

Llandovery Castle and the Clifford Family

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INTRODUCTION

If one visits the small market town of Llandovery, in the beautiful Tywi valley, today the castle makes little impact on the visitor, its relatively insignificant ruins being islanded between the Afon Gwydderig and a large car park, almost as though it was an embarrassment. When built in the 12th century the castle was one of the most important to be established by the Normans in the Welsh kingdom of Deheubarth. Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of Deheubarth, was killed by Normans in Brycheiniog (Brecknock) in 1093 and this opened the floodgates for the invaders. Castles were built at Cardigan, Pembroke and near Carmarthen in short order, but it was another thirteen years before Llandovery Castle came into being. The builder was Richard fitzPons of Clifford, who had Cantref Bychan by grant of king Henry I. Richard and his sons established a lordship there centred on Llandovery Castle. The building of the castle was a provocative act in that it lay in the upper reaches of the Tywi valley in the heart of the Welsh kingdom, and this together with its strategic position at the point where three side valleys meet the main Tywi valley meant that it was much fought-over. Eventually, Rhys ap Gruffudd ('the lord Rhys'), grandson of Rhys ap Tewdwr, took the castle in 1162 and retained it (apart from possible Clifford possession in 1190-3) until his death in 1197. After this, the castle and its lordship (or sometimes just the castle or all or part of the lordship) changed hands with bewildering frequency over the next eighty years as his successors fought over their inheritance. The Cliffords also held it at various times during these years, or so they claimed. Except for fleeting moments afterwards, the castle passed permanently out of Welsh ownership when it was captured by king Edward I's forces in 1277. Five years later it was handed over to John Giffard, a representative of the Clifford family via his wife.

RICHARD FITZPONS OF CLIFFORD

Richard was one of five sons of Pons (Pontius), a Frenchman who came to England at the Conquest. After Hastings, Pons received a small barony consisting of twenty-four estates, most of them in Herefordshire but with some in the neighbouring counties of Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. He was dead by 1086, when his barony was being shared by his two eldest sons, Drogo and Walter.¹ Drogo fitzPons had by far the larger part of his father's barony, including Clifford (which was held under Ralph I de Tosny, baron of Clifford and Flamstead), with only a small part passing to Walter. All their lands passed to their brother Richard (who held no lands independently at *Domesday*) after their deaths, which had occurred before 1100. It is likely, in fact, that Drogo had died before 1093, since it was probably Richard, who took part in the conquest of the Welsh kingdom of Brycheiniog, immediately to the west of Clifford, by Bernard de Neufmarché in that year, and he is unlikely to have had the resources to do so if he had not already supplanted Drogo (if not Walter as well). His reward was the grant of an estate at Bronllys on which he built the motte-and-bailey castle that underlies the present stone castle. It was also in the 1090s, probably, that he received from William Rufus lands at Clifford and in the nearby Golden Valley that had belonged to Gilbert fitzThorold, sheriff of Herefordshire, in 1086, Gilbert having forfeited his lands for treason. These new lands² augmented and extended his holding on the Welsh border, and he doubtless used these enlarged resources to maintain himself at Clifford (where he was probably castellan under Tosny), Bronllys and, eventually, Llandovery and Cantref Bychan.

That Richard had Llandovery and Cantref Bychan by grant of king Henry I of England (1100-35) is clear from an entry in the Welsh chronicle *Brut y Tywysogion*

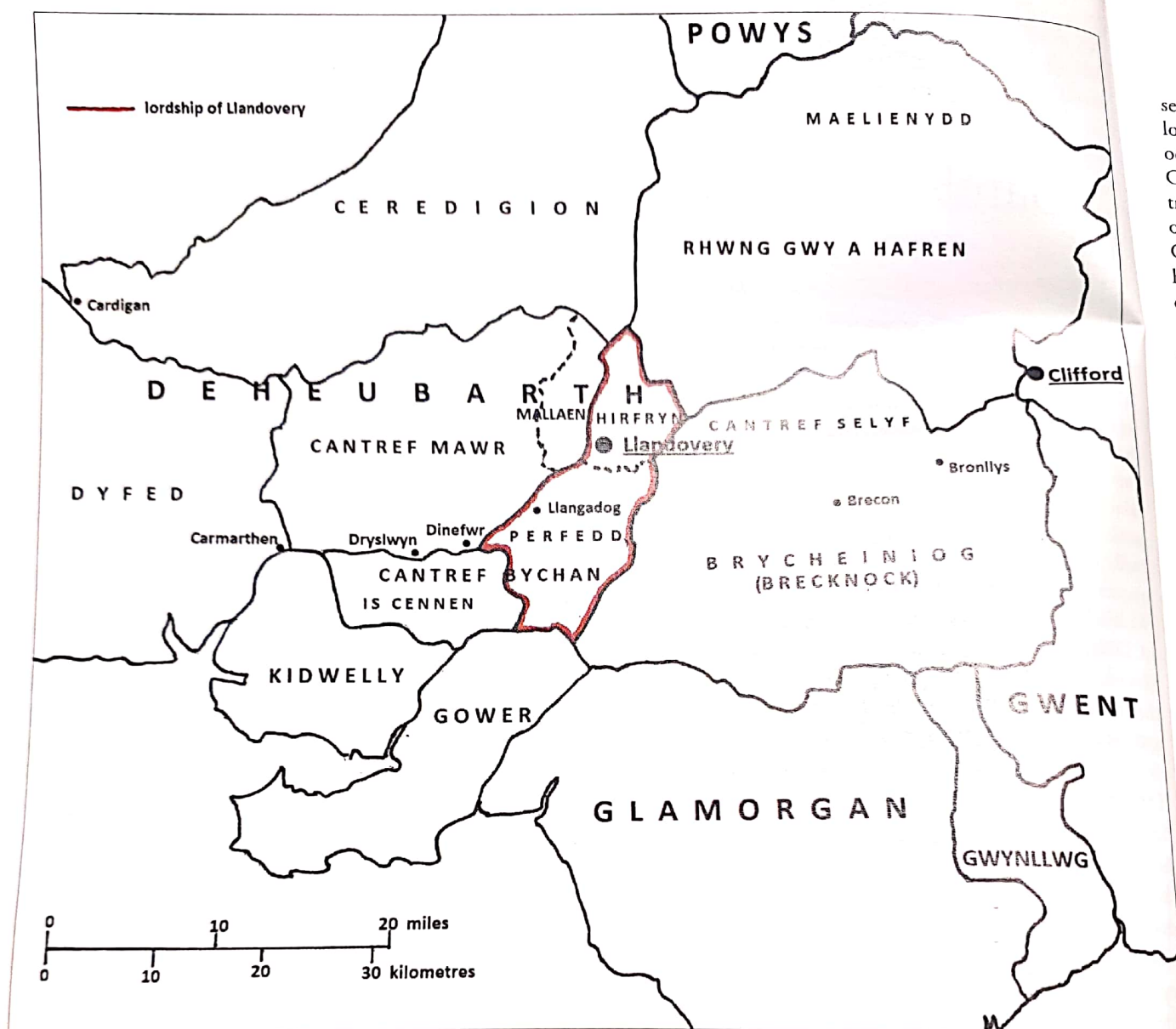


Fig. 1: The Lordship of Llandovery and Surrounding Lands.

for the year 1116 which says that he was the man to whom king Henry had given Cantref Bychan.³ Precisely when the gift took place is unknown, but it is likely to have been in 1106. In that year king Henry divided up the principality of Ystrad Tywi – consisting of the *cantref*s (Welsh local administrative divisions similar to the English hundred) of Cantref Mawr, Cantref Bychan, Kidwelly (with Carnwyllion) and Gower (see map, Fig. 1) – after the death of one Hywel ap Gronw, the man to whom he had given it. In the process he gave Gower to the earl of Warwick, Kidwelly to the bishop of

Salisbury, and Cantref Bychan, probably, to Richard fitzPons. Richard had been among the earliest knights and barons to support Henry in his seizure of the throne after the death of William Rufus in August 1100,⁴ and the gift of Cantref Bychan may have been his reward. He was already established at Clifford and Bronllys on the border of Wales, so the grant represented a major step forward into the interior of the country. Later evidence shows that the grant was in return for the service of one knight's fee at the royal castle of Carmarthen.⁵ Kidwelly and Gower were held for the same

service and this may indicate that the grant of those lordships and of Cantref Bychan were made on the same occasion and the result of a single decision. Historically, Cantref Bychan contained three commotes (administrative divisions smaller than a cantref), Hirfryn (centred on Llandovery), Perfedd (centred on Llangadog) and Is Cennen, but the last of these remained largely in Welsh hands and so did not form part of the lordship of Llandovery established by Richard fitzPons and his successors.

Having received Cantref Bychan from king Henry, fitzPons moved swiftly to secure his hold on it. This he did by building his chief castle at Llandovery (housing his chancery and exchequer) in the commote of Hirfryn with a subsidiary one at Llangadog in the commote of Perfedd. At Llandovery a natural rocky hillock on the banks of the Afon Gwydderig that was probably the site of the *llys* or chief court of the Welsh lord of Hirfryn, was scarped to form a motte-and-bailey castle.⁶ He may also be the author of the motte-and-bailey castle (made by inserting a small motte in the northern corner of a Roman fortlet) on Trecastell Hill, four miles to the south-east of Llandovery. The fortlet had been built to control the Roman road between Cicucium (Brecon Gaer) and Alabum (Llanfair-ar-y-bryn) as it passed over that hill⁷ and the castle was probably needed for the same purpose.

Close to his new castle at Llandovery, Richard will have found two pre-existing churches. One of these was St Dincat's (Llandingad), now the parish church of Llandovery. Dincat was a reputed son of Brychan, eponymous founder of the kingdom of Brycheiniog in the 5th century.⁸ In the 'Life' of St Paulinus written by Wrmonoc the Breton in 884, Dincat's church stands in the district of *Brehant Dincat* in which lived 'count Porphyrius', father of St Paulinus.⁹ *Brehant Dincat* means 'Dincat's gorge',¹⁰ the reference being to the narrow valley of the Afon Gwydderig, east of Llandovery, close by the Roman road over Trecastell Hill that Dincat ap Brychan would have used to travel to and from Brycheiniog. The modern A40 road, first built in 1769, twists and turns through this gorge on its way between Brecon and Llandovery.

The other church close to his castle was the one at Llanfair-ar-y-bryn, half a mile to the north-east and within the ruined defences of a Roman auxiliary fort. This fort is called Alabum in the 7th century *Ravenna Cosmography*. The church is now dedicated to St Mary, but this probably dates only from the time when Richard gave it to Great Malvern Priory (whose own

church was dedicated to the Virgin). Its original dedicatee was probably St Paulinus (also known as St Paul Aurelian),¹¹ whose father was 'count' of the district. According to Wrmonoc, at the age of sixteen Paulinus 'went forth and sought the seclusion of a certain desert place adjoined to his father's possessions' where 'he built some cells and a little oratory' for a community of twelve priests.¹² This 'desert place' was probably Alabum, his 'oratory' being situated within the second of three successively smaller Roman forts revealed by excavation and geophysical survey (all of which had gone out of use by c.130 AD)¹³ and perhaps built from the remains of its walls. Paulinus's priestly community within (or immediately adjacent to) a Roman fortification can thus be added to those already known elsewhere in Wales, such as St Tatheus at Caerwent, St Teulyddog at Carmarthen and St Cybi at Holyhead. Wrmonoc says further that two of his brothers founded the 'church of the Two Saints', Llanddeusant, a few miles south of Llandovery. He then proceeds to confuse their foundation with Paulinus's, probably because his information, which he got from a *transmarini*, was faulty. Most auxiliary forts developed a *vicus* or civilian settlement outside its defences which could last long after it had gone out of use. Alabum's *vicus* lay on its north-east side and several phases of structures have been found by geophysical survey and excavation that may indicate that this happened here. Possibly, it was only abandoned when the local leader or 'count' (Dincat or Porphyrius?) established his *llys* on the rocky mound now occupied by the medieval castle. Although there is no evidence as yet of the site being used before the construction of the castle, its situation must have invited fortification from an early date.

Paulinus became a renowned teacher. According to Rhygifarch's *Life of St David* (written in the 1090s), David 'went to Paulinus the scribe . . . who in a certain island was leading a life pleasing to God.'¹⁴ In this context, 'island' means a location withdrawn from everyday life, where a life of contemplation and prayer could be followed, rather than a geographical one. (In a 12th century recession of the 'Life' (Bodleian MS Digby 112) this 'island' is called *Wincedi-lantquendi*, a place-name so utterly corrupt as to defy reasonable explanation.)¹⁵ Nevertheless, Alabum's situation could easily be described as 'islanded', its ancient defences proscribing the area dedicated to God. The Dincat connection was responsible for the transference of the cult of Paulinus to Llangorse in Brycheiniog.

As Llangadog was an estate belonging to the bishop of St David's, Richard built his castle (another motte-and-bailey) outside this estate, half a mile south, at a location now known as Castell Meurig. Llangadog had the alternative (or earlier) name of *Luchewein*, 'Owain's Marsh (or Pool)', referred to in the *Annales Cambriae* in 1205 and 1208.¹⁶ This place-name occurs as *Lluoch Ewin* in *Culhwch and Olwen*, the earliest surviving Arthurian tale. There it is one of several places at which the boar Twrch Trwyth stands at bay when being pursued across South Wales by Arthur and his knights.¹⁷ The natural feature suggested by the place-name probably lies at the point where the Afon Brân and Afon Sawdde join the Tywi just to the west of St Cadog's church. The area is still very boggy.

To further consolidate his power in Cantref Bychan, Richard founded a town under the protection of his castle at Llandovery (to provide a useful income) and a priory church at Llanfair-ar-y-bryn (to provide for his immortal soul). The town he filled with English burgesses (the Welsh having no notion of towns) and is first referred to in existing sources in about the year 1186 (see below), when its burgesses were still English in origin. Its burgage-plots were laid out on the north side of the present Broad Street and the Market Square (the south side probably coming within an outer bailey of the castle) and on both sides of Broad Street east of the Market Square as far as its junction with Bridge Street.¹⁸ The origins of the bishop's very small town at Llangadog are unknown, but, as at Llandovery, it must have looked to Richard's castle for protection.¹⁹

The priory church Richard founded at Llanfair-ar-y-bryn was a cell of the Benedictine priory of Great Malvern in Worcestershire. King Henry was a great benefactor of Great Malvern and encouraged his barons to copy him. It helped that Anglo-Norman adventurers in Wales such as Richard regarded the founding of monastic churches within their newly conquered territories as much instruments of conquest, subjugation and settlement as the castle. In some cases this meant the founding of new monasteries on virgin sites, but in others (perhaps most) they were founded in old Welsh *clas* or mother churches, their semi-secular communities of canons or clergy under a lay abbot being replaced by Benedictine monks drawn from an English (or Norman) abbey or priory. In Richard's case the second of these two alternatives was adopted, the *claswyr* in St Paulinus's church – the 'church of his castle of Cantref Bychan' – being replaced with monks from Great Malvern. The

present structure of the church is largely late medieval in architectural detail, although it shows signs of once having been a large and important church, early Norman in date and cruciform in plan.²⁰ This was the church that replaced Paulinus's 'oratory'. Its nave may be Richard's work,²¹ as also may the two carved Romanesque capitals thought to have come from a free-standing structure within a church or chapel,²² probably (but not certainly) St Mary's church. These capitals represent 'The Fall', with 'Eve' given the attitude of a Sheela-na-gig and 'Adam' an uninhibited response. They were found built into the wall of the porch at Cynglordy Hall in the 19th century.²³ Their origins are sometimes connected with a 'Cistercian monastic grange of Cyfnab at Cynglordy'.²⁴ There was, however, no monastic grange (Cistercian or otherwise) at Cynglordy, although the Cistercian abbey of Strata Florida had one at Nant-y-bai in the valley of the Afon Tywi (where, indeed, at Ystrad-ffin, there was a chapel of St Paulinus). A letter of Erasmus Saunders, Edward Lhuyd's antiquarian assistant in Carmarthenshire, dating from 1693 mentions 'a pack of old ruins' at the east end of the church.²⁵ These could have been the remains of Paulinus's 'cells' or more likely, perhaps, an *eglwys-y-bedd* or 'grave chapel' standing separately from the church as at a number of locations in Wales and England.²⁶

To Great Malvern Richard gave the church of his castle in Cantref Bychan, two carucates of land, the tithe of all his revenues there and the tithe of his demesnes at The Bage in the Golden Valley.²⁷ Evidence of ridge-and-furrow ploughing to the north-west and south-east of the church found by aerial photography may represent efforts by the monks to bring their two carucates of land into production.²⁸ On another occasion he gave the church of Eastleach Martin in Gloucestershire, together with one and a quarter hides of land and certain tithes.²⁹ Like other 'castle-priorities' established by the Normans in Wales, such as Cardigan ('Llanddwy'), St Clear's and Kidwelly, there were probably never more than a prior and two or three monks in residence at St Mary's. They made little contribution to the religious life of the area and were effectively not much more than rent-collectors for their main church.³⁰ Unlike the other priorities, however, this one lasted only some seventy or eighty years before it was suppressed by the lord Rhys and the bishop of St David's (see below).

As already noted, Richard's presence at Llandovery is first recorded in 1116, when the castle was attacked by

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Gruffudd, son of Rhys ap Tewdwr and heir to the throne of Deheubarth. He had gone into exile in Ireland on his father's death in 1093, returning to Wales only in 1113. At first he lived quietly on his ancestral lands in Cantref Mawr, but in 1116 he launched a wide-ranging assault on Anglo-Norman castles in south-west Wales. Having first attacked a castle at Narberth:

... he went to Llandovery, where was a castle of a certain leader called Richard fitzPons, to whom king Henry had given Cantref Bychan, and he tried to breach it and to set it on fire, but he failed; for the keepers of the castle, and Maredudd ap Rhydderch ap Caradog along with them – the man who held the stewardship under the said Richard – resisted him. Nevertheless, he burned the outer castle. And after he had been shot at from the tower and many of his men had been wounded by arrows and others killed, he turned back again.³¹

After this Gruffudd went on to besiege Carmarthen Castle, which he also failed to take. One of the defenders of this castle on behalf of the Normans, however, was Owain Wan, second-cousin to Maredudd ap Rhydderch ap Caradog, defender of Llandovery, and current representative of the ruling line of Gwynllwg in Gwent. Rhydderch ab Iestyn, the common ancestor of these men, had ruled all South Wales in 1023-33, so it was doubtless through him that they could lay some claim to the loyalties of the Welsh of Deheubarth, though they themselves had evidently thrown in their lot with the Norman invaders. The 'tower' from which the defenders shot their arrows probably stood on the motte.

Cantref Bychan, of course, lay well within Wales and at some distance from Richard's nearest castle at Bronllys in Brycheiniog, which was not terribly convenient for him. To close the gap he eventually acquired the lordship of Cantref Selyf in Bernard de Neufmarché's barony of Brecknock (*see map, Fig. 1*), but this did not happen until after Sybil, Bernard's heiress, had married Miles, son of Walter fitzRoger, sheriff of Gloucester (and father of Richard's wife, Maud), in 1121. Bernard was now old (he had been in the Conqueror's military household in the 1070s) and had but a few more years to live, and it seems likely that this marriage was arranged so that his new son-in-law could govern Brecknock, if nothing more, on his behalf. As a dynastic marriage

between two of the most powerful Anglo-Norman families of the Welsh border, the marriage required the king's approval, and this was given in the form of a marriage contract between the two parties. This contract details what was to pass to Miles with his wife, but as it names the holders of only four out of the five sub-lordships known to have existed in Brecknock in the 12th and later centuries – Pencelli (Roger de Baskerville), Hay (William Revel), Crughywel (Robert de Turbeville) and Tretower (Picard) – it is clear that Richard did not then have the fifth, Cantref Selyf. The wording of the marriage contract also makes this clear, saying, in words that would not have been used if Richard had Cantref Selyf, that 'all the land of Brecknock as far as the boundary of Richard fitzPons, that is, as far as Cantref Bychan' was to pass to Miles with his wife.³² It seems certain, therefore, that Cantref Selyf was a lordship specially created by Miles for his brother-in-law, who now combined this new lordship with the holding he already had at Bronllys, the whole being held from the lord of Brecknock by the service of five knights.³³ Prior to this, probably in 1115-21, Richard had been with Neufmarché to witness a charter concerning the church in William Revel's sub-lordship of Hay.³⁴

As a man active in 1086, Richard was himself advanced in years by the time he acquired Cantref Selyf. It is doubtless for this reason that soon afterwards he took a leaf out of Neufmarché's book and placed his heir in charge of some of his lands. In his case it was his eldest son Simon and the lands involved were at Cantref Bychan and in the Golden Valley. At Cantref Bychan, Simon set himself up in the castle at Llandovery with his own *familia* or military household. Some of these men are named in a charter of 1127 in which Richard moved to make provision for his daughter Bertha when she married Ellis II Giffard (of Brimpsfield in Gloucestershire) by giving her the manor of Ullingswick in Herefordshire. As, however, this manor was his wife Maud's marriage portion he needed to give her his manor of Eastleach Martin in Gloucestershire in exchange. The deed in which this was effected was witnessed by many important men of his acquaintance (such as Walter his brother and Miles of Gloucester his brother-in-law), but not his son and heir. His acquiescence in the exchange was of course essential because it affected his inheritance, so Richard sought him out 'in Cantref Bychan' (in *Cantelbochan*) to obtain his assent. This he gave in the form of addenda to the original deed and in which he waived his rights in return for a gold ring. It was

almost certainly issued at Llandovery Castle and was made in the presence of members of his own *familia*: Ellis Giffard (his new brother-in-law), Humphrey, William Brace, Richard *de Lawastina*, Robert *de Carisio*, Ralph *Dubblel*, Ralph of Hereford, Adam fitzWilliam and Robert fitzWyard.³⁵

Simon also had his father's manors in the Golden Valley of Herefordshire (those that had belonged to Drogo fitzPons and Gilbert fitzThorold in 1086) before the latter's death. When Richard wished to give his wife the manor of Aston Blank in Gloucestershire (again within his son's inheritance), Simon 'his son and heir and then a knight' was absent once more. This time he was in *Stradia* (the Golden Valley) and on this occasion it was his mother Maud who gave him a gold ring in return for his assent.³⁶ The expression 'then a knight' used in this deed suggests that Simon had only just reached his age of majority when it was issued. Round dates it to 'c.1127', and, if right, suggests that Richard married Maud (a second wife?) at about the time he was given Cantref Bychan, when he was approaching middle age.

In the summer months of 1127 Richard travelled with Miles of Gloucester, his brother-in-law, to Hereford to meet king Henry. There he persuaded the king to include the grants he had made to Great Malvern Priory in Cantref Bychan, Eastleach Martin and Bache (for all of which Simon had now given his consent) in a charter of general confirmation. In this deed Richard's grant is described as:

... the church of the castle of Richard fitzPons in Cantref Bychan and two carucates of land there, and all the tithes of Richard of all his revenues of that land, and the church of Eastleach (Martin) and one hide and one virgate of land in that vill, and the tithe of the demesne of Richard in the land of Straddle (*Estradel*) that is called Bache, just as the aforesaid Richard and Matilda his wife and Simon his son gave and granted them.³⁷

Richard's journey to Hereford must have been one of his last. He was still alive in April 1128, when he is named in a papal bull as a despoiler of the church of Llandaff (which claimed that Cantref Bychan was in its diocese),³⁸ but as he does not appear on the pipe roll that commenced at Michaelmas 1129, may well have been dead by that time.³⁹

SIMON FITZPONS OF CLIFFORD, SON OF RICHARD

Simon, his successor at Clifford, Llandovery and elsewhere, did not long outlive his father. He founded a Cluniac house subject to Lewes Priory at Clifford,⁴⁰ but died without heirs of his body sometime before September 1139, ten years or less after his father.

In the absence of heirs, king Stephen (1135-54) allowed his brother Walter to succeed him. Walter was in possession of his brother's English fief in the period July 1137 to September 1139, when he appears in a list of landholders in Herefordshire drawn up in the exchequer,⁴¹ but precisely when he succeeded Simon is unknown. Walter was the first recorded member of his family to assume the locative surname 'of Clifford'.

WALTER I OF CLIFFORD

Walter took up his responsibilities at Llandovery at a time when the Welsh were making strenuous efforts to remove the Anglo-Normans from their country. The death of king Henry in December 1135 was immediately followed by attempts by the Welsh to regain all the lands lost to them in the previous half-century or more. This had varying degrees of success, but it is thought that Llandovery had come into the hands of Gruffudd ap Rhys of Deheubarth (he who had failed to take it nineteen years earlier) before his death in 1137.⁴² Whether it was taken from Simon fitzPons or Walter of Clifford is difficult to say, but it now remained in Welsh hands for up to twenty years.

The struggle against the Anglo-Normans in Wales begun at this time continued under Gruffudd's four sons – Anarawd, Cadell, Maredudd and Rhys (*see Fig. 2*). It was, however, Hywel ap Maredudd, son of the Maredudd ap Rhydderch who had held Llandovery Castle for Richard fitzPons in 1116, who is described as 'lord of Cantref Bychan' when he died in 1141.⁴³ Hywel was replaced in Cantref Bychan by Anarawd, the eldest of Gruffudd's sons. He was killed in 1143 and Cadell, his brother, incapacitated by a severe beating by the men of Tenby in 1151. Maredudd, the third brother, then became leader of the Welsh of Deheubarth, but he died four years later leaving Rhys ap Gruffudd, the last of the brothers. He was to rule Deheubarth and, at times, much of south-west Wales for nearly half a century, and such was his stature in the politics of the age that he became known as 'the lord Rhys' and even 'Rhys the Great'.

As Llandovery and Cantref Bychan had been a royal grant to Walter's grandfather, king Henry II (1154-89)

was obliged to provide him with other lands in compensation. It was not until 1158, however, after he had re-established royal control over an England wracked by civil war, that he was able to arrange that Walter should have certain lands in the royal demesne lands in Herefordshire. The sheriff was duly allowed a sum against his farm of the county, but only ten shillings was accounted for before Walter regained Llandovery, and the gift made null and void.⁴⁴

Walter gained (or regained) Llandovery in the aftermath of the first of two campaigns of Henry II in South Wales in 1158. Both campaigns were intended to curb Rhys ap Gruffudd's rising power. In the first this objective was achieved when the royal army drove the Welsh prince into the remoter areas of his territories and obliged him to give up all the conquests he and his family had made since the death of Henry I in 1135. Walter of Clifford took immediate possession of Llandovery and then began to recoup some of his lost revenues with a raid on neighbouring lands belonging to Rhys. As a contemporary chronicle puts it, after the king had returned to England, Walter 'who then owned the castle of Llandovery, gathered spoil from Rhys's territory which was next to him and slew his men'. The attack was probably on the commote of Mallaen, which lay in Cantref Mawr just across the Tywi from Llandovery. Rhys made the raid known to the king, but as he was otherwise engaged, he and his war-band went against Llandovery Castle and took it.⁴⁵ Only a matter of weeks later the king returned to Deheubarth for a second campaign. Again he forced Rhys to give up what he had taken and (this time) give hostages for his future good behaviour. One possible long-term result of the year's activities was that Mallaen, whose location made it desirable that it should be in the same hands, came to be associated with the castle. Indeed, the purpose of Walter's raid may have been as much to make Mallaen an appendage of his castle as to recoup some of his lost revenues. Walter should now have expected to resume possession of Llandovery Castle, but, instead, it was retained by king Henry as part of a policy to contain Rhys within his ancestral lands in Cantref Mawr. He did, however, retain possession of the town of Llandovery and the lordship in Cantref Bychan.

Over the next four years Henry spent £305-13s-0d on the castle.⁴⁶ Only a small part of it was on building work, however, the vast majority of it being for its manning and maintenance. Building was nevertheless regarded as a priority, £41 on construction at 'the castle

of Cantref Bychan' being carried out in the first year (1159/60), with another £18-5s-0d being paid to William de Beauchamp (baron of Salwarpe, Worcestershire, and sheriff of that county) for its fortification (*munitio*).⁴⁷ No further expenditure of this kind is recorded and Paul Davis has suggested that it was sufficient for building a stone shell-keep on the motte (probably replacing a timber predecessor) and little more.⁴⁸ The great size of the expenditure on manning and maintaining the castle, however, is a clear indication of how serious the crown regarded Rhys ap Gruffudd's threat to the security of the area. In 1159/60, for example, £35-3s-6d was spent on wages for ten knights and serjeants (men-at-arms) at the castle. In the following year £63 was expended on the wages of knights and serjeants and £82-12s-0d on those of knights alone, both sums by the hand of Philip de Broy. Philip held the manor of Aylton, Herefordshire, from the king by serjeanty tenure, and his involvement with Llandovery Castle may have resulted from this. His father Geoffrey had been condemned by the Pope as a despoiler of the diocese of Llandaff in 1119, so the family may also have had a landed interest in Cantref Bychan.⁴⁹ Another £44-12s-6d for wages of knights was paid into the hand of Walter of Clifford in the same year, so, if not the possessor of the castle, Walter was still involved with it. A final £21 was spent on wages for knights in 1161/2.⁵⁰ Only this small amount was required (either that, or the garrison had been reduced sufficiently for the castle to become a tempting target) because Rhys ap Gruffudd attacked and took the castle early in 1162.⁵¹ As the king was absent on the continent at the time, he compensated Walter with a grant of the great manor of Corfham in Shropshire.⁵² The value of this manor to Walter (and thus possibly of his lost lordship in Cantref Bychan) can probably be gaged from the fact that after his death in 1190 his younger son Richard proffered the crown the large sum of £200 for it.⁵³ Even so, the lordship was too poor in resources for its Clifford lords to consider granting out lands in return for knight service, which is something they certainly did on their lands at Clifford and Cantref Selyf.

RHYS AP GRUFFUDD (THE LORD RHYS)

After he had taken the castle in 1162, Llandovery and its lordship were kept by Rhys until his death thirty-five years later. During this time he maintained the castle and even lived in it from time to time.⁵⁴ He also patronised and protected the borough. Great Malvern's priory,

however, was another matter: this he was eventually obliged to suppress because of the libidinous behaviour of its monks towards the womenfolk of the town, or so it was alleged.

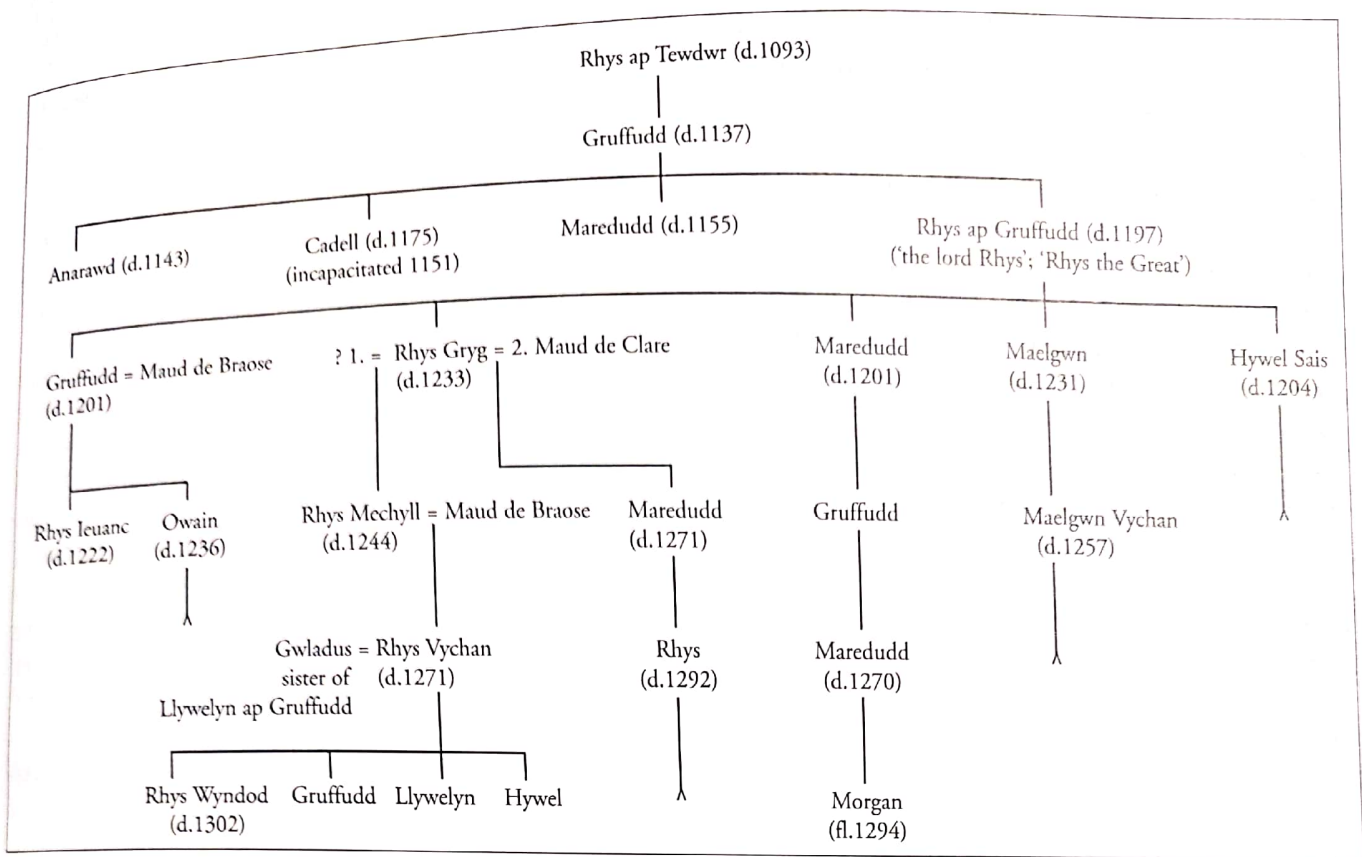
Gerald of Wales tells how the suppression of the priory came about. He had apparently been sent by king Henry on an embassy to the Welsh prince, whom the English king had made his 'justice in all Deheubarth' in an accord made between them at Pembroke in September 1171 which had seen the king confirm him in possession of Cantref Bychan, against the interests of Walter of Clifford.⁵⁵ He gives no date for it, as usual. It could have been made in 1185, when an uprising by the Welsh of Glamorgan would have made it imperative that the king retain Rhys's loyalty. An alternative could be about May in the following year, after king Henry had returned from France (27 April)⁵⁶ intent on a campaign in Galloway (which, in the event, never took place):

I found Rhys in his castle of Llandovery in the province of Cantref Bychan, he himself forthwith, like the kindly and discreet man he was, came down from the fortress to an orchard that lay about the castle to hear in private the message the king had sent. And when he heard it in full, and we were turning back, we saw three or four monks not far off seated on a hill within sight of us and waiting that they might by our intervention be reconciled to the prince whom they had grievously offended, as they had entreated us to do so on our coming thither. And when I spoke to him on this matter, he replied that if we had known what manner of men they were and how evil was their living, we should most certainly never have uttered a word on their behalf; he said also that the burgesses of the castle were ready one and all to leave his town and retire to England, for the sake of their wives and daughters whom these monks frequently and openly abused. He showed us also a young and beardless monk among them, who to make himself chaste had castrated himself a little before that time, but to no purpose; for he asserted that he was not withstanding far more given to lust and filthiness than all the rest of them. But at our instance and entreaty he [Rhys] granted our request that they might remain there in hope of the reformation that they promised and the mending of their ways. But a little after,

since their vice abated not nor was the scandal removed these monks were one and all cast out, and clerks set in their places, by order of the prince and of the bishop of the diocese.⁵⁷

The suppression may therefore have come in 1185 or 1186, and almost certainly before Gerald accompanied the archbishop of Canterbury on his tour of Wales preaching the Crusade in 1188. Gerald blamed the lascivious behaviour of the monks, but it probably had more to do with the fact that Great Malvern was a cell of Westminster Abbey. Rhys may therefore have suspected its monks of sending reports of his activities right to the heart of Henry's administration (this is possibly the 'grievous offence' the monks gave him), a situation he would not have tolerated, despite the accord between them.⁵⁸ After the suppression, Malvern's monks' lands were taken by the bishop, Peter de Leia, as endowment for a college of clerks to serve the church. Each of the clerks was allocated lands for his maintenance, one of these prebends being reserved for a clerk appointed by Great Malvern Priory, which was possibly the price of its acquiescence in the destruction of its priory.⁵⁹ It is possible that bishop Peter saw them as a replacement for the community of priests set up there by St Paulinus centuries before, but we cannot be certain of this. Nothing more is known of them. The advowson of the church was retained by the lord Rhys and passed to his secular descendants including, eventually, the king of England.

While king Henry II lived the accord he had reached with the lord Rhys meant that a level of peace was maintained in South Wales and the March. When he died in 1189, however, Rhys regarded it as null and void and this together with king Richard's apparent reluctance to accept his homage resulted in him attacking English lordships in south-west Wales. Despite this, Llandovery appears to have returned to Clifford hands at this time. According to a claim made many years later, Walter II of Clifford (1190-1220) held the commote of Perfedd (and its castle 'of Llangadog, presumably) 'in time of peace' in the reign of king Richard (1189-99) until he 'was ejected by the power and force of one Hywel ap Maredudd'.⁶⁰ This claim was made at a time when John Giffard (d.1299) was trying to prove his right to Llandovery and its lordship through his wife, the daughter and heiress of Walter III of Clifford (d.1263). The town of Llandovery (but not the castle, which was then in the king's hands, though it did eventually come to Giffard)

Fig. 2: *The Descendants of Rhys ap Gruffudd.*

and the commote of Hirfryn were the subject of a separate claim which almost certainly (though the precise details are missing) said that Walter II had once had them and had also been ejected from them by Hywel ap Maredudd. Hywel is described as an ancestor of Rhys Wyndod, great-great-grandson of the lord Rhys and possessor of Llandovery until 1277, but he is not known to have had an ancestor of that name. Possibly, therefore, he was being confused with Hywel Sais, son of the lord Rhys, who supported his father's attacks in 1189. This Hywel was in possession of Llandovery Castle in 1193 when he destroyed it after successful campaigns against the English had left him with too many castles to hold with the military resources at his command.⁶¹ Possibly, therefore, 1190-93 was the time when Walter II of Clifford had had the lordship of Llandovery before being ejected by Hywel Sais.

The destruction wrought by Hywel Sais on Llandovery Castle in 1193 cannot have made it completely untenable, however, because only two years later Rhys Gryg and Maredudd ap Rhys, two of his brothers, took the 'castle of Cantref Bychan with the consent of the men of the land'.⁶² Shortly afterwards Rhys and Maredudd were imprisoned by the lord Rhys, their father, but Maredudd seems to have been back in possession of Llandovery by

the time he was killed in Carnwyllian by the men of William II of London, lord of Kidwelly, in 1201.⁶³

THE SONS OF RHYS AP GRUFFUDD (see Fig. 2)

After the lord Rhys's death in 1197 the unity he had struggled to achieve and maintain over the course of forty years broke down. Gruffudd, his eldest legitimate son, seems to have been regarded as his heir, but the partibility of inheritance under Welsh law meant that he had four brothers contending with him for their share. Llandovery Castle and its lordship seem to have been regarded as particularly worth fighting for, and over the course of two generations after the death of Maredudd changed hands on bewilderingly frequent occasions.

Immediately after Maredudd's death his elder brother Gruffudd took possession of Llandovery Castle (*oppido llanamdewri*)⁶⁴ and Cantref Bychan. He, however, died suddenly within a month, leaving two sons, Rhys (known as Rhys Ieuanc, 'the Younger', to distinguish him from Rhys Gryg, brother to Maredudd and Gruffudd) and Owain.⁶⁵ Before the end of the year Rhys Gryg had taken Llandovery from these brothers,⁶⁶ but at Michaelmas 1202 Rhys Ieuanc, now lord of Dinefwr, the ancestral home of the dynasty of Deheubarth in Cantref Mawr, and his war-band managed to retake it 'by diligence and

invention'. Later that year Rhys Ieuanc (described as 'Rhys son of Gruffudd son of Rhys the Great (*Resi magni*)') was probably at Llandovery to issue a charter to the abbey of Strata Florida granting it all the pasture in Cantref Bychan in a deed witnessed by his mother Maud (de Braose), Adam his clerk and others.⁶⁷

At this point, Maelgwn, another son of the lord Rhys (and Gruffudd's bitterest enemy), entered the contest. Allied with Gwenwynwyn, lord of southern Powys, he took the castles of Llandovery and Llangadog from his nephews in 1203 with the aid of catapults and slings, the garrisons in them being driven away. Then, to remove Hywel Sais, his brother and a previous holder of Llandovery, from the equation, Maelgwn brought about his death in Cemaes in 1204. Shortly afterwards the brothers Rhys and Owain, together with Rhys Gryg, their uncle, 'manfully' drove Maelgwn out of the castles of Dinefwr and Llandovery, which two castles were 'the bolts and stays of all his territory and all else he had to his name'.⁶⁸ The victors then divided his lands between them, the brothers taking Llandovery and its lordship as their share and Rhys Gryg Dinefwr and the remainder. Two years later we find Cadwallon ap Hywel (of the line of Maelienydd in Rhwng Gwy a Hafren and evidently an ally of Rhys and Owain) at Llandovery to issue a deed selling land in Arwystli to Strata Marcella Abbey.⁶⁹

The pact between Rhys Gryg and his nephews that had enabled them to achieve so much soon broke down. Rhys Gryg was not satisfied with his share and in 1206 began to contest possession of Llangadog and Perfedd with his nephews. By now the growing power in Wales of Llywelyn Fawr of Gwynedd was being felt in the south and it was with his encouragement, and with the aid of some 'French' (i.e. Anglo-Norman) allies, that Rhys Gryg burned the castle at Llangadog (*castellum Luchewein*), killing all within it.⁷⁰ The brothers immediately rebuilt it so that Rhys Gryg was obliged to return at Michaelmas 1208 and burn *castellum Luchewein* for a second time. Some of the captured garrison Rhys then imprisoned and others he blinded.⁷¹

Having thus lost the southern half of their lordship of Llandovery to Rhys Gryg, the brothers sought the aid of Llywelyn Fawr in obtaining additional lands. He obliged them by giving them all of Ceredigion north of the Aeron that had previously been held by Maelgwn ap Rhys. That same year the brothers also obtained the aid of the agents of king John of England holding the lordship of Brecknock (John having taken that lordship from William de Braose, his former favourite) in regain-

ing Llangadog. With their assistance they returned to attack it and, after killing some of the garrison and capturing others, they burned it on 24 May 1209.⁷²

By the end of 1209, therefore, Rhys and Owain had been restored to their former position at Llandovery and had added to it the two northern-most cantrefs of Ceredigion. This situation changed within a year, however. In 1210 king John brought an army through South Wales on his way to Ireland, where he intended to campaign against the disgraced William de Braose and his Anglo-Irish allies. Having had the formidable power of the English throne amply demonstrated, many Welsh lords thought it prudent to break their alliance with Llywelyn and swear fealty to John. The two brothers, however, were not among them and, indeed, began to intrigue with Llywelyn against the English king. John's response was to encourage Rhys Gryg to take Llandovery from the brothers. With the assistance of royal forces:

... he gained possession of the castle of Llandovery. For the garrison, having despaired of all help, surrendered the castle with sixteen steeds in it, on the feast of St Mary in September [8th September], on condition that the garrison should have their bodies and all that was theirs safe.⁷³

John then encouraged Maelgwn ap Rhys, its former lord, to dislodge them from northern Ceredigion, but they defeated him in battle at Cilcennan and his expedition failed.

In the following year Llywelyn himself was the target when John brought a powerful army into North Wales. The Welsh prince was forced to capitulate to the English king in the face of overwhelming military force, and without his support the brothers' position in Ceredigion and elsewhere became untenable. They therefore went to England to make their peace with the king. Llywelyn's own charter of submission was issued on 11 August⁷⁴ and the brothers' charter seems to date from the same time. Only a minute of their deed is now known, although this is sufficient to show that John's price for his benevolence towards them was very high. It runs as follows:

Charter of Rhys ap Gruffudd and Owain his brother in which they demise and quitclaim in perpetuity to John, king of England, for the remittance of his ill will towards them, all their land in the honour of Cardigan, all the land of

Cantref Bychan with the castle of Llandovery and all the land of Mallaen.⁷⁵

Like the prince of Gwynedd they now held nothing in Wales except by the will of the king of England. Neither of the charters had a long-term effect, however, as they were annulled at the Council of Oxford in July 1215 in the aftermath of Magna Carta.⁷⁶

Over the next two years Llywelyn built up an alliance of Welsh princes whose support gave him the confidence to take from John and his agents those lands he had been forced to yield. These allies included Rhys Gryg and Maelgwn ap Rhys, but not Rhys Ieuanc and his brother. They kept faith with the English king, and he now sent them to Wales with orders to attack Maelgwn in Ceredigion. They met with no success, however, and by early in 1213 they were sufficiently isolated for Rhys (doubtless speaking for himself and his brother) to realise that whereas Rhys Gryg, Maelgwn and others had done well out of their change of allegiance to Llywelyn, 'he alone had no portion of his patrimony'. True to their word, the brothers now sought the king's help in regaining Llandovery and its lordship, if nothing more.⁷⁷ John's response was to threaten to drive Rhys Gryg from all his lands unless he surrendered 'the castle of Llandovery and the land [Cantref Bychan] to the brothers. And when Rhys Gryg vowed 'that he would not share with them a single acre of land', he commissioned the sheriffs of Hereford and Glamorgan (Engelard de Cigogné and Faukes de Breauté, two of his hated mercenary captains) to assist the brothers in carrying out his threat. Rhys and Owain went to Brecknock (their mother, Maud, being a daughter of William III de Braose, lord of Brecknock until his disgrace in 1208) and raised an army, and together with the two sheriffs they defeated Rhys Gryg in battle near Talley in January 1213. Rhys fled to his castle at Dinefwr, having first fortified Llandovery Castle 'with men and arms and food and engines and other necessities'.⁷⁸ Thus, when Rhys Ieuanc captured Dinefwr, he and his family were forced to seek refuge with his brother Maelgwn in Ceredigion. With insufficient forces at his command to take Llandovery, Rhys Ieuanc returned to Brecknock for reinforcements and, having raised a fresh force of Welsh and 'French', returned to besiege the castle. The garrison, however, surrendered 'on condition that they should be granted their lives and their members' even before they had encamped before it.⁷⁹ The two brothers then proceeded to take all their uncle's lands in Ystrad Tywi.

Later in the year the homeless Rhys Gryg, having tried but failed to mend fences with his nephews, was captured at Carmarthen by royal forces and placed in prison.

Llywelyn Fawr's attempts to unite all Welshmen under his rule gained fresh impetus after the failure of John's great continental campaign against Philip of France in 1214. His growing problems with his barons also helped Llywelyn, and by the following year virtually all the leaders of the Welsh had recognised his primacy. This brought reconciliation between Rhys Ieuanc and Maelgwn ap Rhys, his uncle, and in May 1215, while Llywelyn attacked Shrewsbury, they campaigned in Dyfed, bringing all the Welsh there under their rule, apart from those of Cemaes. A little later Rhys Ieuanc 'gathered a host of immense size,⁸⁰ and descended on Kidwelly,' Carnwylion and Gower, bringing all three territories under his power. The crown's reaction was to release Rhys Gryg from imprisonment at Carmarthen in the hope that he would form an opposition party to his nephews as he had in the past.⁸¹ He, however, did no more than make common cause with them (and with his brother Maelgwn) to assist Llywelyn Fawr in conquering almost all of Deheubarth apart from parts of western Dyfed.

At Aberdyfi in January 1216 Llywelyn Fawr divided the spoils of conquest among the surviving members of the ruling house of Deheubarth. Llandovery, together with the commote of Mallaen in Cantref Mawr and the manor of Myddfai in the commote of Perfedd, were given to Maelgwn ap Rhys. The remainder of Perfedd, with Is Cennen, Kidwelly, Gower and the whole of Cantref Mawr, went to Rhys Gryg. As their share, the brothers Rhys Ieuanc and Owain were given the whole of Ceredigion except for the commotes of Mabwynion and Gwynionydd, which went to Maelgwn.⁸² After this, neither they nor their descendants ever ruled in Llandovery again.

Maelgwn ap Rhys retained Llandovery for several years after the events at Aberdyfi. Sometime in these years, it appears, bishop Iorwerth of St David's gained some form of over-lordship of Cantref Bychan. This is demonstrated in an agreement of 1222 in which Maelgwn ap Rhys and Maelgwn 'the Younger' (Maelgwn Vychan), his son, acknowledged the right of the church of St David and its bishop:

... to the whole land of Llandovery with appurtenances. The bishop, with the consent of Maelgwn the Elder, shall receive the homage of Maelgwn

the Younger for that land, to be held of the bishop of St David's and his church by the following service: whenever the bishop of St David's shall pass through those parts, if the bishop so wishes, the said Maelgwn shall give him safe conduct in going and returning and shall make his procuration to the bishop in the castle of Llandovery at least once a year, and the men of that tenement, at the summons of the bishop, shall go in his army as other men of St David.⁸³

Bishop Iorwerth claimed that his current agreement was based on one previously reached between lord Rhys and a previous bishop, but nothing is known of this.⁸⁴

Within five years of this agreement Llandovery had come into the hands of Rhys Gryg once more, any overlordship by the bishop now (apparently) being set aside. J. Beverley Smith has suggested that this came about after Rhys Ieuanc's death without heirs of his body in August 1222. The king of England entrusted his lands to Llywelyn Fawr of Gwynedd and it is possible that he induced Maelgwn to give Llandovery to Rhys Gryg in return for a share of Rhys Ieuanc's lands in Ceredigion.⁸⁵ However that may be, Llandovery was certainly in Rhys Gryg's hands in 1227, when, having become impatient at his ageing father's continuing grip on power, Rhys Mechyll, his son, captured him in Is Cennen. The price of his release was the surrender of Llandovery Castle.⁸⁶

That, at least, was the course of events according to Welsh sources. As with events thirty years before, the Clifford family had their own version. In this, Rhys Gryg held Llandovery and its commote of Hirfryn under Walter III of Clifford (1220-63) and not on his own account. This was apparently on the same basis as Maredudd ap Rhydderch had had the keeping of Llandovery under Richard fitzPons in 1116, because after the death of Rhys Gryg in 1233 (they said) Walter had given Llandovery and its lordship to Rhys Mechyll, his son, to hold as his bailiff. Subsequently, however, 'in a time of war between Welsh and English' Rhys Mechyll 'by force and power, had unjustly detained the lands and occupied them throughout all his life'.⁸⁷ Rhys Mechyll succeeded his father in 1233 and died in 1244, so the 'war' is probably a reference to the 1233-4 rebellion of the earl of Pembroke against king Henry III and the foreign favourites at his court. Walter was a supporter of the earl, and his temporary loss of Clifford to royal forces in September 1233 may have encouraged Rhys to repudiate his overlordship at Llandovery.

Rhys died in 1244 leaving several under-age children. It is said that Maud de Braose (daughter of Reginald de Braose of Brecknock), his widow, then made over the castle of Carreg Cennen (in the commote of Is Cennen) to the 'French' out of enmity for Rhys Fychan, her eldest son. Rhys Fychan obtained Carreg Cennen in 1248,⁸⁸ but he had a cousin, Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg, who coveted Llandovery as a territory once held by his father. Maredudd was already lord of much of Cantref Mawr when his father died in 1233, and since Rhys Vychan claimed later that it had been taken from him 'in time of war' it seems that he used the general uprising of the Welsh under Dafydd ap Llywelyn Fawr of Gwynedd in 1244 as an opportunity to gain Llandovery.

Rhys Vychan now turned to the king of England for redress. On 20 August 1246 he and his brothers made their homage to Henry at Woodstock⁸⁹ and early in the next year he came against Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg in *curia regis* for restitution of the castle of Llandovery with appurtenances. These, he said, had been taken from him with the aid of the king's enemies in wartime. This plea progressed through the royal court until the Hilary Term of 1248,⁹⁰ when it was apparently concurred, as a result of which Maredudd was in charge at Llandovery in the following year when he fell foul of bishop Thomas of St David's over the presentation to the church. (Maredudd had the advowson in his hands as heir to the lord Rhys, who had retained it for himself on the suppression of the Benedictine priory.) In August bishop Thomas notified king Henry that he had excommunicated Maredudd in respect of its advowson. In October the constable of Carmarthen reported to Robert Walerand, king's justice, concerning an inquisition of 'darrien presentment' between bishop Thomas and Maredudd ap Rhys. This assize, on which sat several Welshmen from the neighbourhood of Llandovery, said that Rhys Gryg, father of Maredudd, had presented the last parson of the church and that the advowson belonged to Maredudd as his son.⁹¹ Bishop Thomas did not accept the verdict, however, and the dispute was ongoing in June 1251, when he suspended Maredudd's excommunication for a time 'in the hope that peace may meanwhile be made between his church and Maredudd and his men'.⁹²

Rhys Vychan, meanwhile, though no longer in possession of Llandovery, was still lord of Dinefwr in Cantref Mawr and high in the king's favour. In February 1251 he and his men were placed under the king's special protection.⁹³ To counter this, Maredudd ap Rhys

attached himself to the rising star of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd. Even so, Rhys Vychan and 'the English' succeeded in driving Maredudd out of all his lands in Deheubarth, including Llandovery, in 1256.⁹⁴

Maredudd immediately joined forces with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and, having campaigned together in North Wales, they came south in December. In a short campaign Rhys Fychan was deprived of Dinefwr, Llandovery and Cantref Bychan and driven into exile in England. By the following May Rhys had acquired the help of the king and of Stephen Bauzun, keeper of Carmarthen, in trying to regain his lands. At the end of the month they set out from Carmarthen with a large army to attack Maredudd. During the night, however, Rhys Vychan slipped away to join Maredudd and on the following day the two men defeated the English army. Soon afterwards Llywelyn managed to reconcile Maredudd and Rhys,⁹⁵ as a result of which Rhys recovered Llandovery and Hirfryn.

As was normal between the heirs of the lord Rhys, that reconciliation was only temporary. By October 1257 the king had tempted Maredudd away from his allegiance to Llywelyn with promises of reinstatement in all his lands in Deheubarth. On the 18th of the month Maredudd made his homage to king Henry and in return the king proposed that he should have all his hereditary lands, including the commotes of Hirfryn and Mallaen with the castle of Llandovery, plus Dryslwyn Castle, Is Cennen commote and all the lands of Rhys Vychan, ally of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd.⁹⁶ Llywelyn (whose sister was married to Rhys Vychan) now punished Maredudd for his desertion with a raid on the valley of the Tywi in 1258 in which all his lands were ravaged. Maredudd himself was wounded in a battle at Cilgerran in which Patrick de Chaworth of Kidwelly, the royal steward at Carmarthen, was killed.⁹⁷ This raid resulted in the commote of Perfedd – the southern half of the lordship of Llandovery (its northern half already being in his hands) – and many other lands, being restored to Rhys Vychan.

When next they appear in the records in 1270, however, Llandovery and Hirfryn were in the hands of Maredudd ap Gruffudd of Caerleon. He was a grandson of that Maredudd ap Rhys ap Gruffudd, lord of Llandovery, who had been slain in 1201 and so had a claim on it through him. He died at his castle of Llandovery on 19 October 1270 leaving a son called Morgan.⁹⁸ Morgan entered into his inheritance and then travelled to Snowdon to do homage to Llywelyn. Llywelyn, how-

ever, ejected him from Llandovery and restored it to Rhys Fychan. Rhys died at his castle of Dinefwr on 17 August 1271, less than a year later, leaving a son Rhys (known as Rhys Wyndod) as his heir. Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg, meanwhile, his arch-rival for Llandovery, had died at his castle of Dryslwyn just three weeks earlier, leaving a son called (inevitably and confusingly) Rhys.⁹⁹

RHYS WYNDOD AND THE GIFFARD FAMILY, HEIRS OF CLIFFORD

Rhys Wyndod retained Llandovery from 1270 until it was lost to English forces seven years later, during the first war between Llywelyn ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd and king Edward I of England. In May 1276 Llywelyn complained to king Edward that Payn, son of Patrick de Chaworth of Kidwelly, had committed 'plunderings and murders' in the lands of his barons. A month later he further advised Edward that:

The sons of Payn de Chaworth . . . have, with a multitude of armed men invaded the lands of Llywelyn's vassals and nephews, the sons of Rhys Vychan [i.e. Rhys Wyndod and his brothers], and have done much damage there . . .¹⁰⁰

By November, negotiations with Llywelyn over his refusal to do homage to Edward as his overlord having been broken off, three armies were being assembled to invade his lands. One of these was based at Carmarthen under the command of Payn de Chaworth, and included a force under John Giffard, husband of the heiress of Walter III of Clifford. Payn set out from Carmarthen early in 1277 and by 11 April had secured the surrender of Dinefwr Castle from Rhys ap Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg. Chaworth then despatched Giffard to deal with Llandovery while he moved north-west over the hills in the direction of Aberystwyth. It seems (from 'grievances' against the king and the royal forces that Rhys later brought to the notice of the archbishop of Canterbury) that at this point Rhys sought out Payn de Chaworth in his tent and in heated discussions over the terms of his surrender six of his men lost their lives. The killing of these men was perhaps Payn's revenge for the death of his brother, Harvey, at their hands in the previous year. According to those same 'grievances' the conquest of Rhys's lordship of Llandovery had resulted in many 'enormities' being committed on its churches by Payn and his men. At Llangadog, for instance, stables had

been made of the bishop of St David's church there. They had then 'played the harlot', taken away all its goods, burnt all its houses and wounded its priest before the high altar, leaving him for dead. Also, the church of Llandovery (probably St Mary's), the church of Llanwrda in Mallaen and other unnamed churches in Rhys's lands were spoiled and burned, their chalices, books and 'all other ornaments and goods' taken.¹⁰¹

Despite all that had gone on, it was eventually agreed that Rhys Wyndod would retain the commotes of Mallaen, Hirfryn and Perfedd (and Is Cennen), but not Dinefwr and his other lands. Nor would he have the castles of Llandovery and Carreg Cennen, these being the castles which, on 2 June, Chaworth was instructed to retain in the king's hands and provide for their custody as securely as possible. At the same time the men of Rhys Wyndod were permitted to hold their lands and tenements as before until the king should decide what further should be done.¹⁰² On 11 September 1278 the king presented one John of Kempesford to the living of the church of Llandovery (St Mary's), which living he had by right of conquest from Rhys Wyndod.¹⁰³ As Payn de Chaworth was baron of Kempesford, Gloucestershire (as well as Kidwelly), it is clear that he put his own man forward to the king for presentation. On 24 June in the same year Rhys Wyndod and Rhys ap Maredudd and many other leaders of the Welsh of Deheubarth went to Worcester to render their homage to king Edward. Having done so, Rhys ap Maredudd was allowed to return home to Dryslwyn, but Rhys Wyndod was detained at court until 7 October, when he had safe conduct in 'going with his horses, harness and men to his own parts'.¹⁰⁴

In June 1280 the castles of Llandovery, Dinefwr and Carreg Cennen and their appurtenances were assigned by the king to the keeping of Bogo de Knoville.¹⁰⁵ This was until John Giffard of Brimpsfield, second husband of Matilda, daughter and heiress of Walter III Clifford (who had died in 1263) could prove his right to it through his wife. Early in the previous year she and her husband had set out before the king what they saw as her right as her father's heir to the lordship of Llandovery. Their plea was principally against Rhys Wyndod, but Rhys ap Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg and Morgan ap Maredudd were also involved. Maud and John Giffard claimed against them the commotes of Hirfryn and Perfedd and the vill of Llandovery, but not the castle, which was in the king's hands. Together these made up what they said was the marcher barony or lordship of Llandovery in Cantref Bychan, which barony was held

of the king in chief.¹⁰⁶ The plea was still in progress three years later when Rhys Wyndod joined Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in his final war against Edward I.

On 26 March 1282 David, brother to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, together with Gruffudd and Llywelyn, brothers to Rhys Wyndod 'lord of Is Cennen', and many others, took the king's castles at Llandovery and Carreg Cennen by treachery.¹⁰⁷ Llandovery was soon retaken, however, and on 14 April the king committed it to John Giffard during pleasure, commanding that he strengthen it as he saw fit for the security of the area at the king's expense.¹⁰⁸ On 2 June Giffard was granted full possession of the castle that had belonged to Rhys Wyndod, 'the king's enemy and felon'.¹⁰⁹ On 16 August Giffard was empowered to bring the Welsh of the commotes of Hirfryn and Perfedd to the king's peace,¹¹⁰ thus effectively bringing the barony or lordship of Llandovery into the hands of the Clifford heir. In November 1283 king Edward granted to John Giffard, for his services in the recent wars in Wales, Is Cennen (the third commote of historical Cantref Bychan) for the service of one knight's fee.¹¹¹ That same year bishop Thomas Beck of St David's established a college of canons in Llangadog Church in expiation of recent bloodshed in the area. As he himself put it, 'in order that the places of Ystrad Tywi, places hitherto of lamentation, death and slaughter, may be turned into places of spiritual joy and of homage to the Redeemer, and of safe refuge and surety to the country round about'.¹¹²

In 1287 Rhys ap Maredudd of Dryslwyn, who had sided with the king of England in the war of 1282-3 (and received a knighthood as a result), provoked by Robert de Tibetot, the king's justice of Carmarthen, broke out in revolt and on 8 June captured Llandovery Castle, along with Dinefwr and Carreg Cennen.¹¹³ These, however, were soon recovered by royal forces and the lordship of Cantref Bychan placed (because of Giffard's unimpressive conduct at the time) in the hands of Humphrey V de Bohun, earl of Hereford and Essex. He held them until king Edward returned them to Giffard on 13 October 1289.¹¹⁴ Rhys ap Maredudd escaped but was captured in 1292 and put to death. On his death it was said that Rhys Gryg, his grandfather, had, 'held the body of the castle of Llandovery with the commotes of Hirfryn and Perfedd in his demesne as of fee from Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, formerly prince of Wales, by Welsh services and customs'.¹¹⁵ The record is inaccurate insofar as Rhys Gryg had died before Llywelyn ap Gruffudd became prince of Gwynedd. It may well be

accurate, however, if Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (d.1240), grandfather of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, is substituted. Even so, this can only have been the case in the brief periods when Rhys was possessed of Llandovery, i.e. 1210-13 and (possibly) 1227-33. It was also said in the same source that the freemen of the commote of Hirfryn were bound to carry timber and lime for building operations at Llandovery Castle when necessary.¹¹⁶

When John Giffard died in 1299 he held of the king by homage and fealty, and by right of his wife, the commote of Hirfryn, with the castle of Llandovery, and the commote of Perfedd, extended jointly at £35 3s 3d per annum, and in his own right the commote Is Cennen.¹¹⁷ All his lands passed with his daughter Catherine to Nicholas I of Audley, her husband, who died in the same year as John Giffard. Nicholas II, their son, died in December 1316 having at Llandovery in the com-

mote of Hirfryn, the castle, which he held of the king in chief by service of one knight's fee and doing suit at the king's county court of Carmarthen for all services, save in time of war. He also had the town of Llandovery, with seventy-eight burgesses rendering a shilling each annually, *tolcestre* and the toll of the fair. He also had the commote of Perfedd, which included the manors of Myddfai, Llanddeusant, Gwynfe and Manoravon. Another inquisition post mortem held a few months later says he had Llandovery castle and borough and the commotes of Hirfryn and Perfedd, all of which were held of the king in chief by knight's service and doing suit of county court at Carmarthen. It was said further that there are no knight's fees or advowsons pertaining to the lordship of Llandovery.¹¹⁸

Rhys Wyndod died in one of Edward I's prisons in 1302.

NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS:

- AC = *Annales Cambriae*, ed. J. Williams ab Ithel, Rolls Series, 1860.
 ByT = *Brut y Tywysogyon: Peniarth MS 20 version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones, Cardiff, 1952.
 ChR = *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, Public Record Office, 1903-27.
 CLR = *Calendar of Close Rolls*, Public Record Office, 1902-.
 CW = T. Jones (ed.), "Chronica de Wallia" and Other Documents from Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3514', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 12 (1946), 27-44.
 CWR = *Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls: Supplementary Close Rolls, Welsh Rolls, Scutage Rolls 1277-1326*, Public Record Office, 1912.
Episcopal Acts = J. Conway Davies (ed. & trans.), *Episcopal Acts and Cognate Documents Relating to Welsh Dioceses 1066-1272*, 2 vols., Historical Society of the Church in Wales, 1946-8.
 Ipm = *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Public Record Office, 1916.
Monasticon = Sir William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 6 vols. in 8, London, 1817-30.
 PatR = *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, Public Record Office, 1906-.
 PR = *Pipe Roll*, as published by the Pipe Roll Society, London, 1883-.
 RBH = *Brut y Tywysogyon: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones, Cardiff, 1955.

1. *Domesday Book* (ed. J. Farley, Record Commission, 1783), ff.64b, 72b-73, 168b, 177, 180b, 186b.
2. At The Bage (Bache), Middlewood and Harewood, all now in the civil parish of Clifford: *Domesday Book*, f.187.
3. ByT, 40; RBH, 87.
4. See the charter of Henry's he witnessed at Newnham-on-Severn on 2 December: R. H. C. Davis *et al.* (eds.), *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* (4 vols., London, 1913-68), ii, no. 500.
5. Ipm, vi, no. 56.
6. For a possible outer bailey to the north, on the site of the present car park (suggested by nearby property boundaries), see K. Murphy, 'Small Boroughs in South-West Wales: their planning, early development and defences', in N. Edwards (ed.), *Landscape and Settlement in Medieval Wales* (Oxford, 1997), 148-9.
7. H. James, 'The Roman Roads of Carmarthenshire', in *Sir Gâr: Studies in Carmarthenshire History* (Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society, 1991), 60.
8. P. C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts* (Cardiff, 1966), 15, etc.
9. C. Cuissard (ed.), 'Vita S. Pauli Aureliani', *Revue Celtique*, 5 (1883), 413-460, abridged and translated by G. H. Doble, 'Saint Paul Aurelian', in *The Saints of Cornwall, Part I: Saints of the Land's End District* (1942; facsimile reprint, Felinfach, 1997), 11-28. See also *Lives of the Welsh Saints* (ed. D. Simon Evans, Cardiff, 1971), 147-152.
10. I am grateful to Professor Andrew Breeze for advice on this place-name.
11. Dyfed Archaeological Trust HER.
12. Doble, 'Saint Paul Aurelian', 15.
13. B. C. Burnham & J. L. Davies (eds.), *Roman Frontiers in Wales and the Marches* (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2010), 253-5.
14. A. W. Wade-Evans (ed. & trans.), *Life of St David* (London, 1923), 7.

15. The latest attempt is by Professor Breeze, 'St David and the School of Paulinus', *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, 44 (2008), 13-16.
16. *AC*, 66.
17. R. Bromwich & D. Simon Evans, *Culhwch ac Olwen* (Cardiff, 1988), 135. See also J. Rhys, *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx* (2 vols., 1901), ii, 509-19.
18. I. N. Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales* (Chichester, 1983), 162-4.
19. *Ibid.*, 168-9.
20. W. D. Caroe, 'Llanfair-ar-y-bryn, Carmarthenshire', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (1917), 15-38 (and also in *ante* (1925), 454-6); T. Lloyd, J. Orbach & R. Scourfield, *Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion* (New Haven and London, 2006) ('The Pevsner Guide to the Buildings of Wales'), 291-2.
21. Mike Salter (*The Old Parish Churches of South-West Wales* (Malvern, 1994), plan on p. 35) makes all of what remains of the north, west and south walls of the nave 12th century in date.
22. P. Lord & J. Morgan Guy (eds.), *The Visual Culture of Wales: Medieval Vision* (Cardiff, 2003), 89.
23. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales: *Carmarthenshire* (London, 1917), 124. This says several sculpted figures were discovered, but Carmarthen Museum has only two.
24. Lord & Morgan Guy (eds.), *op. cit.*
25. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales: *Carmarthenshire*, 93.
26. D. Longley, 'Early Medieval Burial in Wales' and D. Petts & S. Turner, 'Early Medieval Church Groups in Wales and Western England', both in N. Edwards (ed.), *The Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches* (Leeds, 2009), 112-122, 281-99.
27. *Monasticon*, iii, 448 Charter II; *Episcopal Acts*, no. D65; Davis *et al.* (eds.), *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, ii, no. 1490.
28. N. Cook, 'Rethinking Alabum: recent work at Llanfair-ar-y-bryn Roman Fort, Llandovery', *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, 43 (2007), 5.
29. *Monasticon*, iii, 449 Charter V.
30. G. Williams, 'Carmarthenshire Monasteries in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', *Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society*, 3 (1961), 139.
31. *ByT*, 40; *RBH*, 87.
32. J. H. Round (ed.), *Ancient Charters, Royal and Private, Prior to 1200* (Pipe Roll Society, 1888), no. 6.
33. Charter of William II de Braose, son-in-law of Miles of Gloucester, to Walter of Clifford, son of Richard, quoted in I. W. Rowland, 'William de Braose and the Lordship of Brecon', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 30 (1982), 133.
34. J. Barrow (ed.), *St David's Episcopal Acta* (Cardiff, 1998), no. 17.
35. Round, *Ancient Charters*, no. 12.
36. *Ibid.*, no. 13.
37. *Monasticon*, iii, 447 Charter II; *Episcopal Acts*, no. D65; Davis *et al.* (eds.), *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, ii, no. 1490 dated May-Aug. 1127. 'Straddle (Valley)' was an old name for the Golden Valley: see my *Herefordshire Place-Names* (2nd ed., Logaston, 2009), 23-6.
38. J. G. Evans & J. Rhys (eds.), *The Book of Llan Dâu* (Oxford, 1893), 37.
39. *Episcopal Acts*, no. L54. For the probable timing of Richard's death, see *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, ii, no. 1681 note and Round, *Ancient Charters*, 23.
40. A. Clifford, *Collectanea Cliffordiana* (Paris, 1817), Appendix 1, 90.
41. V. H. Galbraith & J. Tait (eds.), *Herefordshire Domesday Book, 1160-70* (Pipe Roll Society, 1950), 78.
42. For the probable date, see the excellent biography by Dr Roger Turvey, *The Lord Rhys* (Llandysul, 1997), 31.
43. *ByT*, 52.
44. *PR 4 Henry II*, 144.
45. *ByT*, 60-1; *AC*, 48 (*s.a.* 1159).
46. Dr Turvey has analysed the way this money was spent in 'Llandovery Castle and the Pipe Rolls (1159-62)', *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, 26 (1990), 5-11.
47. *PR 6 Henry II*, 22, 28, 30.
48. *A Company of Forts* (Llandysul, 2000), 87-8. Turvey, 'Llandovery and the Pipe Rolls', 11, note 19, suggested it received a 'simple stone keep'.
49. Tait and Galbraith (eds.), *The Herefordshire Domesday Book 1160-70*, 57; *Book of Fees* (3 vols., Public Record Office, 1920-31), 102; Evans & Rhys (eds.), *The Book of Llan Dâu*, 93.
50. *PRs 6 Henry II*, 22, 28, 30; *7 Henry II*, 22, 54; and *8 Henry II*, 56. Currently, knights were paid at a rate of about 6d a day and sergeants 2d.
51. *AC*, 49 (*s.a.* 1163); J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest* (London, 1911), 511.
52. *The Book of Fees*, 146, says Walter had it from Henry II and *The Red Book of the Exchequer* (ed. H. Hall, 3 vols., Rolls Series, 1896), 277, has him holding it from the king by service of one knight's fee in or after 1166.
53. *PR 2 Richard I*, 126.
54. Turvey, *The Lord Rhys*, 77, 81-2. On Rhys's attitude towards, and use of, castles, see the same author's 'The Defences of Twelfth Century Deheubarth and the Castle Strategy of the Lord Rhys', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 144 (1995), 103-32.
55. *ByT*, 66-7.
56. R. W. Eyton, *Court, Household and Itinerary of King Henry II* (London, 1878), 267-8.
57. *Speculum Ecclesie* II, cap. XXXII in Gerald of Wales: *Opera* (ed. J. S. Brewer *et al.*, 8 vols., Rolls Series, 1861-91), iv, 100. English translation from H. E. Butler (ed.), *The Autobiography of Gerald of Wales* (London, 1937; repro. Woodbridge, 2005), 85-6, with amendments from J. Conway Davies, 'Giraldus Cambrensis 1146-1946', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 99 (1947), 101.
58. A. T. Arber-Cooke, *Pages from the History of Llandovery* (2 vols., Llandovery, 1975), i, 85.
59. T. R. Nash (*Collections for the History of Worcestershire* (2 vols., London, 178199), ii, 122) quotes the *Liber Albus* of the bishop of Worcester to the effect that Great Malvern had once had lands in Cantref Bychan and the parish

- church of Llandoverly (*Laugh Mayn*), 'together with a prebend in the said church'.
60. J. Conway Davies (ed. & trans.), *The Welsh Assize Roll 1277-84* (Cardiff, 1940), 269.
 61. *AC*, 58, note 7 (MS. C) . . . *Hoelus filius Resi . . . castrum de Lanamdeuery destruxit . . .*
 62. *ByT*, 75; *CW*, 30.
 63. *ByT*, 81.
 64. *AC*, 62.
 65. *CW*, 32.
 66. *AC*, 63.
 67. *ChR* 1327-41, 383, no. 4; English translation in G. Roberts, 'Documents and Charters Connected with Strata Florida Abbey', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (1848), 202-3.
 68. *ByT*, 82; *CW*, 32.
 69. K. L. Maund, *Handlist of the Acts of the Native Welsh Rulers 1132-1283* (Cardiff, 1996), no. 190.
 70. *ByT*, 82; *AC*, 66 (*s.a.* 1205, but the event took place in 1206, the year in which king John went on his first expedition to Poitou).
 71. *ByT*, 83; *RBH*, 188; *AC*, 66; also E. Phillimore, "'Llwch' in Welsh Place-Names", in H. Owen (ed.), *The Description of Pembrokeshire* (4 vols; in 3, Cymmrodorion Record Series, 1897-1936), iv, 416.
 72. *ByT*, 83; *CW*, 33 (*s.a.* 1208).
 73. *RBH*, 189.
 74. J. Beverley Smith, 'Magna Carta and the Charters of the Welsh Princes', *English Historical Review*, 99 (1984), 344-362, appendix.
 75. *The Antient Kalendars and Inventories of the Treasury of His Majesty's Exchequer* (ed. Sir Francis Palgrave, 3 vols., Record Commission, 1836), i, 113; no. 4; calendared in Maund, *Handlist of the Acts of the Native Welsh Rulers*, no. 25. It is notable that Mallaen was now regarded as an appurtenance of Llandoverly.
 76. Smith, 'Magna Carta and the Charters of the Welsh Princes', 351.
 77. *ByT*, 87.
 78. *RBH*, 199.
 79. *ByT*, 87-8; *AC*, 69.
 80. *ByT*, 90; *RBH*, 203.
 81. *ByT*, 91.
 82. *Ib.*, 92; *CW*, 36.
 83. *Episcopal Acts*, no. D455.
 84. Arber-Cooke, *Pages from the History of Llandoverly*, i, 91.
 85. J. B. Smith, 'The Chronica de Wallia and the Dynasty of Dinefwr: a textual and historical study', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 20 (1962-4), 265.
 86. *ByT*, 101. Maredudd was Rhys Gryg's son by Maud, daughter of Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester and Hertford. Rhys Mechyll was his son by an earlier wife: Smith, 'The Chronica de Wallia . . .', 266, note 4.
 87. Davies, *Welsh Assize Roll*, 268.
 88. *ByT*, 108.
 89. *PatR* 1232-47, 485.
 90. Davies, *Welsh Assize Roll*, 16.
 91. *Episcopal Acts*, no. D576; J. G. Edwards (ed.), *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence Concerning Wales* (Cardiff, 1935), 52.
 92. *Episcopal Acts*, no. D582.
 93. *CLR* 1247-51, 566.
 94. *AC*, 91.
 95. *ByT*, 110-11.
 96. *ChR* 1226-57, 475; J. G. Evans (ed.), *Littere Wallie* (Cardiff, 1940), no. 287.
 97. *AC*, 96; Lloyd, *History of Wales*, 724.
 98. *ByT*, 115.
 99. *Ib.*, 116.
 100. Edwards (ed.), *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence Concerning Wales*, 86-7, 162-3.
 101. These 'grievances' (*gravamina*) were offered to Rhys ('Rhys Vychan of Ystrad Towy') by the king's agents and were put before the archbishop of Canterbury in the form of a letter. This was on the archbishop's brief visit to Wales in November 1282: *Registrum Epistolarum Fratris Johannis Peckham, Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis* (ed. C. T. Martin, 3 vols., Rolls Series, 1882-5), no. 345; Arber-Cooke, *Pages from the History of Llandoverly*, i, 97.
 102. *PatR* 1272-81, 212.
 103. *Ibid.*, 278.
 104. *ByT*, 118-9; *PatR* 1272-81, 229.
 105. *CWR*, 186.
 106. *Ibid.*, 177. The plea is set out in detail in Davies, *Welsh Assize Roll*, 261-339 *passim*, but is handily summarised in the Introduction at pp. 162-73.
 107. *AC*, 106; Edwards (ed.), *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence Concerning Wales*, 44. Arber-Cooke, *Pages from the History of Llandoverly*, i, 100, says that Rhys Wyndod was briefly restored to the castle, but there is no evidence for this.
 108. *CWR*, 213-4.
 109. *Ibid.*, 222.
 110. *Ibid.*, 235.
 111. *Ibid.*, 283.
 112. A. H. Thompson, 'Notes on Colleges of Secular Canons in England', *Archaeological Journal*, 74 (1917), 183-4.
 113. *AC*, 109.
 114. *CWR*, 321.
 115. W. Rees, *South Wales and the March 1284-1415* (Oxford, 1924), 22.
 116. *Ibid.*, 76.
 117. *Ipm*, iii, no. 544; G. Evans, 'The Story of the Ancient Churches of Llandoverly', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1911-12) (1913), 153.
 118. *Ipm*, vi, no. 56.