no thought to external symmetry. If the ground allowed these could be terraced, and the rolling countryside of Gwent lends itself to the creation of terraced gardens, of which there are some fine Tudor and Stuart examples. At the grandest and most sophisticated level these could be massive, as is the case at Raglan Castle. Ponds, often of medieval origin, could be incorporated into the layout, and served both ornamental and utilitarian purposes. Again at Raglan Castle the largest pond, or lake, and the most sophisticated water feature, the elaborate water parterre, are found. In the Restoration period ideas of axial planning and external symmetry filtered through from France and the court, resulting in the axial layouts of Llanfihangel Court, Trewyn, and Troy. In Gwent this phase culminated in the extensive layout of avenues at Tredegar House.

Little is known in detail about the planting of gardens in Gwent in this period. In general terms they would have been laid out formally, with walks, flowerbeds, and square or rectangular 'knots', laid out with intricately interlaced patterns of clipped, low-growing plants and often surrounded by hedges of quickthorn or privet. Fruit trees would have been grown both free-standing and against the walls, and orchards were common adjuncts of gardens. Trees known to have been planted in avenues of the period in Gwent include oak, sweet chestnut, walnut, and Scots pine.

Of the 55 parks and gardens in Gwent now listed on the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales, 20 have features dating back to the sixteenth to early eighteenth century. Of these one is principally mediaeval (Abergavenny deer park), seven are chiefly Tudor or early Stuart (Raglan Castle, Moynes Court, Plas Machen, Lower Dyffryn, Treowen, Troy House, and Pencoed Castle), and three date mainly to *ca.* 1660-1720 (Tredegar Park, Llanfihangel Court, and Trewyn). Apart from those sites on the Register there are many lesser or more fragmentary ones that have features dating back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

MEDIAEVAL, TUDOR AND EARLY STUART GARDENS

Moynes Court

One of the earliest recorded gardens in Gwent was at Moynes Court, Mathern (*OS 162, ST 520909*). In 1307 the Inquisition Post Mortem of the owner, Bogo de Knovill, mentioned *'A capital messuage with a garden and pigeon house, worth 20s a year'*.[1] In 1340, an Inquisition Post Mortem on the death of Margery Moignes listed, among other things, *a dove-house, worth 4s a year; a garden worth 3s 4d a year beyond outgoings'* at Moynes Court.[2] This garden and dovecote went with a house first recorded on the site in 1271 in a survey of Wentwood, which names Bogo de Knovill as the owner. It was probably he who built the very tall gatehouse to the south-east of the house. The house was largely rebuilt, probably by the Morgan family, in the late sixteenth century, as a substantial three-storey house with a symmetrical north-east front. In 1608 Moynes Court was sold to Francis Godwin, bishop of Llandaff, who inserted a heraldic panel over the front door on the north-east, with his coat of arms and the date *'1609'*. Godwin sold to Robert Robotham in 1618, after which ownership passed through several families, and the status of the house declined to that of a farmhouse. The Lewises of St Pierre (*see* p.45) bought Moynes Court in 1826, and it is now in divided ownership.

It was probably at the time of the late sixteenth-century rebuilding that the present layout of garden enclosures was made. The approach is from the north-east to the gatehouse. The rectangular area between the gatehouse and the house is bounded by high stone walls, with doorways in them adjacent to the house. A central stone-flagged path leads from the gatehouse to the front door. To the south-east of this area and the house is a square enclosure, also bounded by high stone walls, with perimeter and central paths. In 1801 Charles Heath of Monmouth recorded that Roman inscriptions found near Caerleon in 1607 and 1608 were fixed to the garden walls by Bishop Godwin, *'in which situation they now remain, though somewhat injured by time and weather'*.[3] This would suggest that the walls were already in existence, or were built in the early seventeenth century. For the most part they stand to their full height. In the centre of the south-east garden is a stone sundial, probably of seventeenth- or eighteenth-century date,[4] and next to the house door on this side is a holy water stoup from the ruined Runston chapel, Crick.

To the north-west of the house the ground slopes steeply down to a rectilinear pond, which may have originated as a medieval fishpond. A copy of a 1669 map of part of the Moynes Court estate shows the tree-lined approach, the walled garden

to the south-east (with internal layout shown schematically) and the pond to the north-west, with the field to the south, in which stand the earthworks of a medieval moated site, marked with scattered trees, but not named as an orchard.[5]

Moynes Court, its gatehouse, walled gardens and pond thus form a little altered layout dating back at least to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries. It demonstrates the formality and enclosed nature of gardens of a substantial Tudor manor house.

Pencoed Castle

There is both documentary and physical evidence for the existence of gardens at Pencoed Castle (*OS map 171, ST 406894*) in the Tudor period. The castle itself is substantial. Of the first building phase, in the early thirteenth century, only the south-west tower of the courtyard survives.[6] Most of the surviving castle dates from the first half of the sixteenth century, when the owners were a branch of the Morgan family of Tredegar (Sir Thomas Morgan (*d.* 1510), his son William (*d.* 1542), and grandson Thomas II). It is likely that the Tudor gardens were made during this phase as Thomas II's son William (1541-84) was a profligate soldier who spent most of his adulthood away.[7]

By the end of the sixteenth century the castle consisted of an entrance gatehouse on the west side of a rectangular courtyard bounded by curtain walls, with the main residential block on the east side of the courtyard. This stands largely intact and partially restored. Although built 'castle-wise' Pencoed had no military function, and was simply a substantial manor house. As befitted a house of this status it was accompanied by gardens, orchards and a dovecote.

The main Tudor gardens lay to the south of the castle, in what is now a rectangular pasture field surrounded by a low dry-stone wall. A raised terrace walk, now turf covered, with a low revetment wall along its southern side, runs the length of the south front. Near its western end a raised path at right-angles leads to a doorway in the courtyard wall. There are faint traces of shallow terracing in the field. How this garden area was laid out in the Tudor period is not known, but a plan of 1751 shows it divided into six square sections, each surrounded by paths, with orchards to the east and west.[8] That to the east is labelled the 'New Orchard', with 'The Green', in which the dovecote (dated stylistically to the sixteenth century) and a small pond are situated, to its north. A late-eighteenth century plan shows the garden area reduced, with the western half orchard,[9] and later the garden became wholly orchard. The compartmented garden area to the east of the castle dates from the second half of the nineteenth century.[10] Although the Tudor garden remains at Pencoed Castle are very partial, they are of importance in demonstrating the presence of gardens attached to substantial manor houses of the period.

Plas Machen

Plas Machen (*OS map 171, ST 235876*) is another Morgan house, built in about 1490 by Thomas Morgan and enlarged soon afterwards by either he or his son Rowland to become a substantial manor house.[11] In 1580 the Machen and Tredegar estates were united under Rowland's son Thomas. After the Civil War his son Thomas abandoned Machen in favour of Tredegar, where he built a new house (*see*

p.38). At this point Plas Machen's status declined to that of tenanted farmhouse. However, it retained some of its former glory into the nineteenth century, when Coxe noted the circular 'hunting room' in the now demolished east wing, with paintings of Diana and other hunting themes in thirteen compartments of the ceiling.[12]

Terraced gardens were made in the Tudor period to the south and east of the house, which stands on the eastern edge of the Rhymney valley, with a steep drop below to the flood plain. This drop was revetted with a massive stone wall to provide both a platform for the house and the lower edge to the garden terraces. The garden was divided into two walled areas, the walls of which remain for the most part, with a high wall between the two enclosures. Within each section are two terraces now separated by turf scarps (the upper enclosure is now pasture field, the lower one remains a garden, largely turfed). The upper terraces would appear to have been raised walks from which to view the formal gardens below. The lowest terrace is built up above the slope, bounded on the west and south by retaining walls, and on the north by the house and a stone wall with a doorway in it leading to the forecourt east of the house. From this terrace there is a fine view out over the Rhymney valley. The ornamental layout is continued into the valley below with a field and narrow fishpond (now much overgrown) at its west end aligned with the terraces.

These gardens demonstrate slightly more sophistication and grandeur than is common in the area in the Tudor period: an axial layout of terraces and fishpond, and a massive amount of earth-moving to create the terracing. Although not on the scale of Raglan (*see p.33*) the terraces are more substantial than others in the county of comparable date (Lower Dyffryn, Kemeys House, The Garn).

Lower Dyffryn

Lower Dyffryn (*OS map 161, SO 435228*) is a remote farm in the Monnow valley. When the house was built in the late sixteenth century by a branch of the Cecil family it was of sufficient status to warrant an ornamental terraced garden next to it. Subsequently that status declined to one of ordinary farmhouse, and the garden survives as pasture.

The substantial stone house is built on an E-plan, with typical early Renaissance features including a two-storey porch in the centre of the east side.[13] Stone farm buildings, some of which may be contemporary with the house, lie to the south and east. The former garden lies to the west of the house. Its main component is a large square levelled terrace bounded by the house, low walls on the south and west and a higher wall, most of which stands to its full height, on top of the terrace revetment wall on the north. Projecting out from the middle of this wall is a semi-circular alcove (*Figure 1*), in the centre of which is a small window giving a view out over the former fishponds below, and the lovely Monnow valley beyond. The window is rectangular and still retains its wooden surround and mullion. A slight projection in the wall of the alcove, near its base, suggests that there was probably a seat around it. This ornamental touch to the garden is a rare survival, and one which indicates a sensibility to the landscape beyond.

The fishponds below the garden no longer hold water, and survive as earthworks. Although mainly utilitarian in purpose, they were undoubtedly integrated into the ornamental scheme, as the window suggests.

Fig 1. Alcove in the north wall of garden of Lower Dyffryn. *Photo: author.*

Treowen

Treowen (*OS map 161, SO 461110*) is one of the finer and more substantial Tudor manor houses of Gwent, and to the north of the house are the remnants of its Tudor garden. There has been a manor house on the site since at least the medieval period, but the present double-pile house was probably built by William ap John Thomas, standard bearer to Henry VIII and sheriff of Monmouthshire in 1556, in the middle years of the sixteenth century.[14] It is a tall, rather gaunt house, originally of three storeys both front and back (the top storey was removed from the front in the second half of the seventeenth century). The rough stone of the back walls would originally have been plastered.

William's grandson, William Jones (sheriff in 1614), inherited a fortune as well as marrying an heiress. He made improvements and alterations, including the addition of the two-storey porch in the middle of the south side of the house, in 1627. A heraldic panel over the doorway carries the arms of various families including Jones (Herbert). William's son Philip was the commander of the Royalist troops in Monmouthshire, and when he died in 1660 his son William went to live at the family's second home of Llanarth Court. Thenceforward Treowen was reduced in status to a tenanted farmhouse.

There is evidence of a garden at Treowen by 1563, when William John Thomas's divorce settlement referred to *'gardens orchards and also the watermill in the parish of Wonastowe'*. The house was divided, and various outhouses, the orchard and garden were halved.[15] Visible garden remains from the Tudor period lie to the north of the house, and are probably contemporary with the building of the house, or with its improvement at the beginning of the seventeenth century. They consist of a square levelled lawn slightly wider than the house surrounded on all but the house side by a raised bank revetted on its outer side by a stone and brick wall, now partly obscured by turf. The top of the bank is flat, which would suggest a raised walk around the ornamental garden. Beyond, to the north, is an orchard, and former fishponds lie nearby in the valleys to the north-west and east. Charles Heath, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, recorded that *'The pleasure grounds, which surrounded the house, are converted into farm lands: and the fishponds ... are all drained'*. He implied that the gardens were originally extensive, stretching beyond the present gardens.[16] The level garden area to the south of the house has no visible Tudor features, although in 1907 Bradney thought that 'old-fashioned' gardens could be traced here.[17] The drive to the house, which now runs west of the farm buildings, originally approached to their east, between the buildings and the garden.

Kemeys House

Kemeys House (*OS map 171, ST 383926*) is another Tudor house with the remains of a contemporary formal garden, here terraced down the steep eastern edge of the Usk valley. The substantial stone house was an important one in the county, being the home until 1700 of the Kemeys family.[18] It was built in several phases in the sixteenth century, (there is a date of 1597 over the entrance to the large stone barn to the north). The main entrance was originally on the south-east side, facing a public road which ran just above the house. Later the road was moved to its present route below the house, to its north-west.

The integration of the terraced gardens with the house and barn, and the construction of their walls, suggests that they also are Tudor in date. They lie on the slope beside and below the house. Above is a small walled court that was originally the forecourt, cobbled beneath the turf.[19] There are two terraces. The higher one lies south-west of the house, and is enclosed by a stone wall. A grass scarp divides it from the lower terrace which runs the full length of the garden, with the handsome barn closing its northern end. This lower terrace is built up over the slope, and is bounded by a substantial revetment wall and reached by stone steps from below, which lead to a flagstone path to the front door.[20] The southern garden wall continues down the slope below the terraces to the road. It encloses an area known to have been an orchard in the nineteenth century, and undoubtedly an orchard much earlier than that. A small stream that is culverted under the terraces runs into two small ponds near the top of this area. Bradney noted a stone path from the house to the church below,[20] but there is now no vestige of this, and the house has been cut off from the site of the church by the A449 dual carriageway.

Troy House

One of the most ancient remaining gardens in Gwent is the large walled garden dating to the beginning of the seventeenth century, that lies to the west of Troy House, to the south of Monmouth (*OS map 162, SO 508113*). The river Trothy, from which the house undoubtedly got its name, runs eastwards through the meadow below the garden. This garden is a first cousin to that of Raglan Castle, in that it also was created by the Somerset family. It belonged not to the present house, but to an earlier, essentially Tudor one on the same site.[22] The fourth Earl of Worcester had acquired Troy House from the Herbert family in the late sixteenth century, but the gardening tradition here goes back to the time of the Herberts: it is recorded that William Herbert, in the reign of Henry VIII, sent two men, Richards and Williams, to France and Flanders to study horticulture and to bring back vegetables and fruit trees.[23] From the beginning of the seventeenth century until his death in 1665 Troy was lived in by one of the earl's younger sons, Sir Charles Somerset, and the present garden was built by him.

That Sir Charles Somerset's garden at Troy has survived is probably due to the fact that after his death the new house, built soon after he inherited in 1667 by the Marquess of Worcester (created Duke of Beaufort in 1682) was always tenanted. The grand, enlarged house, with its imposing classical north front, although the family's principal Monmouthshire seat (in place of the ruined Raglan Castle), was usually lived in by their stewards.

The rectangular garden is surrounded by a rubble-built Old Red Sandstone wall, with dressed stone quoins at the corners, and flat coping stones. It is slightly battered at the base on the lower, north side, and has a gap on the south side.[24] The north and east walls are best preserved, standing to about 4 and 3.5 metres respectively. The principal entrance is in the middle of the east side, facing the house. Shallow steps lead over a stone-lined drain running parallel with the wall up to a fine decorated doorway and lobby. The studded wooden door has a dressed stone surround with shallow, primitive rustication, on top of which is a heraldic panel with the initials *'C S E'* (Charles and Elizabeth Somerset) set in scrolls and strapwork. Inside is a small barrel-vaulted lobby. There is nothing comparable to this in Gwent. In the middle of the west side of the garden is a much simpler entrance, now blocked, flanked by large dressed stones; in 1804 Charles Heath recorded that there were two doors to the garden, both with shields.[25] This west entrance could have been the second 'door'. Other features of the walls are a small, blocked, square opening half-way up the wall south of the main entrance, and two bee-bole rectangular alcoves set in the inside of the east wall. There are no visible remains of any garden layout in the interior, which is now given over to pasture, a few old fruit trees, and a small nuns' graveyard.

There is no doubt that this garden was a fine, productive one in Sir Charles's time. First, we have evidence that Sir Charles was keen on gardens, and took an interest in the latest fashions on the Continent. In 1609 he married the wealthy heiress Elizabeth Powell, daughter of Sir William Powell of Llanpylt (or Llansoy), Monmouthshire, and in 1611-12 he travelled abroad, visiting and recording in his diary many of the finest gardens of the day in France and Italy.[26] Secondly, the gardens of Sir Charles's father, the 4th Earl of Worcester, and brother, the first

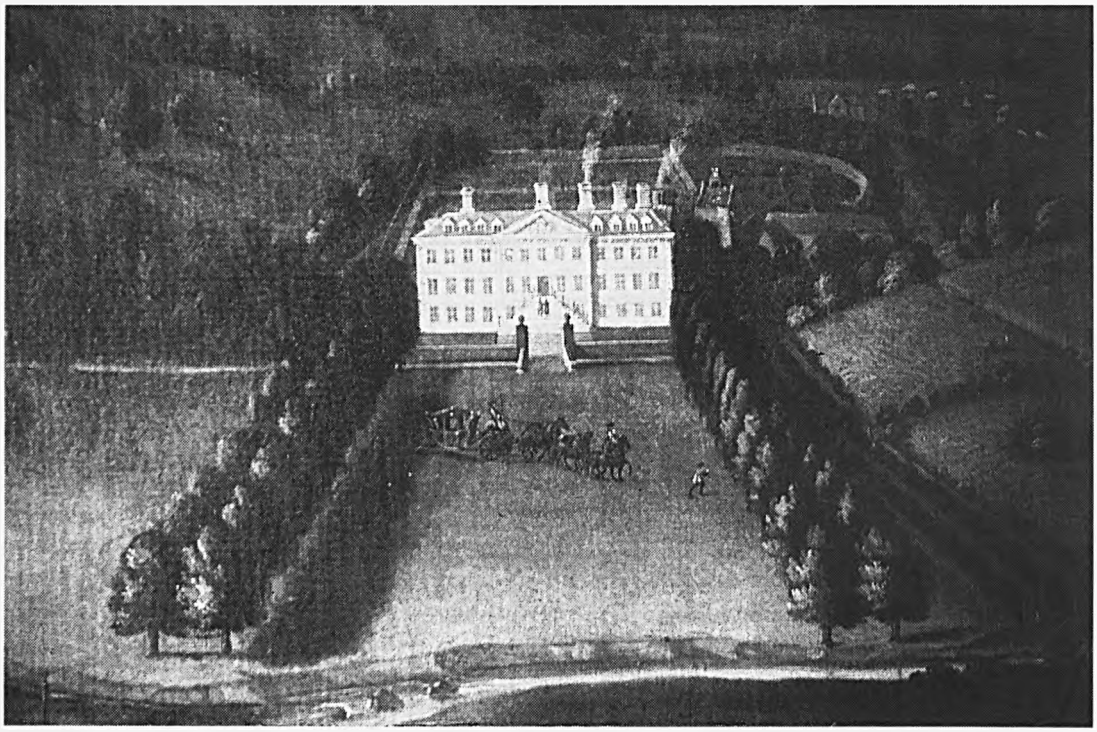

Fig 2. Detail of painting by Thomas Smith of Troy House and Monmouth, *ca.* 1740. *By courtesy of the Duke of Beaufort.*

Marquis of Worcester, at nearby Raglan Castle, were grand and sophisticated, and must have influenced him. Thirdly, there is evidence from the Marquis of Worcester himself that the garden at Troy was exceptional. In his *Apopthegm 43* he recounts how Sir Thomas Somerset[27], who *'being a compleat Gentleman of himself, delighted himself much in fine gardens and orchards'*, sent fruit, including apricots, over to Raglan Castle when Charles I was staying there in 1645. When presented with them by the Marquess, the king is supposed to have replied *'I have heard, that corn now grows where Troy town stood, but I never thought there had grown any apricocks there before'*.[28]

After 1667 Troy was given a grand baroque layout, with a great double avenue from the main, north front of the house to the confluence of the rivers Monnow and Wye, on the edge of Monmouth. This is shown in a painting of Troy House from the Wye Bridge, of *ca.* 1740, by Thomas Smith (*Figure 2*).[29] The walled garden, confusingly put in the wrong place, and of the wrong shape, is shown laid out with trees (presumably an orchard). The 1706 estate map of Troy[30] shows the avenue, the walled garden in its true position, laid out with trees, compartments to the north of the house, and a formal garden to the east, with the axis continued as a narrow band, possibly a walk, over a bend in the river Trothy. Some of the shallow terracing to the north and east of the house, although now part of a much later garden, may therefore

be late seventeenth-century in origin. Sale particulars of 1901 mention gravel walks leading to lawns on the site of old fishponds and the pleasance, between the house and the river Trothy, *'which were renowned in the Jacobean period'*. These have subsequently become school recreation grounds and playing fields.

Raglan Castle

The gardens of Raglan Castle (*OS map 161, SO 414083*), dating to the Tudor and early Stuart periods, are the most important of their period in the county. They were made by the 3rd and 4th Earls of Worcester, between 1549 and 1628, and incorporated advanced Renaissance features such as grand terracing, shell niches for statues of Roman emperors, a fountain, and a large lake at the head of which was an elaborate water parterre. These gardens have been described fully in earlier articles in *The Monmouthshire Antiquary* and elsewhere.[31] Evidence for the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century appearance of the gardens comes not only from the remains on the ground but also from documentary sources, including a map of 1652 by Laurence Smythe. The salient points about the gardens are that they were on the grandest scale, that they were the most sophisticated for their time in the county, and perhaps in Wales, and that their structure survives, untouched since the surrender and abandonment of the castle in 1646.

Coldbrook House

Although Coldbrook House (*OS map 161, SO 313126*) has gone, demolished in August 1954, there are remnants around its site of gardens and pleasure grounds of several eras, the earliest being that of the Tudor and Stuart period.[32] There are also remains of the medieval deer park (*see p.45*). The house, whose main eighteenth-century front faced north-west, stood in a small valley on the south flank of the Ysgyryd Fach hill. This was one of the most historic houses in Gwent, with features in it from the thirteenth century onwards. It was described as *'a large town in a pile of stone'* by the Welsh bard Guto'r Glyn in the fifteenth century.[33] and as *'an irregular old pile'* until given a classical front by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams in 1746.[34] To the west of the house site the late seventeenth-century stable block remains, converted to a house.

Coldbrook was owned by the Herbert family from the mid fifteenth century until it was bought in 1720 by Major Hanbury of Pontypool Park for his son Sir Charles Hanbury Williams. The Herberts were prominent both in local affairs and at court. During the Civil War Henry Herbert of Coldbrook sided with the Parliamentarians, almost the only Herbert to do so, and was rewarded with £3000 and the looting of Raglan Castle. In 1889 Coldbrook was sold to Lady Llanover, thus bringing it back to the Herbert family.

The earliest garden remains at Coldbrook of Tudor or Stuart date consist of two narrow terraces, revetted with stone walls, set into the hillside to the south-east of the house site. Next to them is a cold bath - a small stone-lined rectangular tank set into the ground and fed from a spring above - which is probably contemporary. There is documentary evidence for further early features. A drawing by Meredith Jones of 1753 showed avenues, probably of the Restoration period, radiating out from each front of the house.[35] One of these flanked the main entrance drive, now the back

drive, to the south-west of the house. All have gone, but Bradney traced two rows of ancient sycamores in the grove to the north-east of the house *'now crowded up with other trees'*,[36] and two isolated ancient sycamores in the field to the south of the house may be avenue remnants. The only other remnants of this era are two sundials, which long stood in the grounds at Coldbrook, although neither are there now. One was inscribed '1630 Long liffe to King Charles' and the other *'1707 Festina Lente'*.3[37]

GARDENS OF c. 1660 TO 1720

Trewyn

Trewyn (*OS map 161, SO 328228*), situated on the western flank of the Monnow valley, at the foot of the Black Mountains, is the ancestral home of the Wynstons (or Winstons), who lived here from the medieval period until the seventeenth century. In 1609 the owner was John Delahay of Allt-yr-ynys, but the Wynstons continued in residence. There were various owners in the eighteenth century, including several generations of Shaws during the second half of the century.[38] The present house dates to the Restoration period, and has undergone very little subsequent alteration. It is a compact, symmetrical, stone house with a hipped roof. Its main front faces east, across the valley.

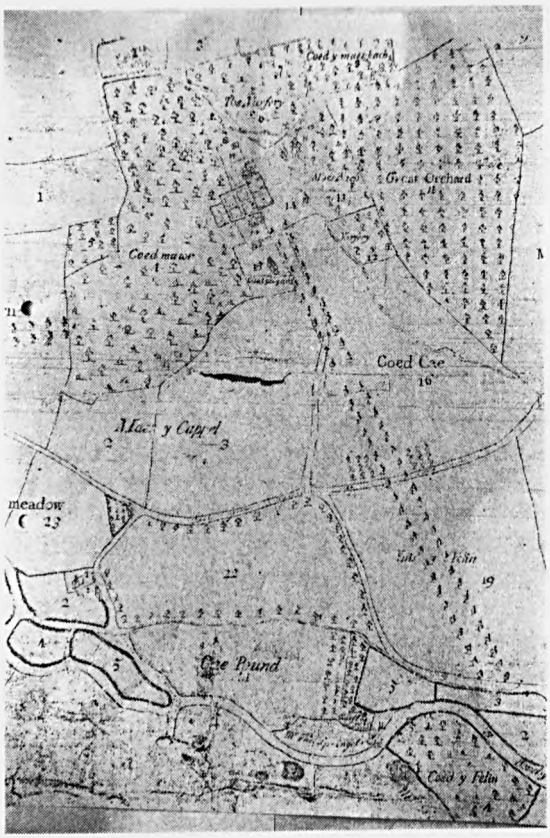

Fig 3. 'Survey of Upper and Lower Trewen', by E. Moore, 1726. *Gwent Record Office D591.8.534.*

Trewyn provides a good example on a small scale of the baroque garden planning of the Restoration period. A map of 1726[39] shows a formal, axial layout of terraces and avenue on the east front and terraces on the south front (*Figure 3*). The avenue is shown extending right to the river at Allt-yr-ynys. To the east of the house this layout remains virtually unaltered, except that the avenue no longer reaches to the river. The garden on this side is rectangular, bounded on the north and south sides by high

brick (south) and brick/stone (north) walls. The east side is open, to give a view down the avenue, with iron railings bedded into a low brick wall. In the centre are simple iron gates flanked by tall stone piers topped by large ornamental stone urns. A central gravel path leads up to the two terraces at the west end, next to the house. These are clearly shown on the 1726 map; they are revetted with stone, and are of uneven height, the upper being about three times higher than the lower. The terraces are linked in the centre by three flights of wide stone steps, ornamented with balls and vases, leading up to the front door. The axis is continued by a Scots pine avenue, now discontinuous, which runs as far as the Pandy-Oldcastle road. The stretch of avenue between here and the river had already gone by the late nineteenth century.[40] From the size of the trees it would appear that some, if not all, have been replaced at various times. Most of those remaining lie on either side of the public road at the western end of the avenue; further east the avenue cuts across a pre-existing pond, and three pines remain on the south side, one of which is of a great size. A narrow lime avenue, thought to date to the second half of the nineteenth century, runs south-eastwards from the middle of the pine avenue to a park entrance on the Pandy-Oldcastle road.

To the south of the house nineteenth-century alterations to the terraces have obscured the 1726 layout. This was of a rectangular terrace with border paths immediately south of the house, an enclosure with small outbuilding to its west, and a large square terrace or enclosure, shown divided into four squares bounded by paths, to the east (south of the garden east of the house). To the south of this was a further, smaller terrace or enclosure divided by cross paths. To the east lay an enclosure with a small building in it, and a chapel to its east in an enclosure labelled 'Chapelyard'. The main terrace south of the house was enlarged in the nineteenth century to form the present wide terrace. The original width of the terrace can be gauged from the butt end of its outer wall, which protrudes from the revetment wall (which may be original) at the west end of the terrace. Above this, to the west, is a small area enclosed by a low stone wall that may be the enclosure shown on the 1726 map. The rest of the 1726 layout has gone: the present lower L-shaped terrace is nineteenth-century,[41] but the northern end of its east wall, which is of stone, may be earlier. There are remnants of a stone building against the north wall, east of the house, which may be that shown on the map, but of the chapel there is no sign. A very fine survival, however, is the octagonal brick dovecote, clearly shown on the map, and thought to be late seventeenth century in date. It is well preserved, with 831 nesting holes inside, and a revolving ladder to reach them.

Llanfihangel Court

Llanfihangel Court (*OS map 161, SO 327204*) had one of the finest and most extensive garden and park layouts in Monmouthshire in the late seventeenth century. Remarkably, much of the garden, and one avenue of the park survive. The substantial stone house stands on the east side of the Honddu valley, to the south-east of Llanfihangel Crucorney village. The present main entrance drive, now sliced in two by the new A465 road, runs straight from the gates at the entrance to the garden to the village church. A few miles to the south the great bulk of the Skyrrid Mountain rises dramatically above the rolling valley.

As with so many of the substantial houses of the county, the history of Llanfihangel Court goes back to the mediaeval period. However, the present house is essentially Tudor and Jacobean, built on an H-plan with the main front facing north. Started in about 1520, it was rebuilt in about 1559-69 by Rhys Morgan, son of William Morgan of nearby Triley. In 1608 Llanfihangel was sold to the 4th Earl of Worcester, and was bought by Nicholas Arnold of Llanthony in about 1626, when he was elected MP. He was sheriff of the county in 1633. A sundial on the south wall of the house is inscribed *'NA 1627'*. Nicholas further remodelled the house between 1640 and 1660. In 1665 he was succeeded by his son John, a rabid anti-catholic and enemy of the Earl of Worcester. In order to achieve greater external symmetry for the house, and for the grand axis he created to the north, John moved the front door to the middle of the north side, and also, in about 1673 added the southern annexe with its fine yew staircase. To the south of the house are early seventeenth century stables and a large seventeenth-century barn. It was John who made the walled and terraced gardens and laid out the park in the formal style then fashionable, with the house, garden and park on the north side united into one axial whole. The contemporary appearance of Llanfihangel is shown in a remarkable bird's-eye view oil painting of about 1680 (*Figure 4*).

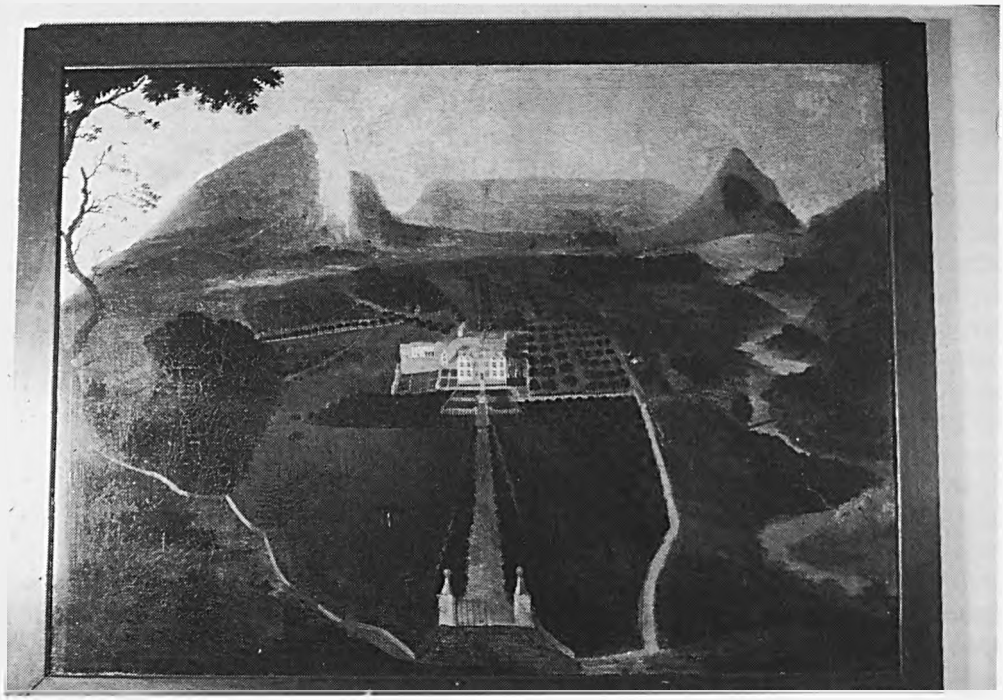

Fig. 4. Painting of Llanfihangel Court, *c.* 1680 . *By courtesy of Mr and Mrs D. Johnston.*

The painting shows the park (*see* p. 47) and garden in some detail, and appears to be a faithful record of their appearance. The axial layout, and integration of house, garden, and park, particularly on the north side, where the front door was moved to the centre to complete the symmetry, is clearly shown. The gardens made by John Arnold survive best on the north side of the house, where he terminated his great axis with three terraces built into the steep slope below the house, and with central steps between them leading up to his new central front door (*Figure 5*). Both terraces and steps remain, built of stone, with brick walls flanking the middle terrace. The steps are flanked by stone parapet walls topped by large ball finials (*Figure 6*). At the foot of the terraces the steps fan out into a wide semi-circle, beyond which is a gravel forecourt and a small stone pillar and ball on a circular base of unknown date, but in place by 1916.[42] In the early decades of the twentieth century the terraces were smothered with banks of rhododendrons, yew hedges and ivy.[43]

The axis continues with a lawn the same width as the terraces, flanked by low stone walls and woodland. The painting of *ca.* 1680 clearly shows the terraces and steps, the present lawn apparently planted with trees, and groves on either side. The entrance from the west is shown, but it is unclear if the present wooden gates and stone piers date from this period.[44] The brick building just outside the gates, a former coach-house, could be that shown in this position in the painting.

Fig. 5. Detail of Painting of Llanfihangel Court, *c.* 1680. *By courtesy of Mr and Mrs D. Johnston.*

Fig. 6. Steps at the foot of the north terraces, Llanfihangel Court. *Photo: author.*

On the east side of the house much of John Arnold's garden was swept away between 1796 and 182245 to give the present lawn bounded by a ha-ha, and sloping lawn below. The painting shows that John's garden was very different: it was walled, with a level enclosure divided by cross paths next to the house and a sloping one below, divided into rectangular sections by paths. In all but the south-west corner of the latter were small circular pavilions. The north-east pavilion, called the 'Guardhouse' is all that survives of this seventeenth-century garden. It is a two-storey brick and stone building, with an octagonal slate roof topped by a ball finial, a simple door, small window, and stone bench inside. Now it stands isolated in the lawn, but the stubs of walls on its west and south sides show where it was attached to the garden walls. The depiction of the north-west pavilion in Williams[46] shows it to have been similar to the Guardhouse. One further feature remains from John Arnold's garden: a lead tank, now in the courtyard to the south of the house, on which is cast *'A J M 1673'* (John and Margaret Arnold).

Tredegar House

Tredegar House is an imposing Restoration period house situated on the western edge of Newport (*OS map 171, ST 290853*). The present brick house was built between about 1664 and 1672 by Sir William Morgan, whose family had lived in a

more modest stone house on the site since the fifteenth century. The Morgans were one of the most prominent families in the county, and their new house was the most prestigious of the Restoration period in Gwent. A spacious baroque layout of garden compartments and avenues radiating out into the park (*see p.49*) was made in the same period, although probably by Sir William's son John, who inherited in 1680. The walled courts and gardens, and one of the avenues, survive to the present day.

There is evidence, however, that the present compartments correspond to earlier Tudor gardens, which were laid out around the earlier house, described by Leland in about 1540 as 'a very fair place of stone'.[47] A tracing of an early seventeenth-century plan of Tredegar House by our former President, the antiquary Octavius Morgan (1803-88), brother of Viscount Tredegar,[48] shows much the same layout of enclosures as today, except for the absence of stables to the north-west of the house. The north-west front has a *'great gate'* into *'the great bowling greene'* (outer court), and a similar gate, with ball finials, into *'the middle court'*. The house had no north-west wing at this time, and an inner court was closed by a wall on this side. The appearance of the *'middle court'* after the rebuilding of the house is shown in a drawing of 1684 by Thomas Dineley.[49] This shows a walled court divided into four quarters by wide paths, and with a simple gate in the centre of the outer wall, as shown in the Morgan plan.

To the south-east of the house are three large compartments, with *'a wilderness or maze'* at the northern end, with an arbour in its north-east corner. In the middle is a formal garden of L-shaped beds, *'the garden plott'*, arranged in a square *'contrived in walks and borders for trees and flowers'*, with a *'great walke about'* in the middle, and an orchard at the southern end. To the west are two further large orchards, with 550 trees planted *'dyamond wise'* (in quincunx formation). Little remains of this period: parts of the Restoration period brick walls rest on stone foundations which may be earlier, and the *'great walke about'* in the central compartment, now called the Cedar Garden, has been found and restored.

The gardens were substantially modified and updated in about 1700. The walls were rebuilt in brick, with a broad axial path down the centre of all three compartments. The central gaps in the cross walls are flanked by tall brick piers topped with large ornamental stone vases. The fine classical stables were built *ca.* 1690-1725, probably by John Morgan (*d.* 1719), to the north-west of the house, at right-angles to the main front. At the same time an orangery was built against their west side, facing the northern garden compartment (now called the Orangery Garden). This is one of the earliest orangeries in Wales. Until 1979 it retained its heating system of hot air ducts under the floor and in the back wall.

Information about the garden was given to Octavius Morgan in 1840 by a labourer, John Howell, who had worked there since 1792.[50] According to him the walls were built during the stewardship of Mr Bryan (steward from *ca.* 1700 to *ca.* 1763). Not until after 1782 was the formal layout of the gardens changed. Howell described this as having *'Turpentine Walks'*. ('Turpentine' is usually interpreted as meaning 'serpentine', but a more literal, if less likely interpretation would be walks lined with the turpentine tree, *Pistacia terebinthus*.) Octavius Morgan interpreted this as meaning gardens in the Dutch style *'with many small beds'*, but it has become apparent from survey and excavation that the layout, at least in the northernmost,

or Orangery garden, was much more baroque French, with a spacious design of inorganic parterres. Somewhere in the garden stood the sundial which later stood at the head of the lake. On it was the inscription *'Latitude. 51 deg. 45 min., April 20th, 1698'*.

The early eighteenth-century layout of the Orangery Garden was preserved by the dumping of spoil over it from the making of the lake in 1790. The removal of this layer, and further excavation by the Debois Landscape Group, between 1989 and 1992[51] has revealed a complex pattern, showing that the garden was laid out mainly with inorganic materials such as gravel and cobbles. The central gravel path was flanked by strips of coal dust and brick walls, and there was a perimeter path around the western half of the garden. A small mount was found in the north-west corner, and a plinth in the centre of the west side. The most unusual find was two inorganic parterres next to the orangery (their eastern ends lie under the present terrace). These were geometric patterns of materials that included crushed sea shells, crushed lime mortar, brick dust, coal dust, and white, yellow and orange sand. There may also have been areas of grass, and the coloured areas are likely to have been demarcated by dwarf box hedging. A recreation of a garden of this type has now been made in the Orangery Garden, using the correct materials, and it may eventually be possible to recreate the original parterres.

At the same time as the gardens were re-made and the stables built, in the early eighteenth century, the two courts to the north-west of the house were rebuilt and given a grand baroque appearance (*Figure 7*). The outer court was cobbled and

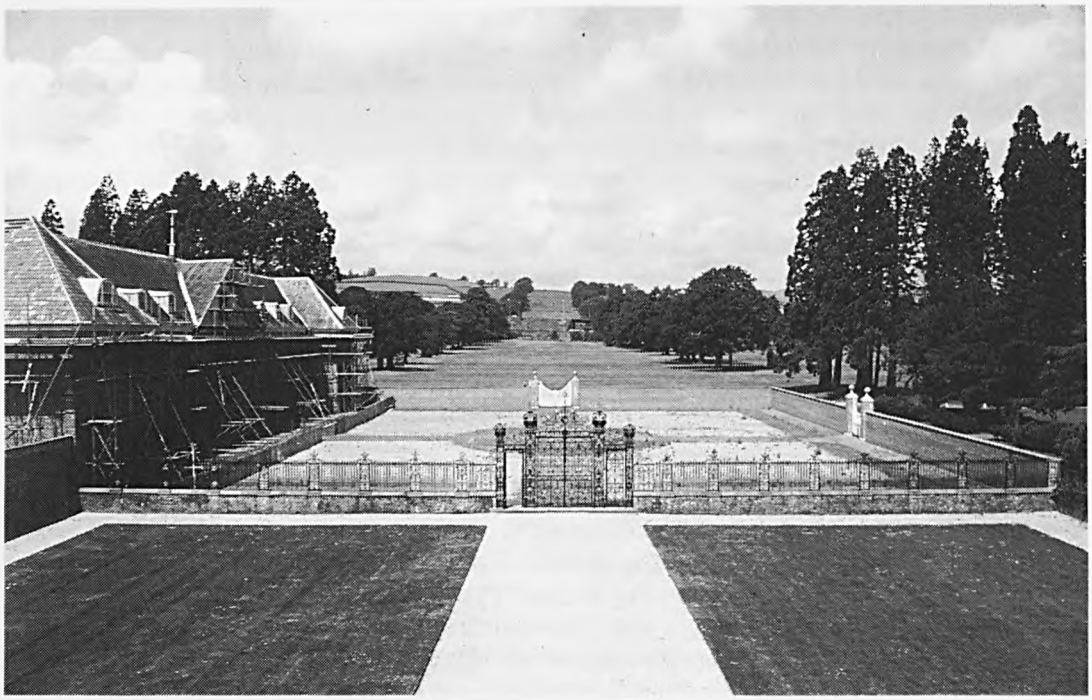

Fig. 7. Courts and avenue north of Tredegar House. *Photo: author.*

surrounded with brick walls (the present walls are a modern reconstruction). Between the outer and inner courts a magnificent pair of wrought-iron gates and screens were erected between 1713 and 1718. These survive, together with the contemporary screens and side gates on either side of the court. The overthrow of the main gate was embellished with the arms of John Morgan quartered with those of his wife Martha of Trebarried, and Octavius Morgan recorded that the side gates were originally decorated with *'JMM'* (John and Martha Morgan) interlaced.[52] All were the work of William Edney of Bristol, and his brother Simon. Of the two William was the better known, and is likely to have made the main gates.[53] In 1713/14 'Mr Edney' was paid a total of £550 for *'the iron gates and palisades'*. Subsequent work was done by Simon Edney, and this was probably for the side screens and gates.5[54]

Further scraps of information about the gardens can be gleaned from the 1701-32 accounts of the chief agent at Tredegar, James Pratt.[55] These mention wages for garden staff, and payment for seeds and plants. Specific plants referred to include peaches, melons, apricots, gooseberries, currants, artichokes, 'liquorice plants', cherry trees, cabbages, bush beans, peas, and turnips.

Within the county, only the gardens of Llanfihangel Court and Troy House could have rivalled those of Tredegar House at the turn of the seventeenth century. David Williams commented on the grandeur of Tredegar in 1796: *'Every thing within and around it, though not truly beautiful, and sometimes not convenient, has an air of magnificence, that pervades the house, the parks, the river, the woods, and even the vast and level moor, on the edge of which it is placed'*.[56]

FRAGMENTARY REMAINS

There are a number of gardens in Gwent with some features that can be identified as being from the Tudor and Stuart periods. Often gardens of this period were either destroyed, adapted, or overlain at a later date. The landscaping fashion of the second half of the eighteenth century led to the demise of many, with documentary sources the only testimony to their former existence.

Pontypool Park, in the heart of Pontypool (now a public park), was the home of the Hanbury family from the end of the seventeenth century until 1915. The Hanburys were ironmasters who first settled in Pontypool in the late-sixteenth century, and established a major ironworks in the town. The first house was built by Major John Hanbury in 1694. This house, and its attendant gardens and park, are shown in an estate map of 1752 (*Figure 8*).[57] The gardens were formal, with a bowling green in front of the house, a canal to its south, and a walled garden to the south of the house. All this was swept away by Capel Hanbury Leigh at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The scene was described by William Coxe, who said that from the house *'The view is rendered formal by a kitchen garden, which occupies the interval between the front of the house and the torrent, and by an artificial terrace, in the style of the last age, not consonant to the genius of the place. But these specimens of false taste will soon be removed: a lawn of verdure will gradually slope from the house to the torrent, and harmonise with the native beauties of the scenery'*.[58] Williams, too, noted the terracing: *'the gardens and decorated grounds, are parts of inclined planes, rendered horizontal by art'*.[59] There is a possibility that the central gates of the present War Memorial, on the south side of the park, which were brought

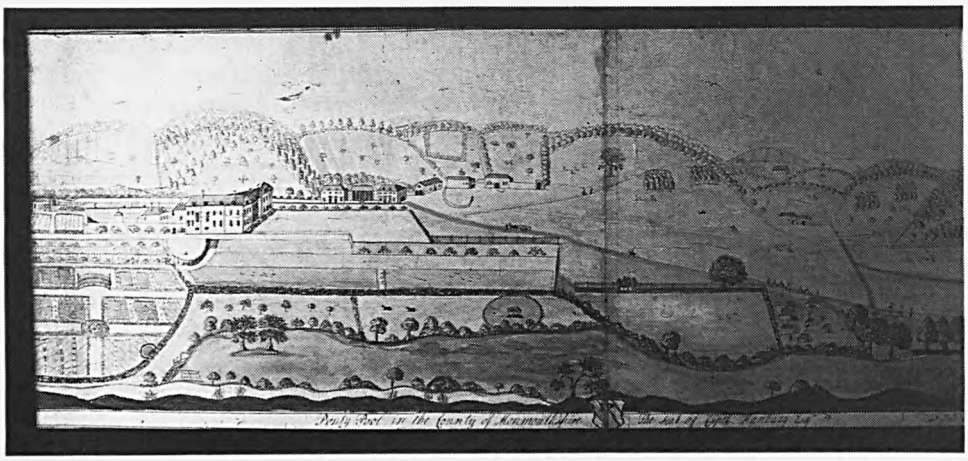

Fig. 8. Detail of drawing of Pontypool Park: *'Ponty Pool in the County of Monmouthshire The Seat of Capel Hanbury Esq. 1752'. By courtesy of R. Hanbury-Tenison.*

from the archway in the stable yard in 1924, date to the early eighteenth-century. Although there is no proof, there is a local tradition that gates (possibly these ones) at Pontypool Park were given to Major John Hanbury by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough at this time.

Several houses of the period retain traces of their contemporary formal gardens, whether walled, terraced, or both. *Llangibby House*, home of the Williams family,[60] no longer stands, but the sloping ground to the south and south-east is levelled into two rectangular terraces. These are probably contemporary with the late seventeenth- to early eighteenth-century remodelling of the house by Sir Trevor Williams. An estate map of 1758 refers to orchards (including one inside the medieval castle above), fishponds, garden, fir trees, and coneygre, but does not show them in detail.[61] Williams (1796) notices the formality: *'the gardens or grounds ... are not assimilated with the country. They are formal, compared with those in England'*.[62] The circular level top of the large Norman motte to the east of the house site is described by Bradney as having been used *'for many generations'* as a bowling green.

Although the gardens at *Cefn Tilla*, near Raglan, were principally laid out after 1856, when the estate was bought for the second Lord Raglan, there are some remains from the seventeenth century. The house was first built in 1620, and during the Civil War was the seat of Roger Oates and used by General Fairfax as his headquarters during the siege of Raglan Castle. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Charles Heath noted that the house had *'a spacious court in front, formerly enclosed with a high wall, but now nearly razed to the ground'*.[63] This has been superseded by a Victorian forecourt. The terracing to the south and east of the house, the dry-stone walls around the south terraces, and the gateway in the south wall, known as 'Fairfax's Gateway' all date from this period.[64]

Shallow garden terracing, and a simple small stone garden building with a date of *1729* over the doorway, survive at the Tudor house of *The Garn*, Tredunnock. At *The Lawns*, Grosmont, a terrace and walled garden, probably contemporary with the late-seventeenth century house built by Charles Walwyn, survive, overlooking the Monnow valley.[65] *Trivor*, St Maughans, lower down the Monnow valley, which was built in two stages in about 1630 and in the late seventeenth century, is complemented by a small terraced and walled garden. *Ty Mawr*, Llangattock-nigh-Usk, is a substantial manor house, thought to have been built by Robert Lucas in the early eighteenth century.[66] The house is built into a steep east-facing bank, and next to it, on the south side, are two stone revetted garden terraces, the upper one cut into the bank.

Almost all traces of the early gardens at *Lower Llanfoist* have gone, erased by years of neglect, use as a race course, and latterly as a golf course. However, this was once an important manor house belonging to the Price family, and around the house were extensive walled gardens, ponds, and a park. At the beginning of this century ruinous walls, remains of ponds, and some park trees were noted by Bradney.[67]

There is a possibility that the two ponds, cascades, and canalized streams, which are such an integral and attractive feature of the gardens of *Ty Uchaf*, Llanover, have their origin in the first half of the seventeenth century. Ty Uchaf was owned at this time by an eminent judge, Walter Rumsey (1584-1660), a man of many parts, nicknamed *'the picklock of the law'*. Among his hobbies were the grafting of trees and the construction of fishponds. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the Rhyd-y-meirch stream flowing through his grounds gave scope for, or even initiated, this diversion. The ponds, cascades, and channels may owe their present appearance more to Benjamin Waddington, who bought Ty Uchaf in 1792, but they could have been initiated much earlier by Rumsey.

A 1789 plan of *Dingestow Court*, near Monmouth, made for James Duberley shows a formal court and gardens to the north and north-east of the house.[68] On stylistic grounds these would have been survivals from the seventeenth century. The main part of the house was built by Sir Philip Jones in 1623, and the Jones family continued to live here until the 1760s. To the north was a walled court with a straight approach and oval in the centre; to its east was a walled garden divided by cross paths, east of which were a wilderness and 'Happy Dick's Mount'. Of this formality only 'Happy Dick's Mount' survives, probably the only true garden mount in the county. It is a flat-topped conical earthen mound, and 'Happy Dick' refers to the last Jones owner, Richard, on whose death the estate was sold to Duberley.

The Argoed, Penallt, retains traces of its sixteenth- or seventeenth-century gardens. The house was first built by Christopher Probert at the end of the sixteenth century, and was rebuilt by Sir George Probert in the first half of the seventeenth century.[69] The approach to the house from the west is flanked by pairs of enormous ancient sycamores, and to the east of the house are two shallow garden terraces within the present garden, and at least one further terrace aligned with them in the field below. From them is a magnificent view out over the Wye valley. To their north is an ancient stone walled garden with a restored pavilion in the corner. *Ty Mawr*, Llantilio Pertholey, home in the Tudor period of a Morgan family, has a traditional bailey in front, walled gardens, and the remains of fishponds.

A number of manor house gardens, now disappeared, have been recorded. An eighteenth-century plan of *Llanellen House*, near Abergavenny, shows the typical irregularity of modest gardens of the period, with garden and orchard enclosures haphazardly arranged around the house. (*Figure 9*)[70] The seventeenth-century house of *Trostrey Court*, near Usk, is thought to have had a terraced formal garden.[71] The farm of *Great Marlborough*, north-east of Pandy, was thought by Fox and Raglan to have had a garden terrace in front, and possibly an avenue leading off from it.[72] And Coxe records that the walls of the garden of the old Morgan house at *Llantarnam Abbey* were still standing in 1801.[73] Several much weathered stone statues of this era survive at Llantarnam, the best and largest of which are a 'musketeer' and 'pilgrim', now set up in the corner bastions of the Victorian garden. An over-life sized stone statue of a man, probably contemporary with the others and popularly known as 'Robin Hood' stood until quite recently in the park, on high ground to the south of the house.[74]

PARKS

The first recorded parks in the county are medieval and Tudor deer parks. These were a luxury afforded only to royalty and a few wealthy families and monasteries. Their

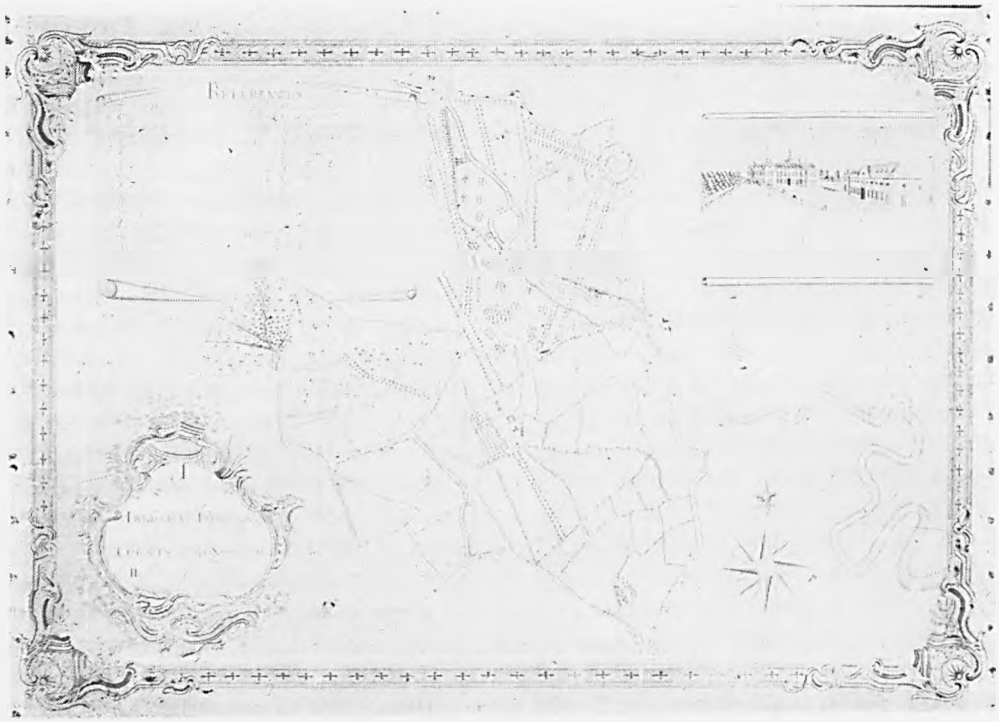

Fig. 9. Section of an eighteenth-century plan of Llanellen House. *Gwent Record Office DA 34.4798.*

purpose was primarily to contain deer for the table rather than for the chase, and to this end they were surrounded with substantial banks and internal ditches, with stout paling, or both. The early county maps of Monmouthshire by Christopher Saxton (*1577*), John Speed (*1610; Figure 10*), and Johannes Blaeu (*1645*) all show eight fenced deer parks: Castell Meredydd (Machen), Tredegar (Newport), St Julians (Newport), Llantarnam Abbey (Cwmbrân), two at Raglan Castle, Grace Dieu Abbey (Dingestow), and Llantilio Crossenny. Two of these (Tredegar and Llantarnam Abbey) were later converted into landscape parks; the remainder have gone, with only field and farm names to testify to their former existence.

However, more existed than are shown on the maps, and traces of some of them remain. A particularly fine example is Abergavenny Priory deer park, on the south-east flank of the Sugar Loaf mountain. It occupies the head of the steep-sided valley of the Afon Cibi, and contains a variety of habitats, including open grassland, ancient coppiced oak woodland, and areas of scattered trees. For much of its length the boundary consists of a substantial bank and inner ditch, with the bank revetted with dry-stone walling in places. Within the park are ancient tracks leading from the entrance at Porth-y-parc to the park-keeper's lodge (Parc Farm) at the head of the valley, and up on to the moor. The park belonged to the Benedictine priory of Abergavenny, which was founded soon after the Norman Conquest by Hamelin de Balun.[75]

There is known to have been a deer park at Llangibby House.[76] It was enclosed with cleft oak paling, and was reduced in extent in the eighteenth century. In 1861, when the house was let, the park was disparked and the deer killed. Troy House had a small park, on rising ground to the south of the house. The 1706 estate map calls this area the 'Olde Parke', and Heath (1804) said that Troy had *'very fine demesnes'*.[77] The area is now pasture, with woodland (Troypark Wood and Troy Orles) above. On the eastern side of the park is a curious small building, faced with good quality dressed stone. It has one door, and a small window, too high to see out of. Its date is uncertain, but it could be seventeenth-century. Although probably utilitarian (? a game larder), the care taken with its exterior shows that it must have been regarded as an ornamental feature in the park.

A deer park was still in existence at Coldbrook House in 1749, when Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams wrote of *'a very good stock of old bucks in the park at Coldbrook'*.[78] The park lay mainly to the south of the house, and parts of its substantial stone boundary wall still stand. The landscape park at St Pierre, near Chepstow, had its origins as a deer park, and even in 1910 it remained one, stocked with fallow deer.[79] There was a deer park at Penhow Castle, to the north of the Cardiff to Chepstow road which runs below it, but it was disparked by Charles Somerset before 1567. St Pierre was the home of the Lewis family from the thirteenth century, and the park may well be medieval in origin. A settlement around the church, which remains, was cleared to make it, an early instance of the removal of inconveniently situated settlement to make way for a park. Some interesting pre-eighteenth century features remain: along the eastern edge of the park is a series of linear ponds, named on John Aram's map of 1781 as 'The Upper Withy Bed', the 'Lower Withy Bed', the 'Stew Pond' and the 'Canal', which had 'The Long Walk' alongside it.[80] Although much overgrown these ponds and walk still exist, and the 'Canal' and 'Long Walk' give a hint of early,

Fig. 10. Detail of John Speed map of Monmouthshire, 1610, showing the three parks of Raglan Castle, and that of Grace Dieu Abbey. *by courtesy of the National Library of Wales.*

probably sixteenth- or seventeenth-century, landscaping with a view to pleasurable use. Some of the magnificent trees in the park, particularly oaks and sweet chestnuts, may well also pre-date the eighteenth century.

Raglan Castle had three parks in the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries: two lay immediately north and south of the castle, the other was several miles to the north at Llantilio Crossenny and was known as the Red Deer Park. Leland, in about 1540, confirmed the presence of two parks next to the castle: *'ther lye to* (two) *goodly Parkes adjacent to the Castel'*.[81] A list of the household at the castle during the first Marquis of Worcester's day (1628-46) records two keepers of the Home Park and two of the Red Deer Park.[82] Adjoining the castle in 1674 was *'a warren and three Parks wherein are seven large fish pounds, the park was thick with huge grown oaks and large beech trees, and richly stocked with Deer'*.[83] All were destroyed in the Civil War: after the surrender of the castle in 1646 the timber was cut down and sold by the Committee for Sequestration, the 'offal' of which amounted to 37,000 cords of wood. Now the parks are farmland, with only field and farm names as reminders of their former status; but at the beginning of the nineteenth century Heath could record that *'In some places the parky appearance of the land still remains, the soil not having been broke up for centuries, but they are mere fragments'*.[84] The Red Park at Llantilio Crossenny was situated on rolling ground to the north of the village. In its south-west corner is the well preserved mediaeval moated site of Hen Gwrt, still with water in the moat. Excavation in 1957 revealed several building phases on the island, the last of which was a sixteenth- to seventeenth-century building that was probably the park's lodge.[85] In 1617 there was a *'great comorth* (assistance by tenants) *to impale and inlarge lantilio Parke'*.[86]All traces of boundaries have now gone, but it is suspected that they followed present-day public roads for some of their length; only field and farm names, and Hen Gwrt, give the park's former presence away.

During the Restoration period and the early-eighteenth century parks, or sometimes just ordinary farmland, were embellished with avenues. These gave grand vistas to and from the house, grand approaches, or by their very presence indicated a wealthy owner with extensive landholdings. Of those that are known to have been planted most have gone; a few have survived through continual renewal; only one or two retain some or all of their original planting.

The most complete survival is the sweet chestnut avenue at Llanfihangel Court, where the garden was laid out and the avenues in the park planted by John Arnold between 1665 and *ca.* 1680. The layout of the park in about 1680 is shown in the remarkable painting at the house (*Figure 4*), and also in an estate map of 1822 (*Figure 11*). The park of Llanfihangel Court was relatively small, dominated by great avenues running north and south (approximately) on the main axis of the house. The north avenue flanked the main entrance drive, aligned on the central front door of the house, and ran from the old Hereford road to the steps at the foot of the terraces. At the entrance were gates in the park wall, flanked by piers with ball finials. The avenue is known to have been of pine, and was usually described as of Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris L.*). The trees were recorded by Bradney in 1906[87] as *'of a size such as is seldom seen'*. He also noted that some had already fallen. Sir Richard Colt Hoare visited Llanfihangel on 3rd May 1793: *'the old seat of the Oxford family (Llanvihangle where there are some of the largest Scotch firs I ever saw)'*.[88] In about

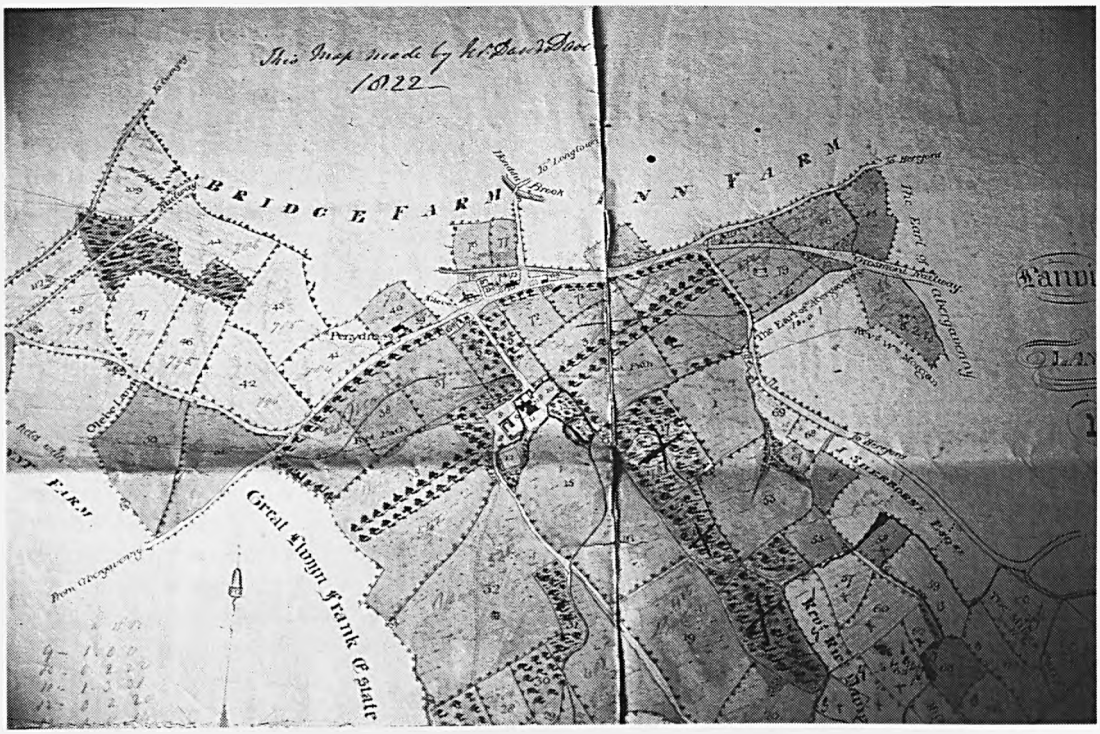

Fig. 11 Detail of estate plan of Llanfihangel Court by David Davis, 1822. *Gwent Record Office D 591.32A.15.*

1847 it was said that, '*The avenue is the finest of its kind in the kingdom; the firs are not of the common Scotch species, and about 40 years ago the Government offered 10,000l. for them*'.[89] A photograph of 1916 in *Country Life*[90] shows the avenue still standing. By 1936 the trees were described as almost dead, and shortly afterwards most were felled. A few remained standing in 1975.[91] Gates, piers, and drive have long since gone. It is not shown on the 1822 estate map by David Davis[92], by which time the west drive had become the main entrance. A few pines, large but probably of a later date, survive either side of the western end (disused) of the present main drive.

The southern avenue, about a quarter of a mile long, still stands, albeit in a parlous state, with several gaps and some dead trees. It is of sweet, or Spanish chestnut (*Castanea sativa Mill.*), with about 60 trees still standing, of massive size.[93] They may owe their longevity to the fact that they were pollarded at an early date. There was never a drive along this avenue: then as now it crossed pasture fields. At its north end, on the west side, is a grove, clearly shown on the painting, of further sweet chestnuts, traditionally said to have been planted as replacement trees for the avenue. Although still standing most of the trees in it are now dead.

In the painting a subsidiary avenue branches off south-eastwards from the southern one, with what appear to be gate piers a short distance along it. This had gone by the time of the Davis estate map (*1822*). In addition, the painting shows

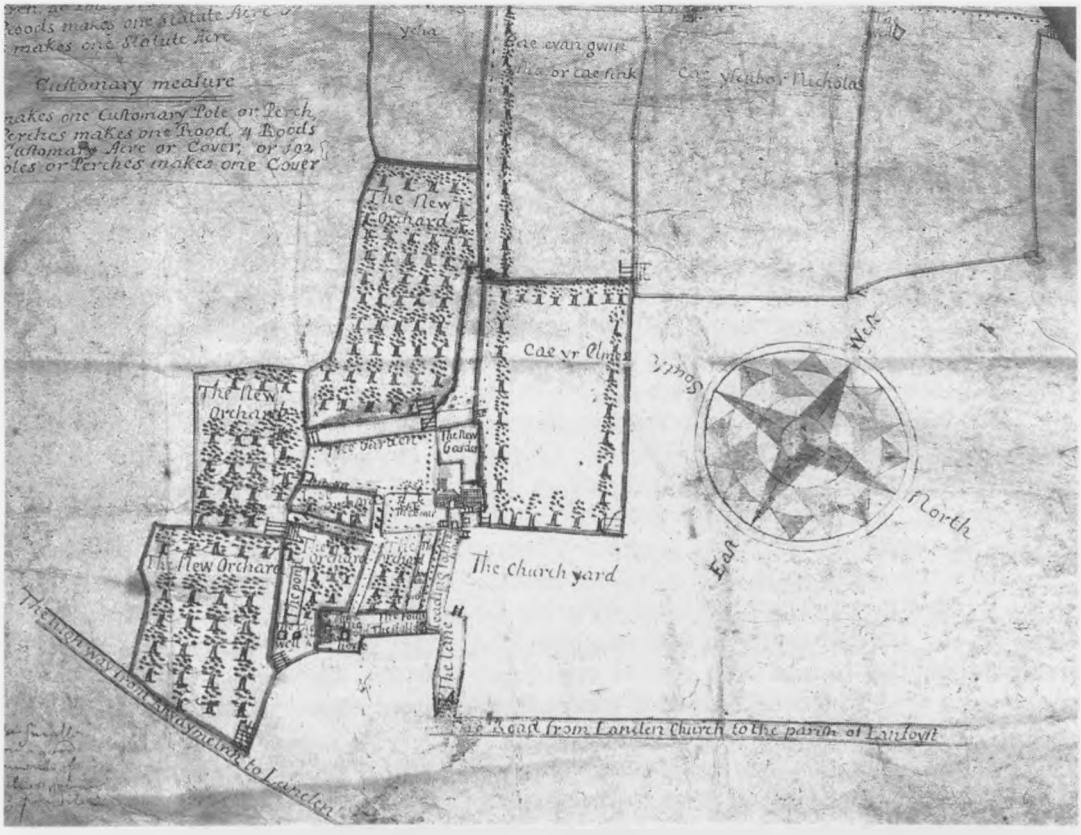

Fig. 12. *A Survey of Tredegar Demean situated in the County of Monmouth belonging to the Hon. Tho. Morgan Esq.*, by Robert Snell, 1775. *By courtesy of the National Library of Wales.*

formal groves of trees around the house, except on the east side, where there is a larger woodland further away. Near the north end of the park, to the east of the drive, are some faintly drawn conifer plantations. A wall is clearly shown along the north side of the park, next to the old Hereford road, and parts of this remain, in a ruinous state.

The most ambitious layout of avenues in the county was that at Tredegar Park, where Sir William Morgan began planting soon after 1664. These are shown on an estate map by Robert Snell of 1775 (*Figure 12*).[94] There had been a medieval park, known as Cleppa Park, at Tredegar, and part of this was incorporated into the western end of the new park (called the 'New Park'), possibly at a later date than the area north of the house (called the 'Old Park'). By 1775 the park was about 1000 acres in extent, with most of the avenues to the north of the house. The main one was the great oak avenue which is aligned on the north-west front of the house. Although cut across by the M4 and A48 this avenue has survived through continual replanting. The original trees, of which four are thought to be left, were *Quercus robur*

(English oak), but much of the replanting has been of *Quercus cerris* (Turkey oak) and *Quercus rubra* (red oak), and south of the motorway the planting distances have been halved. A great double avenue of walnuts ran north-eastwards from the grounds up to an Iron Age hillfort (Tredegar fort), and a further double avenue ran at right-angles to it towards Bassaleg church. A great avenue of sweet chestnuts ran southwards from the central gate in the south wall of the garden. Further lesser avenues branched off the main ones or bordered tracks through the park. Most were broken up during the landscaping of the park in the late eighteenth century, but the main oak and sweet chestnut avenues were allowed to remain. The latter was destroyed during the Second World War. In the late nineteenth century the remaining avenues impressed Wirt Sikes: *'Long aisles of huge chestnuts and oaks border gravelled walks stretching into dim perspectives, ... Some of the oaks are of enormous size, and are centuries old'.*[95]

At Llangibby House and Trewyn there are avenues of the period that have survived through replanting. That at Llangibby House is a Scots pine avenue running west-east, on the axis of the drive, from the Caerleon to Usk road as far as the river Usk. It was initially planted by Sir Hopton Williams in about 1707.[96] That at Trewyn is also a Scots pine avenue, although it may not originally have been. It continues the main axis of the house and garden north-eastwards as far as the present boundary of the park on the Pandy-Oldcastle road. Originally it continued as far as the river Monnow at Allt-yr-ynys. The upper part of the park, to the north and west of the house, are shown as largely wooded on the 1726 map;[97] two enclosures are named as 'Nursery' (presumably a tree nursery), and one large one is 'Great Orchard'.

Fragments of an avenue of horse chestnuts about half a mile long remain at Itton Court, near Chepstow. This was aligned on the east front of the house, and was probably planted when the house was rebuilt by John Jeffrys at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was broken up in the 1950s, but a few trees remain, particularly on the south side. A very faded map of 1782, copied from a map of 1695, shows more extensive formal planting, with parallel rows of trees beyond the formal garden to the north, and a short avenue to the east terminated by flanking transverse double rows of trees.[98] At least some of this formal layout was still in existence in the late-nineteenth century.

Further seventeenth-century avenues, now gone, are known to have existed in the county. The most magnificent was the great double avenue running northwards from the main front of Troy House (*see p.31*). Avenues of sycamores radiated out from Coldbrook House[99], and some of the isolated old sycamores in the field to the south-east of the present house may be remains of them. An avenue ran up the hill to the south of Llantarnam Abbey. It was probably planted by the Morgan family in the seventeenth century, and lasted at least until the end of the nineteenth century. An estate map of 1753 shows an avenue running up one of the ridges in Pontypool Park: this would have been destroyed by landscaping early in the next century.[100] Bradney recorded an avenue of 'magnificent' oaks, felled in 1900, which ran from the main Usk-Abergavenny road to Trostrey Court and on up the hill beyond to the edge of the wood.[101] In the seventeenth century the Court was the home of the Hughes family.

CONCLUSION

This brief survey should enable the Tudor and Stuart parks and gardens of Gwent to be fitted into a wider picture, both of Wales and Britain as a whole. Although necessarily incomplete, through destruction and overlay by later gardens, the survey does give a general idea of the density and range of these parks and gardens. During the building boom of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries in the county there was a corresponding increase in garden-making. The structural elements of these gardens (terracing, ponds), and some of the built structures (walls, pavilions) have often survived, even if now no longer incorporated into gardens. It is clear that Gwent was no backwater as far as garden fashion goes during this period, and that at the top end of the social scale the close contacts of the Somerset family of Raglan Castle with the Court led to the making of one of the most sophisticated gardens in the country at the time at Raglan Castle. The Morgans of Tredegar House and Arnolds of Llanfihangel Court were also well versed in current ideas. Although few owners grasped the Restoration period ideas of symmetry and axial planning, the simpler ones, particularly of terracing and avenues, were more widely embraced. This period, by its mere remoteness in time, presents difficulties in the recovery of information about its parks and gardens. However, this article demonstrates that there is sufficient evidence, both on the ground, and in documents, maps and paintings, to begin to build up at least a general picture of this layer in the rich heritage of historic parks and gardens in the county.

Note

Much of the research for this article was undertaken during the course of compiling the Cadw/ICOMOS *Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Importance in Wales* for the county of Gwent. Parts Two (the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) and Three (the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) will follow in subsequent issues.

The author would like to thank the staff of the Gwent Record Office, Cwmbrân, and of the Reference Library, Newport, for their untiring help. Grateful thanks for advice and information also go to Keith Kissack, Andrew Helme, David Freeman, and Margaret Richards. Lastly I would like to record my gratitude to the many owners who allowed me to look at their parks and gardens, and furnished me with much helpful information.

NOTES

1. Ch. Ed I, File 131, no. 11; see: Wood, James, G., *Moynes Court, Monmouthshire* (Newport, 1914).
2. 23 Ed I: 8 Ed II, no.39; 14 Ed III, file 62.
3. Heath, C., *Historical and Descriptive Accounts of the Ancient and Present State of Chepstow Castle...* (Monmouth, 1801). These inscriptions were later removed to the Caerleon Legionary Museum.
4. Shown in an early photograph (? early-twentieth century): NLW, Cas-Gwent Photo file.
5. Copy of map of: *Moynes Courte ... plotted for James Cecil Gent ... 1669 by* George *Goode Gent.*, (Gwent Record Office: Misc. MS 896).

6. The likely builder was Sir Richard de la More. See: Wakeman, T., 'Pencoyd Castle, Monmouthshire', *Arch. Camb.* X (1855) 118-9. For a brief history of this castle, see: Lloyd, T., 'The birds have flown from the grandest hen-coop in Wales', *Western Mail, Welsh Style* 14 (June 11989) 33-35.
7. Miller, A.C., 'Sir William Morgan of Pencoed', *Welsh History Review* IX:1 (June 1978) 1-31.
8. *A Book of Plans Containing an Exact Survey of Penycoed Castle Demeasne and the Several Tenements and Lands There unto belonging: being part of the Estate of Thomas Mathews Esq. Situate in the several Parishes in the County of Monmouth. Specified in each respective Plan. Taken and delineated in the year of our Lord. One thousand and Seven hundred and fifty one. By Meredith Jones* (Newport Reference Library: qM000 910). The orchard to the east is called *'The new orchard'*, and the field to its north with the dovecote, *'The green'*.
9. In an atlas of plans drawn for Charles Van and Robert Salisbury, probably of late-eighteenth century date (Newport Reference Library: xM000 912).
10. The area is depicted as rough grass in a drawing in: Morgan, Octavius., and Wakeman, Thomas., *Notices of Pencoyd Castle and Langstone* (Caerleon Antiq. Assoc., Newport, 1864). It is shown on the O.S. map of 1881, which also shows a new garden area to the north and east of the dovecote (now reverted to pasture).
11. For a general history, see: Pickford, J.A.F., *Between Mountain and Marsh* (Newport, 1946).
12. Coxe, W., *An Historical Tour through Monmouthshire* (1801; 2nd edn. Brecon, 1901) 80.
13. Fox, C. and Lord Raglan, *The Early Houses of Monmouthshire* (Cardiff, 1951-56) III, 42.
14. Information from: 'An outline history of the manor of Treowen', by Richard Wheelock, the present owner.
15. August 12, 1563: feoffment to create jointure (Historical MSS Comm., Treowen MS, D 583.65).
16. Heath, C., *The Road from Monmouth to Ragland* (n.d.).
17. Bradney, Sir Joseph., *A History of Monmouthshire* I:1 (London, 1907) 43.
18. Ibid. III:2 (London, 1923) 173-81.
19. The Perpendicular window in the south wall of the court was rescued from All Saints Church below the house when it was dismantled, and re-erected here.
20. Some modern features have been added to this terrace, such as walling, steps, a small pond and a low bank, but these have not interfered with the basic structure.
21. Bradney, op.cit. III:2 (1923) 178.
22. This house is shown in a panoramic bird's-eye view of *Troy House with Monmouth in the Distance* by Henrick Danckerts, *ca.* 1672, which also shows the avenue.
23. Evans, J. and Britton, J., *The Beauties of England and Wales* XI (London, 1810) 62.
24. Two modern houses have been built within it: 'The Willows' in the south-west corner, and 'Stella Maris' in the gap on the south side.
25. Heath, C., *Historical and Descriptive Accounts of the Ancient and Present State of Monmouth* (Monmouth, 1804).
26. Brennan, M.G., 'Sir Charles Somerset's observations on continental gardens in 1611 and 1612', *Garden History* 20:1 (1992) 1-10.
27. Sir Thomas is recorded as living at Troy in this incident. It is possible that he was, along with his brother Charles, or that Thomas and Charles have been confused.
28. Heath, op. cit. (1804).
29. This painting is now at Badminton House, the property of the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort, but it is reproduced in Harris, J., *The Artist and the Country House* (London, 1979) 123. The date of the picture has traditionally been put at *ca.* 1680-90, but this is in doubt as it shows St. Mary's Church, Monmouth, in its rebuilt, post-1737 state. The painting is therefore given a tentative date of *ca.* 1740. The view shown is actually impossible on the ground: considerable artistic licence has been used to line up the house and bridge, without the intervening hill. Also confusing is the position of the walled garden, which is shown behind the house (to its south), whereas it is actually to the east (right-hand side on the picture).
30. The original of this map is now lost, but Monmouth Museum possesses a photocopy.
31. Whittle, E.H., 'The Renaissance gardens of Raglan Castle', *Garden History* 17:1 (1989) 83-94; 'The sixteenth and seventeenth century gardens at Raglan Castle', *Monm. Antiq.* VI (1990) 69-75; *The Historic Gardens of Wales* (Cardiff, 1992) 22-23.
32. Later features at Coldbrook will be discussed in a subsequent article.
33. Peate, I.C., *The Welsh House* (Liverpool, 1944) 151.
34. Barber, J.T., *A Tour through South Wales and Monmouthshire* (London, 1803).

35. Bradney, op.cit. I:2 (1906) 187. The drawing was reported by Bradney to be at Llanover, but its present whereabouts are not known.
36. Ibid. 187.
37. Smith, P., 'Coldbrook House', *Arch. Camb.* CVI (1987) 64-71. The whereabouts of only one of these sundials is known.
38. Bradney, op.cit. I:2 (1906) 240-41.
39. *Survey of Upper and Lower Trewen*, by E. Moore (Gwent Record Office D 591.81.534.
40. 1880's O.S. map.
41. As are the sinuous narrow ponds built along the contour to the south-east.
42. *Country Life*, 20 May 1916, p.619.
43. Ibid. 610; and Sale Particulars 1924 (Gwent Record Office, D 591.32A.15.
44. The piers were topped with fine stone eagles until 1991, when they were stolen.
45. An engraving in Williams, D., *A History of Monmouthshire* (London, 1796) pl. XXVII; shows part of the walled garden and north-west pavilion: all had gone except the Guardhouse by the time of the Davis map of 1822.
46. Ibid. Pl.XXVII. The terraces and steps on the north side of the house are also shown in an engraving in Coxe, op.cit. 320b.
47. Toulmin Smith, L (edit.)., *The Itinerary of John Leland* (London, 1906-10) IV, 31-33.
48. NLW: TC 1079; it is annotated by Octavius Morgan: '*Drawing from a rough plan of the ancient mansion and gardens at Tredegar as they were in the early half of the seventeenth century (probably in the time of Elizabeth) before the alterations to the building were made after the Restoration by William Morgan, in whose handwriting the notes on the plan seem to be*'.
49. Dineley, T., *His Grace the Duke of Beaufort's Progress* (1684; reprinted, London, 1888).
50. Morgan, C.O.S., 'Typescript account of the history of the gardens at Tredegar', *Annual Report Nat. Libr. Wales* 1958-59, 65.
51. Debois Landscape Group Report (unpublished).
52. NLW, TC 1303, 1304.
53. Apted, M.R., 'The seventeenth-century buildings at Tredegar House, Newport', in: Apted, M.R., Gilyard-Beer, R. and Saunders, A.D. (edit.), *Ancient Monuments and Their Interpretation: Essays presented to A.J. Taylor* (London, 1977) 327-29. The main work attributed to William Edney in Bristol is the chancel gates of St. Mary's Church (1710).
54. Ibid. 328.
55. NLW, TC MSS 315-45.
56. Williams (1796) op.cit. 280.
57. '*Ponty Pool in the County of Monmouthshire The Seat of Capel Hanbury Esq. 1752*' (Pontypool Estate Office). The gardens and park are also depicted on another estate map of the same date: '*A South Prospect. An Accurate Plan of the Seat and Park of the honorable Capel Hanbury Esq 1752*' (Pontypool Estate Office).
58. Coxe, op.cit. 209.
59. Williams (1796) op.cit. 326-27.
60. Bradney, op.cit. III:1 (1921) 96-103.
61. Map of 1758 of park '*belonging to William Adams Williams*' (Gwent Record Office, D 43.3385).
62. Williams (1796) op.cit. 294.
63. Heath (1801) op.cit.
64. Bradney, op.cit. II:1 (1914) 40-43.
65. Ibid. I:1 (1904) 76.
66. Ibid. I:2 (1906) 333-34.
67. Ibid. 359-62.
68. '*Plan of the Estate of Ja*(mes) *Duberly Esq. 1789*': private collection.
69. Bradney, op.cit. II:2 (1914) 155-56. Bradney noted that a feature of the Argoed was the number and size of the sycamores surrounding it.
70. Estate plan of Llanellen House, no date (eighteenth century): (Gwent Record Office, DA 34.4798).
71. Bradney, op.cit. III:1 (1921) 89.
72. Fox and Raglan, op.cit. III.
73. Coxe, op.cit. 117.
74. This has now been removed to a private location for safe-keeping.
75. Bradney, op.cit. I:2 (1906) 158.

76. Ibid. III:1 (1921) 103.
77. Heath (1804) op.cit.
78. Bradney, op.cit. I:2 (1906) 187.
79. *South Wales Daily News*, 26 Nov 1910.
80. *'Maps of estates belonging to Morgan Lewis of St. Peer in the County of Monmouth Esq. 1765.* John Aram' (Gwent Record Office, D. 501.1332).
81. *Itinerary of John Leland*, op.cit. III, 45.
82. Heath (1801) op.cit.
83. *'A Description of Ragland Castle'* (1674; Badminton Archive 403.1.1.).
84. Heath, C., *Ragland Castle* (Monmouth, 1797).
85. Craster, O.E. and Lewis, J.M., 'Hen Gwrt moated site, Llantilio Crossenny, Monmouthshire', *Arch. Camb.* CXII (1963) 159-83.
86. Bradney, Sir Joseph, (edit.), *The Diary of Walter Powell 1603-1654* (Bristol, 1907). Powell was deputy steward and receiver of rents to the earl of Worcester.
87. Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, op.cit. I:2 (1906) 217.
88. Thompson, M.W (edit.), *The Journeys of Sir Richard Colt Hoare through Wales and England 1793-1810* (Gloucester, 1983) 34.
89. Cliffe, C.F., *Book of South Wales* (London, 1847).
90. Avray Tipping, H., 'Llanvihangel Court, Monmouthshire', *Country Life* 20 May 1916, p.620.
91. Hyde, H.A. and Harrison, S.G., *Welsh Timber Trees* (Cardiff, 1977 edn.) 59.
92. Estate Plan of Llanfihangel Court by David Davis (1822; Gwent Record Office, D 591.32A.15).
93. Hyde and Harrison, op.cit. 128.
94. NLW, Map 661: *A Survey of Tredegar Demean situated in the County of Monmouth belonging to the Hon. Tho. Morgan Esq.*, by Robert Snell (1775).
95. Sikes, W., *Rambles and Studies in Old South Wales* (London, 1881) 111.
96. Bradney, op.cit. III:1 (1921) 103.
97. Moore, E., *Survey of Upper and Lower Trewen* (1726; Gwent Record Office, D 591.81.534).
98. *'A map of the manor of Itton ...* copy'd from an old survey by Tho. Crofts in 1695 ...' (1782; Gwent Record Office, Man/F/45/0001).
99. Shown on an estate map of 1753 by Meredith Jones; cited in Bradney, op.cit. I:2 (1906) 187. The map appears to be lost.
100. *'A South Prospect ...'* op.cit.
101. Bradney, op.cit. III:1 (1921) 89.

REVIEWS

A History of Monmouthshire, Vol. 5 (*The Hundred of Newport*). By Sir Joseph Bradney, edited by Madeleine Gray. xii + 207pp., 38 figs., 215 x 300 mm.
South Wales Record Society Publications, No. 8 (Cardiff, South Wales Record Society; and Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, 1993). ISBN (SWRS) 0 950867 67 5, (NLW) 0 907158 62 5. £22-95 (£15 to members of the South Wales Record Society, 12 The Green, Radyr, Cardiff, CF4 8BR).

Dr Madeleine Gray's rediscovery in the National Library of Wales of the manuscript of the missing final volume of Sir Joseph Bradney's *History of Monmouthshire*, left unfinished at his death in 1933, is an important event for anyone interested in the history of the county. This volume deals with the Hundred of Newport, west of the Ebbw and the Twyn Barlwm ridge. In style and layout, the new volume matches the reprinted version of the old, with many apposite topographical drawings and photographs, though Dr Gray has dispensed with the coats of arms of local families.

Bradney (1859-1933) was an Edwardian antiquary rather than an analytical historian, as Dr Gray's biographical introduction makes clear, and his *History* has the strengths and weaknesses one might expect. He was no archaeologist, nor pretended to be. His emphasis on the genealogy and heraldry of local families and sometimes uncritical use of early documentary sources have meant that he has not lacked his critics. However, Professor Wendy Davies's work on the Llandaff charters shows that Bradney was sometimes wiser than his critics, and it is a primary duty of the historian to report accurately what his sources say. Wisely, Dr Gray has made no attempt to revise Bradney's text, even where this was manifestly incomplete at his death, save in correcting a few errors by the decent obscurity of learned footnotes. Less happy are the genealogies, often clearly rough drafts, and whose space wasting format could have been improved upon.

The present volume includes much of the industrial north-west of the county. Here, even allowing for the unfinished nature of the published text, Bradney was less at home than in rural Gwent. Human settlement was in any case sparser than in the farming lands to the east, and most of the material for industrial history would still have been in the working records of individual ironworks and collieries. Where documentary and other sources were available, as with Ebbw Vale, he made good use of them, and at times he collected oral testimony, but he lacked the technical and historical framework to put his material into context. Similarly, his account of the Chartist affair at Newport, which Dr Gray regards as presenting the 'official' view, shows both his strengths and his weaknesses. It is factual and fair, and in the days before Professor David Williams's biography of John Frost would have provided a useful and impartial account of the 'riot' and the events that led up to it. However, it is cast wholly in terms of individuals, with no mention of the underlying social and economic causes.

If Bradney had written a narrative county history (or worse still, an archaeology), this would by now be obsolete and probably unreadable. As it is, his work has worn well, and enjoys a freshness and reputation sixty years after his death which every historian must hope for. He performed an invaluable service to Monmouthshire by

setting down, parish by parish, hundred by hundred, so much of the material for its history. Dr Gray and the South Wales Record Society have put us all in their debt by bringing this remarkable enterprise to its conclusion in so able a manner.

Jeremy K. Knight.

Catalogue of Seals in the National Museum of Wales, Vol. 1 (*Seal Dies, Welsh Seals, Papal Bullae*). By David H. Williams. xiv + 102pp., 26 figs. and 34 pp. of plates., 297 x 220 mm. (Cardiff, National Museum of Wales; 1993). ISBN 0 7200 0381 4. £15-50 (£18 by post).

By a happy accident, in 1979 Dr David Williams was invited by the National Museum of Wales to catalogue its collection of seals. His involvement has already led to the publication of an attractive booklet, *Welsh History through Seals* (1982) and a 'Catalogue of Welsh Ecclesiastical Seals' (*Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 1984-89). We can now welcome Volume 1 of the catalogue of the Museum's collection. Welsh sigillography is fast moving from being a field of long neglect to one in which we can take pride, and a new resource for historians.

Seals arrive in Welsh history with the expanding use of the written record which began in the twelfth-, and they became commonplace in the thirteenth century. The seal remained the primary means of authentication for private persons until, in Tudor times, the autograph signature gradually replaced it. For corporate bodies the seal remains a recognised mark of authentication, as will be seen by several fine modern examples in this catalogue.

Volume I, of three, includes 129 dies (matrices), 498 casts and impressions of Welsh seals and 14 papal bulls, with a useful list of other bulls located in Wales. All are well described in this catalogue and all, with a few insignificant exceptions, are illustrated in black-and-white photographs. The catalogue is preceded by an excellent introduction.

The catalogue represents only a small part of the total survival of Welsh seals: archive repositories have the most extensive holdings. But it includes a precious element absent from archives, namely original matrices, of metal or stone. Most medieval matrices have survived fortuitously, generally underground; details of provenance make for fascinating reading. One star item from Gwent, however, the common seal of Grace Dieu Abbey, survived in the care of Catholic recusants at Perthir. Outstanding among the secular medieval matrices is that for the chancery of the Duchy of Lancaster at Monmouth.

The catalogue is far from being of mere specialist interest. Its wider appeal will have to be exemplifed here by two observations: the variety of medieval ships to be seen in seals of the boroughs of Beaumaris, Haverfordwest, Monmouth, Tenby, and Newborough; and an early arrival in Wales of renaissance design in the seal of an ecclesiastical official (*W 114*) dated 1554-59.

Daniel Huws.

FIELD EXCURSIONS, 1993.

Saturday, June 5th: We visited the magnificent landscape garden at Stourhead, Wiltshire, on a perfect June day, when the rhododendrons were at their best. Created by Henry Hoare II on his return from the Grand Tour in 1714, the garden was continued by his grandson, the antiquary, Sir Richard Colt Hoare. We spent the afternoon at Purse Caundle Manor, near Sherborne in Dorset, a house dating mainly from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but mentioned also in Domesday. Here, we enjoyed a stroll in the gardens and an excellent tea, made and served by the owner, Mrs Charlotte de Pelet.

Saturday, September 11th: Our autumn excursion to Bristol proved to be a great success. Our guide was our Chairman, Mr George Boon, a native of the city, who had meticulously prepared for us a tour of several very interesting sites. The day started at Kingsweston House, now the home of the Somerset and Avon Constabulary Detective Training School, where Superintendent Richard Allen explained some of its past and present history. The house, built by Vanbrugh in 1710-11 for Sir Edward Cornwell, contains many notable features, not least the beautiful hanging staircase, now considered unsafe for the daily tread of enthusiastic detectives in training. We were privileged to have Mr Boon to show us Kingsweston Roman Villa, which he excavated in 1947. At Sea Mills, the site of the Roman settlement of Abone, a possible point of departure for the Roman crossing to South Wales, and the eighteenth century dock, a commercial failure later used as a whaling station and for fitting out slave ships, a mysterious ship in full sail slid out quietly before our eyes. Later, we saw the graves of the Egyptologist, Amelia Edwards, and the negro slave, Scipio Africanus, in the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin, Henbury, but were unable to see the tombs of the Cornwell family inside the church because of a long succession of weddings. Blaise Castle House, built in 1795 and now a museum, and the Gothic folly on Blaise Hill, were delightful in the warm summer sun. From Blaise Hill, an Iron Age hillfort and site of a Roman building, we walked down through parkland landscaped by Humphrey Repton, ending our day at Blaise Hamlet, a group of ten picturesque cottages designed in 1810 by John Nash.

Evening Outings: Only one of our meetings was slightly affected by rain, though this did not deter our members. A mixture of Wednesday and Thursday evening meetings seems to be working well. We started the season as usual with a hillfort, under the inimitable guidance of Allan Probert, this time at Coed y Bwynydd, Bettws Newydd. At Pembridge Castle, we were welcomed by Miss Cooke. The Honorary Secretary spoke on the history of the small castle farmhouse outside Monmouth, which dates from the thirteenth century. Afterwards, we visited the grave of John Kemble, arrested while chaplain at Pembridge in 1679, in the churchyard at Welsh Newton. A large party of members visited Caerwent to see the progress of Richard Brewer's work there since we last visited the site some years ago. After a walk around the impressive walls, we saw for ourselves the spectacular scale of the excavations in the area of the Forum and Basilica. We spent a delightful evening at Monmouth, where Mrs Sheila Thorneycroft showed us the Nelson Summerhouse Garden, rescued from

neglect and oblivion through her efforts and associated with Nelson's visit to Monmouth in 1802. We moved on to the very impressive excavation being conducted by the Monmouth Archaeological Society in the centre of Monmouth, where Steve Clarke explained the significance of the multi-period site. Keith Kissack invited us to finish the evening with a glass of wine at the Castle Museum, where we saw the newly created herb garden. This year's town walk found us in Crickhowell. We gathered outside the Bear Inn for an introduction by the well-known local historian, Mr Louis Hurley, who then handed us over to members of the Civic Society for a delightful meander around the narrow streets, learning about the architecture and history of Crickhowell.

G.V.J.