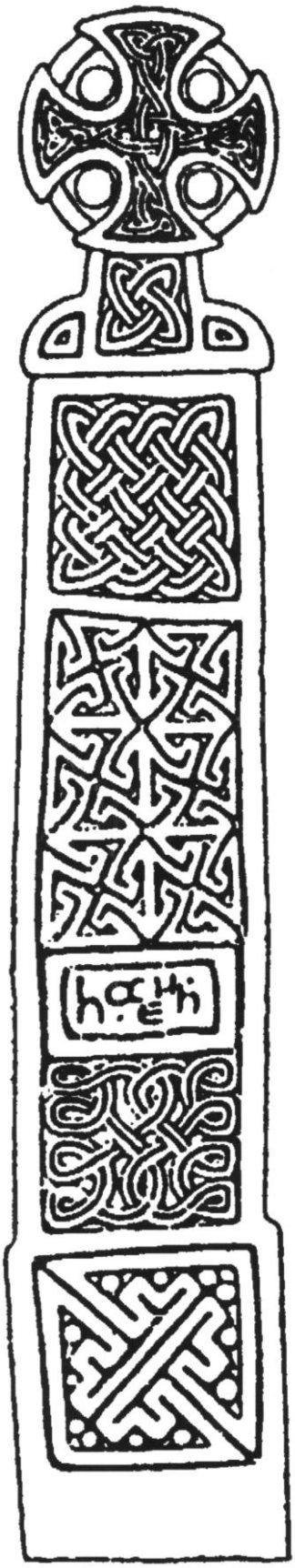

Welsh Battlefields Project Pilot Study Historical Research

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BORDER ARCHAEOLOGY

Head Office
PO Box 36
Leominster
Herefordshire
HR6 0YQ
E-mail: neil@borderarchaeology.com

Technical Services
Chapel Walk
Burgess Street
Leominster
Herefordshire
HR6 8DE
Tel: 01568 610101
Tel/Fax: 01568 616900
E-mail: borderarch@btconnect.com

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CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the results of the programme of detailed documentary and historical research undertaken by Border Archaeology on behalf of Cadw (Welsh Historic Monuments) for the *Welsh Battlefields Project Pilot Study*.

A total of 14 individual battle sites were investigated as part of this pilot study, consisting of the following:

Mynydd Carn (1081)
Crug Mawr (1136)
Maes Gwenllian (1136)
Coleshill (1157)
Painscastle (1198)
Pilleth (1402)
Campston Hill (1404)
Craig-y-dorth (1404)
Grosmont (1405)
Pwll Melyn (1405)
Twthill (1461)
St Fagan's (1648)
Carregwastad Point (1797)
Newport Rising (1839)

This report, which is issued in compliance with the contract specification issued by Cadw, contains a comprehensive gazetteer detailing the evidence for each individual battle site, derived from documentary, cartographic and pictorial sources, both published and unpublished, with an assessment of the significance of each individual battle within its historical context.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background and Aims

Border Archaeology were commissioned by Cadw (Welsh Historic Monuments), to undertake a programme of detailed documentary and historical research for the *Welsh Battlefields Project Pilot Study*, in accordance with a brief issued on June 3rd, 2009. The aim of the programme of work was to undertake detailed documentary and historical research on 14 individual battle sites shortlisted for OS depiction as part of the *Welsh Battlefields Project Pilot Study*.

The 14 battle sites selected for detailed study are listed below:

Mynydd Carn (1081)
Crug Mawr (1136)
Maes Gwenllian (1136)
Coleshill (1157)
Painscastle (1198)
Pilleth (1402)
Campston Hill, (1404)
Craig-y-dorth (1404)
Grosmont (1405)
Pwll Melyn (1405)
Twthill (1461)
St Fagan's (1648)
Carregwastad Point (1797)
Newport Rising (1839)

The objectives of this programme of work were as follows:

1/ To examine primary and secondary documentary sources (in English, Welsh, Latin or other languages) relating to each individual battle site, including written or visual accounts of the course of the conflicts, description of the locations and information about the nature of the forces and the arms involved.

2/ To collate information on each individual battle and the historic terrain and to produce an assessment of the historical significance of each site.

3/ To provide a report describing the work undertaken, listing the evidence for each battle site in the form of a gazetteer with accompanying maps and other illustrations where appropriate.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research undertaken for the Battlefields Survey consisted of the following elements:

3.1 Assessment of archaeological databases

The National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW) held by the RCAHMW at Aberystwyth and the Regional Sites and Monuments Records maintained by the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust, the Dyfed Archaeological Trust, the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust and the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust were consulted and relevant archaeological and historical information obtained on each individual battle site.

3.2 Assessment of primary documentary sources

Relevant published and unpublished primary documentation relating to each battle site was consulted at the National Library of Wales, the National Archives, the British Library and specific county record offices, including chronicle sources, published and unpublished records of government (including accounts of military expenditure), manorial accounts and surveys, quarter sessions records, property deeds and personal correspondence.

3.3 Assessment of cartographic and other pictorial evidence

All relevant cartographic evidence (primarily estate maps, tithe maps and early editions of the Ordnance Survey) and other illustrative material were obtained, in order to identify any place-name/topographical evidence relating to each individual battle site. Aerial photographic sources held by the National Monuments Record and the Regional Sites and Monuments Record were also consulted, including RAF 1940s vertical photography, OS oblique aerial photography (1970s) and records of recent aerial reconnaissance undertaken by the RCAHMW and the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

3.4 Assessment of secondary sources

Relevant secondary literature relating to each battle site was obtained from the National Monuments Record, the Regional Sites and Monuments Records, the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, the National Archives at Kew, the British Library and specific county record offices. Relevant national academic journals such as *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, *Studia Celtica* (Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies) and *Welsh History Review* were consulted, in addition to local historical journals including *Ceredigion*, *Morgannwg*, *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* and the *Journal of the Flintshire Historical Society*.

4. PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

4.1 Stephen Priestley (Team Leader)

Stephen Priestley MA studied history at Cambridge before working as a research assistant for Historic Royal Palaces at the Tower of London (1995-6), undertaking detailed documentary research on the history of the Tower, and its environs, transcribing and translating a broad range of documents ranging in date from the late 11th-18th centuries and compiling detailed gazetteers and assessments based on this research.

Stephen subsequently worked as a researcher for English Heritage on the Windsor Castle Fire Evaluation Project for three years (1998-2000), transcribing and translating a substantial collection of primary documents (chiefly in Latin and Old French) relating to building works at Windsor Castle, ranging in date from the late 11th-17th centuries and producing detailed gazetteers of source materials and reports based on the evidence collected

From 2000 to 2003, he worked as a research consultant for CADW (Welsh Historic Monuments) undertaking extensive documentary research on the history of various historic properties in Wales, including several major castles in Monmouthshire - specifically Chepstow, Caerleon, Llangibby, Raglan and Usk, as well as the castles of Kidwelly and Laugharne (Carmarthenshire) and also undertook a research project for British Waterways on the history of Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and the Shropshire Union Canal.

Since October 2003, he has worked as Research Manager for Border Archaeology, researching and writing desk-based assessments, multi-stage assessments and historic landscape assessments for various projects in Wales and the Marches, including a comprehensive desk-based study undertaken as part of an archaeological and historic landscape assessment of the proposed route of the Claerwen Augmentation Scheme Pipeline, which involved the collection and analysis of extensive primary and secondary source material relating to the archaeological and historical landscape resource within the study area.

4.2 Ross Shurety (Research Assistant)

Ross Shurety BA studied Anglo Saxon, Norse and Celtic studies at Cambridge; he has previously undertaken research for Border Archaeology on several desk-based assessments and has also worked on the LANDMAP Level 3 historic landscape assessment project recently carried out by Border Archaeology on behalf of the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW). As researcher, he reports to Stephen Priestley.

4.3 George Children (Editor)

George Children MA MIfA studied archaeology and anthropology at Cambridge and has an extensive record of published academic work relating to the archaeology of Wales and

the Marches. Since 2003, he has been employed by Border Archaeology as General Manager and exercises overall technical responsibility for field projects (including excavations, watching briefs and historic landscape assessments), for the drafting of project designs, post-excavation analysis and review documents and the writing and editing of archaeological reports and articles for inclusion in relevant specialist journals.

5. GAZETTEER

5.1 Mynydd Carn (1081)

5.1.1 Site of Battle

The site of the battlefield of Mynydd Carn remains undetermined; the available documentary evidence and modern scholarly opinion places the location of the battle somewhere in northern Pembrokeshire within the *commote* of Nevern (possibly in the vicinity of the range of hills between the north Pembrokeshire coast and the Afon Gwaun represented by Mynydd Carningli, Mynydd Llanllawer and Mynydd Dinas), while a completely different location was suggested by the RCAHMW Pembrokeshire Inventory in the vicinity of at North Hill Farm SW of Templeton (now occupied by the disused airfield of RAF Templeton).

5.1.2 Summary

Historical Context of Battle

The battle of Mynydd Carn has been described by the author of the RCAHMW Pembrokeshire Inventory as 'unquestionably the most momentous contest waged on Welsh ground in historic times'; while this assessment may be somewhat exaggerated, it nevertheless represented a decisive event in the dynastic and political history of the Principality and in particular the kingdoms of Gwynedd and Deheubarth. [1]

On the one hand, it represented the culmination of a protracted struggle by the exiled heirs of Iago, Cynan ap Iago and his son Gruffudd ap Cynan to regain control of Gwynedd which had continued since the death of Iago in 1039. On the other, it resulted in the establishment of Rhys ap Tewdwr of Deheubarth as the dominant Welsh lord in South Wales, at the expense of his chief rival Caradog ap Gruffudd, lord of Gwent and Morgannwg.

5.1.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

No information has been found to establish the exact date of the battle, however the evidence of an elegy to Trahaearn ap Caradog reputedly composed by the Welsh bard Meilyr Brydydd (in the form of a prophecy made after the event) relates how 'on Thursday in three weeks time, towards night they (Trahaearn and his ally Meilyr ap

[1] RCAHMW, *Inventory of Ancient and Historical Monuments in Pembrokeshire* (London 1925), xliii-xlvi, 251-2 (No. 745). For further discussion of the significance of the battle see J.E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the earliest times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 384.

Rhiwallon of Powys) will be killed', which would appear to place the battle on a Thursday although no further indication is given of the date of the battle.[2]

The chronicle sources which mention the battle, namely the 'B' and 'C' texts of the *Annales Cambriae* and the various redactions of the Welsh chronicle *Brut y Tywysogion* (namely the Peniarth MS 20, Red Book of Hergest and Brenhinedd y Saeson versions) make no explicit reference the precise date of the engagement, although they all appear to agree in placing the battle of Mynydd Carn before William I's 'pilgrimage' to St David's and meeting with Rhys ap Tewdwr, which occurred in the same year.[3]

The dating of William I's visit to Wales in 1081 is difficult to establish with certainty; based on the chronicle and charter evidence he is known to have held his court at Gloucester in Christmas 1080 and appears to have reached London by February 1081. It is possible that he could have made a rapid visit to St David's during that period, however it is considerably more likely that his expedition to Wales occurred after holding his Whitsun court at Winchester (May 23rd) and before the autumn of 1081, when charter evidence shows William had already arrived in Normandy.[4] Assuming the latter to be the more credible dating of William I's expedition to Wales, this would suggest that the battle of Mynydd Carn probably occurred at some time between January and October 1081, probably not much later than June of that year

Information concerning the actions of the participants prior to the battle of Mynydd Carn is almost entirely derived from a single source, the *Vita Griffini filii Conani* (*Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*) which was originally thought only to survive in the form of a 13th century Welsh translation (*Historia Gruffudd vab Kenan*) although an early 14th century manuscript (NLW Peniarth MS 434E) which appears essentially to be a slightly abbreviated copy of the original Latin text of the *Vita* has recently been identified.[5] The origins of the *Vita* remain uncertain although the general scholarly consensus appears to be that the text was originally compiled in the mid to late 12th century by a cleric

[2] For the text of the poem (in modern Welsh orthography) with translation and detailed commentary see N. Jones 'The Mynydd Carn Prophecy', *Cambrian Medieval Studies* Vol. 36,

[3] *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952), 17; *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973). 30-1; *Brenhinedd y Saeson*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1971); *Annales Cambriae*, ed. J. Williams ab Ithel (London 1860) 27-8. A diplomatic edition of the text of the 'B' & 'C' versions of the *Annales* relating to Mynydd Carn was reproduced in J.E. Lloyd, 'Wales and the Coming of the Normans', *Y Cymmrodor* Vol. 13 (1899-1900), 176-7. For a translation of the *Annales* with useful notes see P.M. Remfry, *Annales Cambriae: A Translation of Harleian MS 3859, PRO E 164/1, Cottonian Domitian A.1 Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3514 and MS Exchequer DB Neath PRO E164/1*(Shrewsbury 2007).

[4] See D.Bates, *Regesta Regum Anglo Normannorum: The Acta of William I* (Oxford 1998), 81 for a detailed discussion of William I's itinerary in 1081.

[5] For a critical edition of the Latin text of the Vita in NLW Peniarth MS 434E with commentary see P.Russell, *Vita Griffini filii Conani* (Cardiff 2006). The most recent critical edition of the Welsh translation of the Vita is D. Simon Evans (ed.), *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* (Cardiff 1977); for the English translation of the Welsh text with commentary see D. Simon Evans (ed. & trans.), *A Medieval Prince of Wales – The Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Felinfach 1990).

employed at the court of the princes of Gwynedd, possibly at the behest of Owain Gwynedd, son of Gruffudd ap Cynan (d.1170).[6]

The testimony of the *Vita* must be treated with caution; it is a late source, compiled nearly a century after the battle took place, and as R. Babcock points out, it is clearly 'a work of propaganda, intended to glorify Gruffudd, his son Owain and the realm of Gwynedd'.[7] Nevertheless, while the *Vita* itself does present certain problems in interpretation, it is possible to establish the basic narrative of the battle, the events leading up to it and its aftermath.

The *Vita* first describes Gruffudd ap Cynan's exile in Ireland, having 'for some years spent time at the court of King Diarmait and other nobles'; 'King Diarmait' may be identifiable with Diarmait ua Briain, son of Toirdelbach ua Briain King of Munster (d.1086). The preparations for Gruffudd's expedition to Wales are then described; Gruffudd 'drew up a fleet in the port of Porthlarg (Waterford) with the equipment necessary for a voyage', which fleet he had 'accepted as a gift from the King' (either Toirdelbach or his son Diarmait) and was 'laden with Irishmen and Britons'. From this and later statements in the *Vita* it would appear that the composition of Gruffudd's force consisted of Welsh, Irish and Scandinavians, which is not surprising in view of his strong Hiberno-Norse connections, his mother being Ragnhild daughter of Olaf of Dublin.[8]

The *Vita* then describes Gruffudd's sea journey to Wales, landing 'at the port of Porth Clais', an ancient harbour located approximately 2km SW of the town and bishopric seat of St David's. According to the *Vita*, Gruffudd was received at Porthclais by Rhys ap Tewdwr prince of Deheubarth, the bishop of St David's (Sulien) and 'the scholars and the whole choir of St David's, and all the clerics of St David's'. At this meeting, according to the *Vita*, Rhys ap Tewdwr, who had apparently been dispossessed of his kingdom and forced into exile in St David's by Caradog and Trahearne, appealed for help from Gruffudd in overcoming his enemies and regaining his inheritance, offering Gruffudd half his kingdom and his homage, an agreement which was apparently ratified in the cathedral church of St David.

This entire account of Gruffudd and Rhys ap Tewdwr's meeting at Porth Clais and their subsequent agreement is highly suspect. Firstly it appears from the *Vita* that Gruffudd's arrival at Porthclais and Rhys ap Tewdwr's presence at St David's were purely coincidental, whereas surely it is more probable that Gruffudd and his fleet were actually summoned by Rhys, a fact which is likely to have been omitted by the author of the *Vita* whose aim was (naturally) to magnify Gruffudd's role in the battle.[9] Indeed, the

[6] For the most recent discussion of the origins of the *Vita*, see the introduction to P. Russell, Vita Griffini filii Conani: *The Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Cardiff 2006) and N.A. Jones, 'The Mynydd Carn Prophecy', *Cambrian Medieval Studies* Vol. 36, 77.

[7] R.S. Babcock, 'Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of Deheubarth', *Anglo Norman Studies*, 16 (1993) 21-35 (esp. p. 26)

[8] For analysis of Gruffudd ap Cynan's strong Hiberno-Norse connections, see D. Wyatt, 'Gruffudd ap Cynan and the Hiberno-Norse world', *Welsh History Review*, Vol. 19 no. 4 (1999), 595-617 and R.S. Babcock, 'The Irish Sea Province and the accession of Henry I', *Haskins Society Journal*, Vol. 17 (2006), 39-62

[9] For an important discussion of the account of Rhys and Gruffudd ap Cynan's meeting at St David's see 'The Mynydd Carn Prophecy', *Cambrian Medieval Studies* Vol. 36, 76-7, where it is suggested that this

possibility has been suggested that Gruffudd's forces actually landed in a completely different location, at Newport (Trefdraeth) on the Nyfer estuary, based on a fragment of a Welsh poem traditionally presumed to be an elegy to Trahaearne ap Caradog, which mentions 'the intractable people (who) have not yet come over the sea to Nanhyfer (Nevern)'.[10]

The testimony of the Peniarth MS. 20 and RBH texts of the Brut appears to support the interpretation of Gruffudd playing a supporting role (albeit an important one) to Rhys ap Tewdwr, describing how 'after him (ie. Rhys) came Gruffudd, grandson of Iago together with Irish to help him'.[11] Moreover, while there is good reason to believe that Rhys ap Tewdwr's position was extremely weak and under imminent threat from the forces of Caradog ap Gruffudd and Trahaearn ap Caradog which appear to have penetrated into Dyfed at this point, it appears it appears unlikely that Gruffudd would have been powerful enough, at this point, to compel Rhys ap Tewdwr to concede half his kingdom and recognize his overlordship.[12]

Whatever the case, it would appear that the combined forces of Rhys ap Tewdwr and Gruffudd ap Cynan set out from St David's (or possibly Newport) soon after cementing their alliance, to seek battle with the armies of Trahaearn ap Caradog and Caradog ap Gruffudd. Information as to the movements of Trahaearn and Caradog before the battle is limited and dependent on the testimony of the *Vita*, which appears to indicate that their combined forces had already entered the kingdom of Deheubarth, presumably with the intention of gaining a decisive victory over Rhys and his allies.

The Battle and its Aftermath

The principal source for the details of the engagement remains the Latin and Welsh texts of the *Vita Griffini Filii Conani*, supplemented by important references to the battle in two early Welsh poems, an elegy to Trahaearn ap Caradog (composed in the form of a prophecy after the event) and an elegy to Gruffudd ap Cynan, both apparently composed by the Welsh bard Meilyr Brydydd (although his authorship of the former poem has been disputed) and by the brief entries concerning the battle in the *Annales Cambriae* and the various texts of the *Brut y Tywysogion*. None of the English chronicles appear to make reference to the battle while the Irish annalistic sources are similarly silent.

The account of the battle given in the Latin text *Vita* is remarkably vivid and worth quoting at length, those points where the Welsh translation differs have been indicated by square brackets.[13]

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meeting could well have been fabricated by the author, modelled on William I's meeting with Rhys at St David's which occurred later in 1081

[10] N.A. Jones, 'The Mynydd Carn Prophecy', *Cambrian Medieval Studies* Vol. 36, 77

[11] *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952), 17; *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973), 30-1

[12] Babcock, 'Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of Deheubarth', *Anglo Norman Studies*, 16 (1993); D. Moore, Gruffudd ap Cynan and the medieval Welsh polity' in *Gruffudd ap Cynan: a collaborative biography*, ed. K.L. Maund (Woodbridge, 1996), 47

[13] P.Russell (ed. & trans.), *Vita Griffini filii Conan: The Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Cardiff 2006) 68-71. D. Simon Evans (ed. & trans.), *A Medieval Prince of Wales – The Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Felinfach 1990), 67-8. The Latin text of the *Vita* is reproduced in Appendix 1

'After a long journey [*a long day's journey*] near evening they reached the mountains [*mountain*] where the above-mentioned kings had placed their camp. Then Rhys said to Gruffudd, 'Lord let us put off the battle until tomorrow as it is now getting dark'. 'Put it off' replied Gruffudd for as long as you like, but I shall attack with the force I have ready'. And he did so, just as he said. The kings were overcome with great terror and were stunned as they saw the fierce forces of Gruffudd, the dense columns of soldiers, the gleaming standards, the Danes armed with two headed axes and the Irish carrying iron-tipped spears [*the Irish with their lances and sharp edged iron balls* (ie. war flails) *and the men of Gwynedd armed with spears and shields*]. Gruffudd himself was the first to rush into battle, just like a giant or a lion laying low enemies with every blow of his sword, furiously calling forward his soldiers against the enemy and urging them not to turn their backs on the enemy. It was a savage and fierce battle in which not even a son spared his father. The shouting of the soldiers rose to the heavens; the earth seemed to resound with the thunder of horses and infantry; violent cries were heard far and wide and the crashing of weapons was terrible to hear. So great a slaughter occurred, while the army of Gruffudd was defeating his enemy, that rivers of sweat and blood was thought to have flowed down. In the end Trahaearn was pierced through spilling his entrails, lying face down on the ground and seemed as if disarmed he was eating the grass with his living teeth. Gwcharki the Irishman had preserved his body in salt like pork being turned into bacon; in this place there fell of his household twenty-five horsemen as if accompanying him and others in the front rank, many thousands in addition were killed and of the remainder soon turned and plunged in headlong flight.'

Clearly, while the Latin and Welsh texts of the *Vita* agree for the most part, they differ on a number of significant details, suggesting that the original text from which the Welsh translation was made contained certain information omitted from the Latin copy made in the early 14th century or that these details were added by the compiler of the Welsh translation from another source. The most significant of these details can be summarised thus:

1/ The Welsh translation specifically describes Gruffudd and Rhys's forces having reached the enemy position 'after a long day's journey' whereas the Latin text simply states that they reached it 'after a long journey'.

2/ The camp of Trahaearn, Caradog and their allies is placed by the Latin text of the Vita in 'mountains' (*montes*) whereas the Welsh translation places it on a mountain.

3/ The Welsh translation adds further details about Gruffudd's army (in particular the Irish with their lances and war-flails and reference to the men of Gwynedd 'with spears and shields') which do not appear in the Latin text of the *Vita*.

While much of this account was obviously written to enhance the importance of the role of Gruffudd and his troops and a certain amount of literary embellishment on the compiler's part must be allowed for, the vivid description of the battle suggests that it may well reflect genuine tradition, even though it may not be based on direct first hand testimony from the participants. Moreover the reference to the battle having occurred in the evening is corroborated by an independent source, the elegy to Trahaearn ap Caradog, which specifically mentions that Trahaearn and his allies would be killed 'towards

night'.[14] The success of Gruffudd and Rhys, who appear to have been facing a numerically superior force, may well be attributed therefore to the decision to mount a surprise attack on the enemy camp in the evening.

The accounts of the subsequent rout of the defeated forces of Trahaearn and Caradog in the Latin and Welsh texts of the Vita, while broadly in agreement, again differ in certain key details further indicating that the Welsh translator utilised a fuller text or incorporated details derived from another source. The account contained in the Latin text of the *Vita* is presented below with variant readings from the Welsh translation inserted in square brackets.[15]

'Gruffudd, as was his usual habit in victory, pursued them through forests, valleys, marshes and mountains throughout the night by the light of the moon [*and throughout the following day*] so that out of such a great number scarcely one of them returned to his own country. After this terrible battle so bravely fought by Gruffudd, Rhys withdrew from the protection and company of one so illustrious and was afterwards not seen by him [*After the battle was over, Rhys feared treachery on the part of Gruffudd. He withdrew secretly at dusk from the presence of Gruffudd and his men and he did not appear to any of them from then on*]. Gruffudd upset by his treachery decided to ravage his land, and that is also what happened. The mountains where this battle was fought are called the mountains of Carn, because a huge pile of stones was heaped up there under which they believe that treasure had once been buried [*The hill, moreover on which the battle took place the people of the country call 'Mynydd Carn', that is to say the 'Mountain of the Cairn', for a huge cairn of stones is there under which was buried a hero in olden times*]'.

Three important differences between the Latin and Welsh texts may be noted:

1/Gruffudd's pursuit of the defeated armies is described in the Latin text as taking place 'throughout the night' whereas the Welsh translation adds that it continued throughout the following day.

2/Rhys ap Tewdwr is specifically stated by the Welsh translation to have withdrawn his troops 'at dusk' after the battle was over, suspecting treachery on Gruffudd's part, though it is unclear whether this was on the actual day of the battle (which would suggest that the battle was of short duration) or at dusk on the following day.

3/The description of the site of the battle in the Latin and Welsh texts differs substantively; the Latin text describing the location as 'the mountains of Carn' where a huge pile of stones marked the site of hidden treasure whereas the Welsh text clearly locates the battlefield at 'The Mountain of the Cairn' (*Menyd Carn*) describing it as an ancient burial site.

[14] N.A. Jones, 'The Mynydd Carn Prophecy', *Cambrian Medieval Studies*, Vol. 36, 77

[15] See Appendix I for full transcription of the Latin text of the *Vita* relating to the battle, reproduced from P. Russell (ed.) *Vita Griffini filii Conani* (Cardiff 2006) 68-71

Allowing for the often significant differences in detail between the Latin and Welsh versions of the *Vita*, and its obvious bias in favour of its main protagonist, Gruffudd ap Cynan, it is possible to reconstruct in broad terms the principal events of the battle. It would appear that the forces of Gruffudd and Rhys reached the enemy camp towards evening, after what the Welsh translation describes as a 'long day's journey' from St David's. The forces of Trahaearn ap Caradog and his allies, which are implied by the *Vita* as being numerically superior to the combined armies of Gruffudd and Rhys, were encamped at what appears to have been a strong defensive position on a hilltop site which appears to have been marked by a large cairn.

Gruffudd and Rhys (if the Vita can be trusted, at Gruffudd's insistence) mounted an attack on the enemy camp in the evening, presumably taking Trahaearn and his allies by surprise. The elegy to Trahaearn appears to confirm the account of the Vita that the attack took place in the evening. After a fierce engagement, Trahaearn and his household troop were killed (possibly together with other leaders 'in the first rank' such as Caradog and Meilyr) resulting in a general rout. The particular attention given in the *Vita* to the death of Trahaearn and his 'equites' suggests that this could have been the decisive turning point of the battle.

The battle itself may have only lasted a few hours, ending towards nightfall with the death of Trahaearn, followed by a prolonged rout and slaughter of the defeated armies (apparently led by Gruffudd) that appears to have continued throughout the night and possibly into the following day. Rhys ap Tewdwr appears to have withdrawn his forces shortly after the battle ended, apparently towards nightfall although it is not entirely clear whether this was on the night of the battle or the following day.

Troops and Casualties

Information concerning the composition of the respective armies is largely derived from the Latin and Welsh texts of the *Vita* (which differ in critical points of detail), supplemented by references in the elegy to Trahaearn ap Caradog. The *Vita* provides a detailed description of Gruffudd's contingent, describing it as consisting of 'Danes, Irish and other allies to the number of one hundred and sixty', the column being headed by one Cynddelw son of Conws of Anglesey. While the precise total of Gruffudd's forces given in the Vita must be treated with some suspicion, it does not appear to be an overly exaggerated estimate. Later in the narrative, the *Vita* describes 'the fierce forces of Gruffudd, the dense columns of soldiers, the gleaming standards, the Danes armed with two handed axes and the Irish carrying iron tipped spears (or lances)'. The Welsh translation of the *Vita* inserts further details of Gruffudd's forces at this point, also mentioning the Irish carrying sharp edged iron balls (probably identifiable with war-flails) and 'the men of Gwynedd armed with spears and shields'[16]. Little information is provided on the size and composition of Rhys ap Tewdwr's forces.

The size and composition of the armies of Trahearn, Caradog and their allies is poorly recorded, the *Vita* implies that they were probably superior in numbers to the forces of

[16] D. Simon Evans (ed. & trans.), *A Medieval Prince of Wales – The Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Felinfach 1990), 67 ('ar guydyl gaflachauc ac eu peleu haernaul kyllelauc, ar gwyndyt gleiuyauc tareanauc')

Rhys and Gruffudd. The Latin text of the *Vita* mentions that the army of Caradog ap Gruffudd included the men of Upper and Lower Gwent, the inhabitants of Morgannwg, together with the Normans', whereas the Welsh version specifically describes the Norman contingent as consisting of 'arbalisters' (crossbowmen). It is also worth noting that the Latin text of the *Vita* makes no mention of the forces from Powys led by Meilyr son of Rhiwallon in support of Trahearn and Caradog's cause, although they are specifically referred to in the Welsh version.[17]

The *Vita* provides one important detail concerning Trahaearn's forces, referring to twenty-five '*equites*' of the household (*familia*) of Trahaearn who fell with him during the battle. The precise meaning of '*equites'* in this context is unclear, it could refer literally to horsemen, perhaps suggesting that Trahaearn and his closest followers were mounted during the battle, or it could be translated as 'knights', meaning (in a general sense) household retainers who may have fought on foot or horseback.[18]

The account of the enemy casualties given in the Vita must, as with most medieval literary sources, be regarded with some scepticism; the reference to 'many thousands' being killed (*multa praeterea millia interficiuntur*) is almost certainly an exaggeration. However the account of the fall of Trahaearn and his household troop, along with others in the front rank (which may have included other leaders such as Caradog ap Gruffudd and Meilyr ap Rhiwallon) contains details suggesting it was derived from authentic tradition concerning the battle. The deaths of Trahaearn and Meilyr ap Rhiwallon at Mynydd Carn are recorded in the elegies to Trahaearn and Gruffudd ap Cynan while Caradog ap Gruffudd's death only appears in the 'B' and 'C' text of the *Annales Cambriae* and the *Brut y Tywysogion*.[19]

5.1.4 Assessment

Battle Location

The location of the battle remains undetermined, although all the available documentary sources appear to agree that the battlefield was located on a hilltop/mountain site marked by a prominent cairn. The Latin and Welsh texts of the *Vita Griffini filii Conani* provide slightly differing accounts of the location of the battlefield, the former stating that 'the *mountains* where this battle was fought are called the **mountains of Carn**, because a huge pile of stones was heaped up there under which they believe that treasure had once been buried', whereas the Welsh text specifically refers to the site as 'Mynydd Carn (*Menyd Carn*) that is to say the 'Mountain of the Cairn', for a huge cairn of stones is there under which was buried a hero in olden times'.[20]

[17] D. Simon Evans (ed. & trans.), *A Medieval Prince of Wales – The Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Felinfach, 1990), 67 ('albryswyr nordmannyeit')
[18] For a discussion of the role of the household troop (*teulu*) with reference to the battle of Mynydd Carn see S. Davies, *Welsh Military Institutions 633-1283* (Cardiff 2004), 38
[19] See see P.M. Remfry, *Annales Cambriae: A Translation of Harleian MS 3859, PRO E 164/1, Cottonian Domitian A.1 Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3514 and MS Exchequer DB Neath PRO E164/1*(Shrewsbury 2007), 70
[20] P. Russell (ed.) *Vita Griffini filii Conani* (Cardiff 2006) 70-1; D. Simon Evans (ed. & trans.), *A Medieval Prince of Wales – The Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Felinfach 1990), 68

It is worth noting that all the other sources relating to the battle, namely the elegy to Trahearn ap Caradog, the 'B' and 'C' texts of the *Annales Cambriae* and the texts of the *Brut y Tywysogion* refer to a singular 'Mynydd Carn'. Meilyr Brydydd's elegy to Gruffudd ap Cynan, composed shortly after the latter's death in 1137, provides an alternative place name for the battlefield, describing it as 'Carn Fynydd' although again it clearly indicates that the battle site was associated with a cairn.[21]

Precisely where this 'Mynydd Carn' was situated remains unclear, although several possible locations have been suggested. The statement in the Welsh text of the *Vita* that Gruffudd and Rhys reached the enemy camp near evening after 'a long day's journey' from St David's would appear to suggest a probable location somewhere in Pembrokeshire. Further possible evidence regarding the general location of the battle is contained in the elegy to Trahaearn ap Caradog, which contains the statement 'now they have come over again, to Nanhyver, wild men, Irish black devils'.[22] Nanhyver could refer either to the village of Nevern or the surrounding *commote* of Uwch Nyfer, comprising an extensive block of territory in Northern Pembrokeshire between the Afon Nyfer and Fishguard, forming part of the medieval *cantref* of Cemais.

Several locations within northern Pembrokeshire have been suggested although none can be positively identified as the site of the battlefield. A. Jones in his edition of the Welsh text of the Life of Gruffudd suggested a possible location at Mynydd Carn Ingli, a steep sided hill topped by rocky outcrops, prominently situated above the town of Newport to the N and the Gwaun Valley to the S.[23] Carn Ingli certainly has an abundance of prehistoric monuments, including several Bronze Age cairn sites, standing stones and the Iron Age hillfort of Carn Ffoi, although no place name evidence has been identified from the documentary sources, including the 1594 extent of Cemais and the 1844 Newport tithe apportionment which can be directly associated with the battle.

Another possible location, situated further to the W of Mynydd Carn Ingli but forming part of the same range of hills, was suggested by Jones and the Rev. A.W. Wade Evans to the SW of Garn Fawr, the highest point on Mynydd Llanllawer, stating that 'near by there are standing stones popularly reported to represent the site of a battle, the fugitives from which were driven over a spot called Craigynestra (which has not yet been identified) into the river Gwaun'.[24]

These standing stones were specifically identified by Wade-Evans with the alignment at Parc-y-Meirw (literally translated as 'The field of the dead') which are situated approximately 1km SW of Garn Fawr.[25] The etymology of 'Parc-y-Meirw' (which is marked on the Llanllawer tithe map and the OS 1st edition map of) certainly suggests

[21] See J.E. Caerwyn-Williams, 'Meilyr Bryddyd and Gruffudd ap Cynan' in K.L. Maund (ed.) *Gruffudd ap Cynan: A Collaborative Biography* (Woodbridge 1996), 180 ('Amug a'u dragon, udd Mon, meinddydd, Men yd las Trahaearn yng Ngharn Fynydd')
[22] N.A. Jones, 'The Mynydd Carn Prophecy', *Cambrian Medieval Studies* Vol. 36, 77. For translation of the elegy to Trahaearn see Appendix 2
[23] A. Jones (ed.), *Historia Gruffudd vab Kenan* (Manchester 1910), 171
[24] A. Jones (ed.), *Historia Gruffudd vab Kenan* (Manchester 1910), 171-2
[25].A.W. Wade Evans, 'Parochiale Wallicanum', *Y Cymmrodor*, Vol. 22 (1910), 22-125 (p. 57)

strong sepulchral associations although no other place name evidence has been identified from the Llanllawer tithe map that appears to refer to a battle. However, a description of the alignment at Parc-y-meirw was contributed by the antiquarian E.L. Barnwell in 1868, which mentions an ancient local tradition referring to ' an account of a desperate battle fought on this spot, among the pillar stones themselves'.[26]

A lengthy paper on 'The locality of the battle of Mynydd Carn' presented by Sir Evan Jones as his presidential address to the Cambrian Archaeological Association in 1922 made a case for the location of the battlefield on the plateau on the E side of Mynydd Llanllawer, to which Jones attributed the name 'Glyn-gath'.[27] While Jones's paper contains a useful discussion of the documentary evidence for the battle, his interpretation of the place name evidence may be challenged on several points.

In particular the claim that 'Glyn-gath' denotes the plateau extending E of Garn Fawr or that it refers to a battle site is questionable, as the etymology of the place name, literally translated as 'steep valley of the cat (*gath*)' appears to be simply describing the meandering corridor of lower-lying land between the steep slopes of Mynydd Llanllawer and Mynydd Dinas to the W and Mynydd Melyn to the E.[28] Moreover, Jones's interpretation of place names Llanychaer and Kilkiffeth, situated to the S of the Afon Gwaun, as being associated with the retreat of the defeated forces after the battle also appears to be suspect. The place name element '*caeth'* has been interpreted as being derived either from the Welsh term for 'captive' or a personal name such as 'Cathed'.[29]

While the three sites suggested by A. Jones, the Rev. Wade-Evans and E. Jones could all potentially meet the criteria for the battlefield as described in the Vita and the elegy to Trahaearn, all of which are located within the *commote* of Nevern, on hilltop sites with evidence of prehistoric funerary monuments in the immediate vicinity, no documentary evidence has been found which explicitly links these sites with the battle of Mynydd Carn. Nevertheless, all three sites would merit further investigation, in particular the locality of Parc-y-Meirw where the place name evidence and the evidence of local tradition appears to be strongest.

Another possible site of the battlefield was suggested by the RCAHMW Inventory for Pembrokeshire in a completely different location from those outlined above, situated in the vicinity of North Hill Farm, approximately 2km SW of Templeton, the site of which is now occupied by the now disused airfield of RAF Templeton.[30]

Approximately 100 yards NW of the farm was a low wide spreading mound representing the remains of a substantial, heavily disturbed round cairn of 'unusual dimensions',

[26] E.L. Barnwell, 'Alignments in Wales' *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, Vol. 23, 3rd Series (1868), 169-79 (esp. p.177)
[27] E.D. Jones, 'The Locality of the Battle of Mynydd Carn AD 1081', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* Vol. 77 pt. 2 (1922), 181-97
[28] For a detailed refutation of much of E.D. Jones's interpretation of the place name evidence see RCAHMW, *Inventory of Ancient and Historical Monuments in Pembrokeshire* (London 1925), xlv
[29] For discussion of the derivation of Llanychaer and Kilkiffeth see B.G. Charles, *The Place Names of Pembrokeshire* 2 vols (Aberystwyth 1992) I, 96-7
[30] RCAHMW, *Inventory of Ancient and Historical Monuments in Pembrokeshire* (London 1925), xliii-xlvi, 251-2 (No. 745)

situated in a field marked as 'Stone Leys' on the Narberth tithe map of 1840. In 1921, the remains of a large cinerary urn of probable Bronze Age date (described by the RCAHMW Inventory as 'one of the largest urns that is known to have been discovered in Wales') together with a number of smaller urns were found by the owner of the farm who was robbing the cairn site for stone. The cairn site appears to have been levelled following the construction of the RAF airfield in 1940, no apparent evidence of the cairn or any other associated features is visible on RAF vertical photographs of the area or on later OS oblique aerial photography.

This cairn, which was undoubtedly a large, prominently sited feature, appears to have given its name to the surrounding area, which formed a discrete, raised plateau on the boundary between the parishes of Begelly and Narberth, referred to in medieval and later post-medieval documents as Carn or Carn Mountain.[31] The evidence presented in the RCAHMW Inventory certainly demonstrates that this area was known as 'Carn' as early as the mid-14th century (the earliest reference occurring in an *inquisition post mortem* dated 1362) and it would perhaps fit more appropriately the description in the Latin text of the *montes Carn* which appears to refer to a district rather than a specific hill or mountain. It also would not particularly conflict with the statement in the Welsh text of the *Vita* that the battle site was located 'a long day's journey' from St David's. However, the proposed location for Mynydd Carn does conflict with the evidence of the elegy to Trahaerne, which appears to indicate a location for the battle site somewhere in northern Pembrokeshire within the *commote* of Nevern.

Other suggested locations for the site of the battle of Mynydd Carn which have now been largely discredited include Carno in Montgomeryshire (first suggested by David Powel in his 'Historie of Cambria' written in 1584) and another location somewhere in the vicinity of Troed-yr-aur in southern Ceredigion suggested in a poem composed by the 15th century Welsh bard Lewis Glyn Cothi.[32]

Discussion of Primary Sources

The battle of Mynydd Carn receives only scanty mention in the Welsh chronicle sources. Brief, somewhat garbled references to the battle occur in the 'B' and 'C' texts of the *Annales Cambriae*, both of which appear to have been compiled at the Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida in the mid to late 13th century, while the entries contained in the Peniarth MS. 20, Red Book of Hergest and Brenhinedd y Saeson texts of the *Brut y Tywysogion* appear to be derived from a similar source to the *Annales Cambriae*.

The chief source relating to the battle is the lengthy account given in the *Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, a biography of Gruffudd which appears originally to have been compiled in the mid to late 12th century by a cleric employed at the court of the princes of Gwynedd, possibly during the lifetime of Owain Gwynedd, son of Gruffudd ap Cynan (d.1170).[33]

[31] RCAHMW, *Inventory of Ancient and Historical Monuments in Pembrokeshire* (London 1925), xliii-xlv; B.G. Charles, *The Place Names of Pembrokeshire* 2 vols (Aberystwyth 1992), II, 472

[32] D. Powel, *Historie of Cambria* (1811 ed.), 85. For a discussion and rejection of the siting of the battle at Carno in Montgomeryshire, see J.E. Lloyd, *History of Wales* (London 1939) II, 384n

[33] For a critical edition of the Latin text of the Vita in NLW Peniarth MS 434E with commentary see P.Russell, *Vita Griffini filii Conani: The Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Cardiff 2006). The

The Life was formerly thought only to survive in the form of a 13th century Welsh translation (*Historia Gruffudd vab Kenan*) although an early 14th century copy of what appears to be a slightly abbreviated redaction of the original Latin text (*Vita Griffini filii Conani*), has recently been identified, which appears subsequently to have been annotated by a late 16th century scholar, Edward Thelwell to bring it into line with the Welsh text.[34]

Although the account of the battle given in the Latin and Welsh texts of the *Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* agree for the most part, they clearly differ on a number of significant details, which leads one to conclude that the original text from which the Welsh translation was made contained information omitted from the Latin copy made in the early 14th century or that these details were added by the compiler of the Welsh translation from another source. The *Vita* must be treated with considerable caution; it is a late source, compiled nearly a century after the battle took place, and is clearly composed in the form of a panegyric, intended to glorify Gruffudd's conduct and consequently omitting any details which might detract from this impression.[35]

Nevertheless, while allowing for these problems in interpretation, the *Vita* remains the principal source for the events of the battle and parts of the account can be corroborated by references in two Welsh poems, namely an elegy traditionally supposed to have been composed on the death of Trahaearn ap Caradog and another elegy to Gruffudd ap Cynan, both of which have been attributed to the Welsh bard Meilyr Brydydd (d. c. 1137), who served as *pencerdd* (court poet) at the court of the princes of Gwynedd.[36]

The earliest texts of both poems survive in the early 14th century compilation of Welsh bardic poetry contained in the Hendregardedd MS at the National Library of Wales. While the attribution of Gruffudd's elegy to Meilyr is generally accepted, his authorship of the elegy to Trahaearn (composed in the form of a prophecy after the event) has been seriously questioned by some scholars on chronological and stylistic terms, although recent studies have argued in favour of Meilyr's authorship of both works.[37] Indeed it has been suggested that the elegy to Trahaearn, the surviving text of which appears to be a fragment of a longer poem, may in fact have been dedicated not to Trahaearn but to Caradog ap Gruffudd who also fell at Mynydd Carn. Whatever the case, the elegy to Trahaearn contains some important references to the battle which independently

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most recent critical edition of the Welsh translation of the Vita is D. Simon Evans (ed.) *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* (Cardiff, 1977); for the English translation of the Welsh text with commentary see D. Simon Evans (ed. & trans.) *A Medieval Prince of Wales – The Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Felinfach 1990)

[34] For a detailed analysis of the annotations and corrections made to the Peniarth MS 434E text of the Vita by Thelwell, with particular reference to the account of the battle of Mynydd Carn, see P.Russell, *Vita Griffini filii Conani* (Cardiff, 2006), 26-9

[35] R.S. Babcock, 'Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of Deheubarth', *Anglo Norman Studies*, 16 (1993) 21-35 (esp. p. 26)

[36] For the text of the elegy to Trahaearn with an important discussion of its origins and significance see N.A. Jones, 'The Mynydd Carn Prophecy', *Cambrian Medieval Studies* Vol. 36, 73-92. For the text of Meilyr Brydydd's elegy to Gruffudd ap Cynan (in modern Welsh orthography) with full commentary see J.E. Caerwyn-Williams, 'Meilyr Bryddyd and Gruffudd ap Cynan' in K.L. Maund (ed.) *Gruffudd ap Cynan: A Collaborative Biography* (Woodbridge 1996), 165-85

[37] See N.A. Jones, 'The Mynydd Carn Prophecy', *Cambrian Medieval Studies* Vol. 36 and J.E. Caerwyn-Williams, 'Meilyr Bryddyd and Gruffudd ap Cynan' in K.L. Maund (ed.) *Gruffudd ap Cynan: A Collaborative Biography* (Woodbridge 1996), 165-85

corroborate details of the account given in the *Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, particularly concerning the battle taking place 'towards evening'.

Discussion of Secondary Sources

Somewhat surprisingly, in view of the historic importance of the battle, there are few references to it in antiquarian accounts. The Elizabethan antiquarian George Owen in his *History of Pembrokeshire* (written in 1598) makes no reference to the battle and there is a similar dearth of information in Richard Fenton's *Historical Tour in Pembrokeshire* (1811).[38]

Valuable early discussions of the evidence for the location of the battle site appear in Egerton Phillimore's article on 'The Publication of Welsh Historical Records' and A. Jones's notes to his edition of the 'Historia Gruffudd vab Kenan'. [39] Sir Evan Jones's article on 'The locality of the battle of Mynydd Carn' contains a useful, if somewhat outdated discussion of the documentary evidence for the battle although his analysis of the place name evidence (as discussed above) must be regarded with caution.[40] The RCAHMW Inventory for Pembrokeshire also contains an important account of the documentary evidence for the battle and makes a plausible case for the location of the battle site at North Hill Farm, SW of Templeton, although it does conflict with the documentary evidence suggesting a site within the *commote* of Nevern in northern Pembrokeshire.[41]

Modern scholarly accounts of the battle are largely indebted to J.E. Lloyd's succinct and cautious assessment in his *History of Wales*, in which he suggested a site 'which cannot have been far from the borders of Dyfed' while admitting that a positive identification was probably not feasible.[42]

More recent discussions of the evidence for the battle site are contained in the notes to the recent critical editions of the *Historia Gruffudd vab Kenan* and the *Vita Griffini filii Conani*,[43] as well as an important discussion by N.A. Jones of the elegy to Trahaearn ap Caradog and J.E. Caerwyn Williams's analysis of the text of Meilyr Brydydd's elegy to Gruffudd ap Cynan; the two latter papers both suggest a location for the battlefield somewhere in northern Pembrokeshire, close to the border with Ceredigion.

[38] G.Owen, *The Description of Penbrokeshire*, ed. H. Owen, 4 vols. *Cymmrodorion Record Series* (London 1897-1936); R. Fenton, *A Historical Tour through Pembrokeshire* (London 1811)
[39] E. Phillimore, 'The Publication of Welsh Historical Records', *Y Cymmrodor* Vol. 11 (1890-1), 133-76 (esp. p.167) A. Jones (ed.), *Historia Gruffudd vab Kenan* (Manchester 1910), 171-3
[40] E.D. Jones, 'The Locality of the Battle of Mynydd Carn AD 1081', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* Vol. 77 pt. 2 (1922), 181-97
[41] RCAHMW, *Inventory of Ancient and Historical Monuments in Pembrokeshire* (London 1925), xliii-xlvi, 251-2 (No. 745)
[42] J.E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the earliest times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 384
[43] P.Russell (ed.), *Vita Griffini filii Conani: The Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Cardiff 2006); D. Simon Evans (ed.), *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* (Cardiff, 1977); D. Simon Evans (ed. & trans.), *A Medieval Prince of Wales – The Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Felinfach 1990)

Archaeology and Historic Terrain

As discussed above, there are clearly problems in establishing a precise location for the battle site, based on the limited documentary and place-name evidence. A number of possible sites have been advanced, the majority located in northern Pembrokeshire with the exception of the site at Templeton suggested by the RCAHMW Inventory. Consequently it is difficult to produce a detailed assessment of the archaeological potential of a particular battle site, although it is possible to indicate broadly the archaeological potential of certain localities within which the battle site may have been situated.

The several possible sites for the battlefield which have been suggested in the vicinity of the range of hills between the north Pembrokeshire coast and the Afon Gwaun, stretching E-W from Mynydd Carn Ingli (S of Newport) to Mynydd Llanllawer (S of Fishguard) consist of remote, partially enclosed upland moor with abundant evidence of prehistoric ritual/funerary monuments and defensive enclosures, as well as remains of settlement sites and field systems of prehistoric and later medieval date. A significant proportion of this area has been covered by a detailed historic landscape characterisation undertaken by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust and extensive aerial reconnaissance carried out by the RCAHMW. Mynydd Carn Ingli, in particular, has recently been the focus of significant archaeological investigation, which has largely focused on the substantial prehistoric archaeology in this area. The most promising areas for further archaeological investigation appear to be located in the vicinity of the summit of Mynydd Carn Ingli and at 'Parc-y-Meirw' located to the SW of Mynydd Llanllawer.

The location proposed by the RCAHMW Pembrokeshire Inventory in 1925 at North Hill Farm, 2km SW of Templeton, is now occupied by the disused WWII airfield of RAF Templeton; the farm buildings have been completely demolished and any trace of the cairn situated approximately 100 yards NW of the farm which is described in the Inventory appears to have been levelled during the airfield's construction. In spite of this fact, there remains some potential for buried remains to be identified within the airfield site, within those areas that have not been significantly impacted by the construction of buildings or runways associated with the airfield.

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

The battle of Mynydd Carn was described by J.E. Lloyd in his magisterial *History of Wales* as a 'memorable battle' and in many respects it certainly represented a turning point in the medieval political history of the Principality; the established order represented by Trahaearn ap Caradog in Gwynedd, Caradog ap Gruffudd in South Wales and Meilyr ap Rhiwallon in Powys had been decisively overthrown by Rhys ap Tewdwr and Gruffudd ap Cynan.[44]

Rhys ap Tewdwr appears to have profited most from this victory, securing his position not only as ruler of Deheubarth but also as the leading Welsh lord in South and West

[44] J.E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the earliest times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 384; S. Davies, *Welsh Military Institutions 633-1283* (Cardiff 2004), 120-1.

Wales. On the other hand, Gruffudd's attempt to regain his inheritance (ie. Gwynedd) was frustrated by the intervention of the Normans, who appear to have taken advantage of Trahaearn's death to further extend their influence and territory in North Wales; Gruffudd himself being captured and imprisoned by Hugh Earl of Chester for a lengthy period.[45]

Indeed it may be plausibly argued that the Normans, in fact, gained most of all from the battle of Mynydd Carn, taking advantage of the political turmoil resulting from the deaths of Trahaearn ap Caradog and Caradog ap Gruffudd, arguably the two most powerful Welsh princes at the time, to extend their lordship over North and South Wales. It can be surely no coincidence that William I's armed 'pilgrimage' to St David's, which was apparently made, if the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle can be believed, to free prisoners (presumably those Normans who had fought on the side of Caradog ap Gruffudd) followed shortly after the battle of Mynydd Carn.[46]

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[45] J.E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the earliest times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 384-5; D. Wyatt, 'Gruffudd ap Cynan and the Hiberno-Norse world', *Welsh History Review*, Vol. 19 no. 4 (1999), 606-7

[46] D. Whitelock (ed.) The Anglo Saxon Chronicle (London 1962), 161 '1081. This year the King led an army into Wales, and there freed many hundreds of men'. For discussion of the significance of this visit, see R.S. Babcock, 'Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of Deheubarth', *Anglo Norman Studies*, 16 (1993), 25-6

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(All maps were obtained from the National Library of Wales unless otherwise stated)

Begelly tithe map 1841

Dinas tithe map - 1841

Llanllawer tithe map – 1842

Llanychaer tithe map - 1842

Narberth tithe map - 1840

Newport tithe map - 1844

OS 1st edition 25 inch map(Pembrokeshire 10.1-10, 13-14; 35.1-2) – 1889

OS 1st edition 6 inch map (Pembrokeshire 10 NW, NE, SW; 35 NW) - 1891

OS 2nd edition 25 inch map (Pembrokeshire 10.1-10, 13-14; 35.1-2)- 1907

OS 2nd edition 6 inch map (Pembrokeshire 10 NW, NE, SW; 35 NW) – 1908

OS provisional edition 6 inch map (Pembrokeshire 10 NW, NE, SW; 35 NW) - 1953

Appendix 1

Transcription of Chapters 17 and 18 from the *Vita Griffini filii Conani* relating to the battle at Mynydd Carn (reproduced from P. Russell (ed.) *Vita Griffini filii Conani: The Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Cardiff 2006), pp 68-71

Cum iam annis nonullis in Hybernia Griffinus trivisset curiam apud Diermit regem et alios viros illustres, classem in portu Porthlarc rebus instruxit ad iter necessaries, quam dono Regis acceptam civibus Hybernis ac Britannis onustam duxit prosperrimo per mare cursu, adspirantibus etiam secundis ventis in portum dictum Porth Cleis non longe a sede archiepiscopali Menevensi. Ad cuius adventum Rysus ap Theodor, rex australium Cambrorum, Menevensis episcopus, doctores, chorus universus Sancti Davidis clericique omnes Menevenses, in portum sunt profecti Rysusque Griffinum sic est allocutus: 'Salve, Cambrorum regum rex, ad te confugio; tibi genua flecto supplex auxilium suppetiasque petens'. Tum Griffinus, 'Quis es stu et cuius huc advenisti causa'. Rysus inquit, 'Sum filius Theodori huius modicae ditionis dominus: nunc vero oppressus, profugos et interritus, in scro hoc delitesco loco'. 'Quis', ait Griffinus, 'te in hoc fugere coegit?' 'Domine', inquit ille, 'tres Cambriae reges praecipui, cum exercitibus suis in hunc principatum delati, cives assidue opes exhauriunt'. 'At quinam', ait Griffinus, 'tam potentes reges, qui hanc pervagantur dominationem tanta multitudione constipati?' 'Caradocus' inquit ille, 'filius Griffini de Guenta vch coet et is coet, cum asseclis suis, incolae Morgannvc, una cum Normannis et Trahaearn rex cum habitantibus Arwystli'. Auditis vero nominibus oppressorum, ira indignationeque aestuans Griffinus quaerit quondam illi laboris praemium constitueret, si hostes eius oppugnaret. 'Dimidum' inquit 'ditionis meae tibi dabo, homagiumque tibi praestabo'. Conditionem accept Griffinus. Aedemque Divi Davidi sacram ambo petunt, cum orandi tum foederis gratia'.

Quo confirmato benedictioneque ab episcopo accepta, statim Griffinus iter accepit sequentibus eum Danis, Hybernis amicisque aliis ad numerum centum sexaginta, agmen primum ducante Kyndelw filius Monensis. Resus etiam cum perpaucis australibus laetus simul proficiscitur, perbelle secum actum cogitans, quod dam opportunum auxilium est nactus.

Longo iam itinere dimenso ad vesperam in montes perveniunt, ubi castra posuissent praedicti reges. Tum resus Griffinum sic est allocutus: 'Domine, differamus bellum in crastinum, quod iam advesperascit'. 'Differ' inquit Griffinus, 'quousque tibi placuerit, ego vero cum ea, quam paratam manum habeo, in eos impetum faciam'. Quod ut dixerat, praestabat. Terrore ingenti continentur reges stupentque dum copias Griffini faeroces, constipate militum agmina, splendentia vexilla, Danos bipennibus armatos, Hybernos iacula ferries cuspidibus ferentes conspiciunt. Ipse vero Griffinus proelium primus irruit, non secus ac gigas vel leo cuncto gladio inimicos prosternens, milites suos animose in hostes provocans, et ne terga adversaries darent exhortans. Fit bellum atrox et cruentum in quo ne filius quidem patri pepercit. Clamor militum in caelum usque ascendit: resonare visa est terra fremitu equorum ac peditum: pugnaces voces longe lateque exaudiuntur, strepitus armorum ingens fuit. Tanta strages facta est, dum Griffuni exercitus hostes suos subiugarent, ut sudoris et sanguinis flumina decurrisse putarentur. Tandem Trahaern effuses visceribus transfoditur, et in terram pronus deiectus quasi herbas viventibus carpere dentibus ex armis visus est. Cuius cadaver ut carnem suillam

in lardum Gucharki Hybernus sale conduerat; hoc in loco ceciderunt de familia eius equites 25 quasi eum stipantes, alii vero primo agmine multa praeterea millia interficiuntur, reliquorum nonulli terga verterunt, in fugam se precipitarunt, Griffinus ex consueta vincendi experientia eos per sylvas, valles, palaudes et montes tota nocte, lucente luna, persequitur ut ex tanto numero vix unus aliquis in patriam sit reversus.

Ab hoc bello terribili fortiter per Griffinum confecto, Resus subduxit sese a tutela et societate uni tam illustris nec in eius conspectum se postea. Qua perfidia commotus Griffinus eius ditionem depopulari constituit, quod et factum est. Montes autem in quibus hoc bellum gestum est, incolae montes Carn appellant, quod ibi lapidum ingénues cumulus congestus sit, sub quo thesaurus absconditos olum opinantur. Postquam vero hanc regionem maxima clade depopulationeque funditus devastasset, in Arwistlensem pagum copias duxit, in quo cede et flamma desaeviens, uxoribus virginibusque eorum in captivitatem tractis Trahaerni iniurias rursum in illarum capita persolvit. Postremo in Powisiam se contulit, ubi summa crudelitate in hostes usus est, adeo ut nex ecclesiis perpercerit. Ita tandem inimicis omnibus fusis, terrque eorum in solitudinem redacta, in paternam hereditatem honorifice susceptus, regebat Venedotiaque summa tranquilitate ad aliquod spacium gavisa est.'

Appendix 2

Text of the Elegy to Trahaearn ap Caradog (reproduced from N.A. Jones, 'The Mynydd Carn Prophecy', *Cambrian Medieval Studies* Vol. 36. 74)

I pray to the Lord, ruler of the firmament,
Sovereign who knows deeply of my concern.
I am deeply concerned,
About my lord and champion, leader of a host.
They have not yet come over the sea
The intractable people of Nanhyfer
(or The intractable people have not yet come over the sea to Nanhyfer)
The Irish, dark devils
Wild (or stealthy) ones, oppressive men.
There will be a battle on Mynydd Carn
And Trahaearn will be killed
And the son of Rhiwallon, ruler of the seas,
From the fight he will not return.
On Thursday in three weeks time
(Wretched night!) You will be killed!

5.2 Crug Mawr (October 10th, 1136)

5.2.1 Site of Battle

Traditionally reputed to be situated at Banc y Warren (NGR SN 207472), a conical hill situated approximately 200m NE of Crug Mawr Farm and 3km NE of Cardigan; however another suggested location for the battle is located close to Cardigan Castle (NGR SN 1778 4590).

5.2.2 Summary

Historical Context

The battle of Crug Mawr represented the third major military success gained by the Welsh in 1136, the first being Hywel ap Maredudd of Brycheiniog's victory at Gower in January of that year, the second being the death of the powerful Marcher lord Richard de Clare in an ambush at Coed Gwryne near Abergavenny some three months later.[1]

In many respects, this battle may be viewed as the culmination of a series of separate revolts by the Welsh against Anglo-Norman rule immediately following the death of Henry I, resulting in the re-establishment of Welsh lordship over a significant proportion of southern and central West Wales at the expense of the Anglo-Norman and Flemish lords (in particular the de Clare family) who had gradually asserted control over much of this territory during the preceding forty years.

In military terms, however, the battle was also of exceptional significance as representing the first major engagement between substantial Welsh and Anglo-Norman forces in which the Welsh emerged victorious since Cadwgan ap Bleddyn's victory at Coed Yspwys in 1093. The importance of the battle is also attested by the fact that it was commented upon by several contemporary English annalists, who were evidently alarmed by the scale of the defeat and the grave losses sustained by the Anglo-Norman and Flemish forces.[2]

5.2.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

The date of the battle appears to be established by a marginal gloss 'y Sadwrn Du' (literally translated as 'Black Saturday') which appears opposite the account of the engagement contained in the Peniarth MS 20 text of the *Brut y Tywysogion*, the Anglicised version 'Blake Saterndey' appears as a footnote to account of the battle given in the 'C' text of the *Annales Cambriae*. This, taken together with the statement by the Gloucester continuator of the Chronicle of John of Worcester that the battle took place 'in

[1] A contemporary chronicle account of the Welsh victory in Gower (dated to January 1st 1136) and the ambush and death of Richard de Clare is contained in *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. P. McGurk (Oxford 1998) III, 219-221

[2] In particular see the accounts given in *Gesta Stephani*, ed. & trans. K. R. Potter & R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1976), *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. P. McGurk (Oxford 1998) III, 221-223 and R.R. Darlington (ed.), 'Winchcombe Annals, 1049-1181', in *A Medieval Miscellany for Doris Mary Stenton*, ed. P. M Barnes & C.F. Slade, Pipe Rolls Society Vol. 36 (London 1960), 118.

the second week of the month of October (1136)', seems to indicate that the probable date of the battle was Saturday October 10th.[3]

The fullest accounts of movements of the Welsh forces prior to the battle are contained in the Peniarth MS 20 and Red Book of Hergest texts of the Brut y Tywysogion and the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae*, which share close similarities and are very likely derived from a single source.[4] They refer to two campaigns in Ceredigion led by Owain and Cadwaladr, sons of Gruffudd ap Cynan lord of Gwynedd, the first of which resulted in the destruction of 'the castle of Walter de Bec, Aberystwyth Castle, the castle of Richard de la Mar and Castell Dinerth (SN 4949 6237), as well as burning down the castle of Caerwedros (SN 3761 5577).[5]

Towards the end of 1136, Owain and Cadwaladr mounted another, more substantial campaign in Ceredigion, this time with the support of other Welsh nobles including Gruffydd ap Rhys lord of Cantref Mawr, Madog ap Idnerth, lord of Cynllibwg and the Hywel ap Maredudd of Cantred Bychan and his two sons (Maredudd and Rhys ap Hywel) who are described in the *Annales* and Brut as coming in strength (*potenter*) to 'Abertewy (Aberteifi)', which presumably refers to the town of Cardigan itself.[6] Curiously, both the 'C' text of the *Annales Cambriae* and Gerald of Wales in his brief account of the battle place Gruffydd ap Rhys in overall command of the Welsh army.[7]

Opposing this combined Welsh force was a substantial Anglo-Norman and Flemish army. The account contained in the *Gesta Stephani*, which was compiled shortly after the events described, mentions that the Anglo-Norman contingent consisted of 'Richard (de Clare's) own knights with the addition of some others who to the number of three thousand, including footsoldiers, had assembled to help them from the neighbouring towns and castles'.[8]

The leaders of the Anglo-Norman/Flemish contingent are specified in greater detail in the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae* and the Peniarth, RBH and Brenhinedd texts of the

[3] See discussion of dating of the battle in *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952), 173n and *Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. McGurk, III, 222n. For further comment see J.R. Lloyd, *The Story of Ceredigion* (Cardiff 1937), 54n

[4] *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952), 51-2 *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973)., 114-5; *Brenhinedd y Saeson*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1971), 145-7. *Annales Cambriae*, ed. J. Williams ab Ithel (London 1860). For a translation of the Annales with useful notes see P.M. Remfry, *Annales Cambriae: A Translation of Harleian MS 3859, PRO E 164/1, Cottonian Domitian A.1 Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3514 and MS Exchequer DB Neath PRO E164/1*(Shrewsbury 2007), a full diplomatic edition of these chronicles is urgently needed

[5] *Annales Cambriae*, ed. Williams ab Ithel (London 1860), 40, 'Owinus et Catwaladrus filii Grifini exercitum in Cardigeaun moveat, et castello Walter de Bek; et castello Aberystuit, et Castello Ricardi de la Mar et Dinierth destructis, Kairwedros quoque combusserunt et sic ad propria reversi sunt'.

[6] *Annales Cambriae*, ed. Williams ab Ithel (London 1860), 40, 'Owinus et Catwaladrus iterum ad Keredigean venerunt, quibus in adjutorium Grifinus filius Resi, et Resus filius Hoeli et Madocus filius Idnerth et filii Hoeli ad Abertewy potenter venerunt'

[7] *Annales Cambriae*, ed. J. Williams ab Ithel (London 1860), 40n

[8] *Gesta Stephani*, ed. & trans. Potter & Davis (Oxford 1976) 16-7, 'ipsosque Ricardi milites, sed et alios nonnullos, qui usque ad tria milia cum peditum agmine ex vicinis urbibus et castellis ad auxillium eorum convenerant'

Brut. The Annales text states that 'resisting them (the Welsh) on the other part came Stephen the Constable, the sons of Gerald (meaning Maurice and William Fitz Gerald the sons of Gerald of Windsor constable of Pembroke) and all the French from the Severn to St David's and the Flemings of Rhos'.[9]

The description given in the Peniarth, RBH and Brenhinedd texts is largely similar to that in the *Annales* although some additional names are given, specifically Robert fitz Martin (lord of Cemais) and William fitz Odo (presumably William fitz Odo de Barri of Manorbier) and the remaining forces are described in the Peniarth and RBH texts as consisting of 'all the Flemings and all the knights (and all the French) from the estuary of the Neath to the estuary of the Dyfi.' [10]

The Battle and its Aftermath

The actual events of the battle are somewhat variably documented in the available documentary sources. The most detailed account from the Anglo-Norman perspective is that contained in the *Gesta Stephani*, which describes how 'the Welsh 'divided themselves into three bands methodically and with a view to war, and surrounded on three sides and routed Richard's own knights with the addition of some others who to the number of three thousand, including footsoldiers, had assembled to help them from the neighbouring towns and castles'.[11]

The *Gesta* then describes in some detail the subsequent rout of the Anglo-Norman forces and their pursuit and slaughter by the Welsh, stating that the Welsh 'pursuing them in energetic and spirited fashion with shouts and arrows they pitifully slaughtered some, others they massacred by driving them violently into a river (presumably the Teifi) a good number they put in houses and churches to which they set fire and burnt them'.[12] The latter reference to the burning of houses and churches has been taken by scholars to refer to the ransacking by the Welsh of the town of Cardigan in the aftermath of the battle; the allusion to churches (templa) was assumed by Lloyd to refer specifically to the Benedictine priory of Holy Trinity which had been founded c.1110 by Gilbert de Clare.[13]

However it is possible that the Gesta may be referring to a general plundering not only of Cardigan but also the surrounding district. Significantly the author of the Gesta adds that the widow of Richard de Clare, had taken refuge in an 'impregnably fortified castle' (*quoddam castellum…inexpugnabili munitione vallatum*) which was closely besieged by

[9] *Annales Cambriae*, ed. J. Williams ab Ithel (London 1860), 40
[10] *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952) *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973); *Brenhinedd y Saeson*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1971)
[11] *Gesta Stephani*, ed. & trans. Potter & Davis (Oxford 1976) 16-7, 'ex diversis provinciis in immensum se coadunantes exercitum, terram illus ingressi, in tres se terribiles turmas ordinate et bellicose diviserunt, ipsosque Ricardi milites, sed et alios nonnullos, qui usque ad tria milia cum peditum agmine ex vicinis urbibus et castellis ad auxillium eorum convenerant, ex tribus partibus perlustrantes in fugam miserunt'
[12] *Gesta Stephani*, ed. & trans. Potter & Davis (Oxford 1976) 16-7, 'eosque cum clamore sagittarumque emissione viriliter et animose insequentes, alios miseranda modis occiserunt, alios in flumine viriliter impulsos enecuerunt, nonullos domibus et templis ignibus impositis cremandos tradiderunt'.
[13] J.E. Lloyd, *History of Wales* (London 1939), II, 173

the Welsh and was eventually relieved by an expedition led by Miles of Gloucester lord of Brecon; this stronghold may be identified with Cardigan Castle.[14]

The description in the *Gesta* of the slaughter of the Anglo-Norman and Flemish troops at the river after the battle appears to be corroborated by the account given in the Gloucester continuator of the Chronicle of John of Worcester. The latter account although briefer than that in the *Gesta*, provides a more specific *locale* for the massacre, placing it in the vicinity of the bridge crossing the Teifi, which apparently collapsed either as a result of the flight or as a result of its destruction by the Welsh. The chronicler vividly describes how 'when the bridge over the River Teifi was broken it was piteous to see crowds passing backwards and forwards across a bridge formed by a horrible mass of human corpses and horses drowned in the river'.[15]

The main accounts of the battle in the Welsh sources, namely the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae* (NA E164/1) and the various texts of the *Brut y Tywysogion*, show close similarities suggesting that they derived their information from a common source although there are some important differences to be noted. The account in the Peniarth and Red Book of Hergest versions of the Brut state that 'after joining battle and fighting fiercely on both sides, the Flemings and the Normans took to flight according to their usual custom'.[16] The account contained in the Brenhinedd differs slightly from that given in the Peniarth and RBH texts of the Brut, specifically stating that 'all at once the Flemings fled' which might suggest that it was the flight of one part of the army which resulted in a general rout.[17]

The account in the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae* appears to generally agree with that given in the various texts of the *Brut*, although it is much more terse and includes two statements of particular importance 1/ it specifically refers to 'the battle having commenced in front of the castle' (*proelio coram castellum initio*) and 2/ it mentions that Cardigan Castle remained in the possession of the Anglo-Norman forces after the battle, which corroborates the account given in the *Gesta Stephani* of the widow of Richard de Clare remaining under siege in the castle until its relief by Miles of Gloucester.[18]

Significantly the accounts given in the *Annales Cambriae* and the various texts of the Brut corroborate the evidence of the English chronicle sources for a general slaughter of the fleeing Anglo-Norman/Flemish forces in the vicinity of the river crossing at Cardigan; the Annales describes how 'the French and Flemings were put to flight, some captured, some killed and others burnt and trampled by horses feet and drowned in the River Teifi.'[19]

[14] *Gesta Stephani*, ed. & trans. Potter & Davis (Oxford 1976) 18-9
[15] *Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. McGurk, III, 220-1 'Eratque ibi magnam videre miseriam, cum fracto ponte super fluvium Teuwi, fieret huc illucque discursantibus pons humanorum corporum sive equorum inibi dimersorum horrenda congeries'
[16] *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952) *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973)
[17] *Brenhinedd y Saeson*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1971)
[18] *Annales Cambriae*, ed. J. Williams ab Ithel (London 1860), 40, 'castello Francis remanente'.
[19] *Annales Cambriae*, ed. J. Williams ab Ithel (London 1860), 40, 'Franci et Flandrenses in fugam versi capti sunt, occisi sunt, combusti et equorum pedibus conculati et in fluvio Tewy submersi sunt'

In addition to the accounts given in the English and Welsh chronicle sources, it is important to note the independent account given by the Welsh bard Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr (fl. c. 1155-1200) in his poem entitled 'In praise of Owain Gwynedd' (*Arwyrain Owain Gwynedd*), probably composed at some time between 1157 and 1167, which contains a lengthy and vivid description of the battle that, although somewhat impressionistic, is worth quoting at length:[20]

At Aberteifi fallen spears shattered
As at Badon clamorous onslaught
I saw savage troops and stiff red corpses
It was left to the wolves, their burial;
I saw them abandoned, defenceless
Beneath birds' feet, strong men slain
I saw their ruin, three hundred corpses
I saw after battle, intestines on thorns,
I saw dreadful tumult in turmoil
Troops contending, a rout collapsing

Having considered the testimony of the available sources, it is possible to establish in broad terms the narrative of the battle as follows:

1/ A fierce initial engagement between the Welsh and Anglo-Norman/Flemish forces. The location of this initial engagement remains uncertain (see below for further detailed discussion) Gerald of Wales's testimony places the field of battle at Crug Mawr, some 3km to the NE of Cardigan, while the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae* specifically refers to battle 'having commenced in front of the castle'. The accounts contained in the other Welsh chronicle sources, namely the Peniarth, RBH and Brenhinedd texts of the *Brut*, as well as in Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr's poem 'In Praise of Owain Gwynedd', all vaguely locate the battle at 'Aberteifi', which presumably refers to somewhere in the vicinity of Cardigan.

The Gesta Stephani is the only chronicle source to describe manoeuvres undertaken during the battle, describing how the Welsh surrounded the enemy forces on three sides, which might imply that 1/ the Welsh outflanked the Anglo-Norman forces or 2/ the Anglo-Norman forces might have been holding a defensive position surrounded on three sides by the Welsh although this cannot be confirmed from the available evidence. Cynddelw Brydydd's poem refers to 'shattered spears' amid a 'clamorous onslaught' which, it has been suggested, might refer to a Welsh charge that broke an infantry line of spears, although it is difficult to say whether this is based on first hand information from a participant in the battle or literary embellishment.[21]

2/ The Anglo-Norman/Flemish forces were eventually broken and routed by the Welsh. The subsequent flight of the defeated army and their pursuit by the victorious Welsh is well documented in all the available chronicle sources, the majority of which refer to how

[20] R. Andrews (ed.), *Welsh Court Poems* (Cardiff 2008); the text of the poem is given on pp. 3-4 (the section describing the battle is contained in l. 39-52) with commentary on pp. 51-5
[21] S. Davies, *Welsh Military Institutions 633-1283* (Cardiff 2004), 129n

the routed army attempted to flee in great numbers across the River Teifi at Cardigan, resulting in considerable losses. The English chronicle sources emphasize the extent to which the town of Cardigan and the surrounding area were severely ravaged by the victorious Welsh army. However, at least some of the Anglo-Norman/Flemish forces, managed to retreat to the relative safety of Cardigan Castle, which, under to the command of Richard de Clare's widow, Adeliza, continued to hold out until relieved by an expedition led by Miles of Gloucester from Brecon.

Troops and Casualties

The annalists provide some information on the size of the Welsh contingent, although their estimates of the numbers of combatants involved must inevitably be treated with a healthy dose of scepticism. According to the Peniarth MS 20 and RBH versions of the *Brut*, Owain and Cadwaladr's forces alone consisted of 'a numerous army of picked warriors, about 6000 fine infantry and 2000 mailed horsemen most brave and ready for battle', while the size of the other Welsh contingents is not specified.[22] The *Gesta Stephani* is the only authority to provide specific information on the size and composition of the Anglo-Norman/Flemish contingent at the battle, estimating the size of their host 'at three thousand, including footsoldiers' (*ad tria milia cum peditum*).[23]

Little specific information is available on the numbers of casualties resulting from the battle and its aftermath, although it is clear from both the English and Welsh chronicle sources that the Anglo-Norman/Flemish sources suffered heavy losses. The *Gesta Stephani* and the Gloucester continuator of the *Chronicle of John of Worcester* both allude to a heavy slaughter of not only the combatants but the inhabitants of the town of Cardigan and its hinterland following the battle, according to the latter source 'there was such slaughter that besides those men taken into captivity there remained 10,000 captive women whose husbands with numberless children were drowned, consumed by flames or put to the sword'.[24]

The Peniarth MS 20 and RBH versions of the *Brut* both state that the Anglo-Norman/Flemish forces 'after losing about three thousand (*amglych teir mil*) of their men, sadly despondent returned to their own land'. In contrast to the somewhat exaggerated totals given in the chronicle sources, the estimate in Cynddelw's 'Arwyrain Owain Gwynedd' is perhaps more realistic, giving a number of 'three hundred dead' (*trychant celain*).

5.2.4 Assessment

Battle Location

The evidence for the site of the battlefield is sketchy and difficult to interpret; the majority of the chronicle sources are somewhat vague in their location of the battle, with

[22] *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952) *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973)
[23] *Gesta Stephani*, ed. & trans. Potter & Davis (Oxford 1976) 18-9
[24] *Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. McGurk, III, 220-1

the exception of two sources, namely Gerald of Wales's *Itinerary* and the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae.*

The traditional location of the battle site at Crug Mawr, located approximately 3km NE of Cardigan is based on a passage in Gerald of Wales's *Itinerary*, in which he specifically states that from Cardigan Castle 'we made our way towards Lampeter (*Pons Stephani*) leaving Crug Mawr, that is the Big Hill, on our left soon after riding out of Cardigan. It was on this spot that, a short time after the death of Henry I, King of the English, Gruffydd son of Rhys ap Tewdwr, gained a great victory in a pitched battle'over the English, which by the murder of Richard de Clare near Abergavenny, had lost their illustrious leader and chief.[25]

Significantly, Gerald provides other topographical details concerning 'Crug Mawr' (largely based on an earlier description in Nennius's Historia Brittonum) stating that 'a tumulus is to be seen on the summit of the aforesaid hill, and the inhabitants affirm that it will adapt itself to persons of all stature and that if any armour is left there entire in the evening it will be found, according to vulgar tradition, broken to pieces in the morning'.[26]

The precise location of the 'Crug Mawr' referred to by Gerald, however, is not altogether clear; it is has usually been assumed to refer not to the existing site of Crug Mawr farm but to the steep conical hill lying approximately 200m NW of the farm, referred to variously as 'Crigmore Hill' or Banc y Warren. Crug Mawr is first referred to by name in the 'De Mirabilis' section of the *Historia Brittonum* compiled by the monk Nennius in about 829 AD, in which he describes 'the grave on the summit of the mountain which is given the name Crucmaur'.[27]

The place name Banc-y-warren appears to be of English origin, derived from the OE *weargtreow* meaning 'gallows tree', and is first recorded in a survey of the royal manor of Cardigan in 1268.[28] The hill was evidently a long established boundary marker, defining the northern boundary of the manor of Cardigan and the respective boundaries of the parishes of Cardigan and Llangoedmor

The antiquarian Samuel Meyrick, writing in 1810, mentions that the tumulus referred to by Gerald of Wales 'still remains and there is some appearance of an intrenchment', which still appears to have been visible until the middle of the 19th century.[29] The OS surveyors drawing of 1810 appears to depict a cairn on the summit of Banc y Warren, but it is not visible on the OS 1st edition 25 inch map of 1888 or on later OS mapping of the

[25] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J. Dymock, 8 vols (London 1861-77) VI, 118, Transivimus autem a castro predicto versus Pontem Stephani; Crugmawr, id est, colle magno, juxta Aberteivi a sinistro latere relicto. Ubi Griphinus filius Resi filii Theodori, post obitum Anglorum Regis Henrici Primi, in bello publico, per necem nobilis viri Ricardi Clarensis juxta Abergevenni, ut dictum est, paulo ante interempti, sine capite relicto, et ob hoc in impetu primo statim confecto, stragem non modicum fecit'

[26] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. Dimock, VI, 118 'In summitate collis eiusdem tumulus reperitur, quem se cuilibet staturae praestare conformem incolae testantur. Et si arma quaecunque vespere ibidem integra reliquantur, mane confracta vulgari assertione reperientur'

[27] J. Morris (ed.) *Nennius, British History and the Welsh Annals* (Chichester 1980)

28 I. Wmffre, *The Place Names of Cardiganshire*, BAR British Series 379, 3 vols (Oxford, 2004), I, 16. Several references to the name occur in late 13th century accounts of the manor of Cardigan, see M. Rhys (ed.), *Ministers' Accounts for West Wales 1277-1306, Pt. 1*, Cymmrodorion Record Series Vol. 13 (London 1936)

[29] S.R. Meyrick, *The History and Antiquities of Cardiganshire* (London 1810), 176

area, which perhaps suggests that it had been destroyed by ploughing or quarrying activity. However evidence of the 'intrenchment' referred to by Meyrick appears to have been identified from aerial reconnaissance in 2004, which revealed two sets of parchmarks enclosing the summit of Banc y Warren, which could represent evidence of a defended enclosure.[30] Gerald of Wales's statement regarding the site of the battle cannot be dismissed lightly, particularly as his father, William fitz Odo de Barri and two of his uncles, Maurice and William fitz Gerald, were present at the battle and would presumably have been able to provide first-hand information concerning its location.

However another possibility which should be considered is that Crug Mawr may not simply refer to Banc-y-Warren but to the massif of which Banc-y-warren forms a part, extending NE from Cardigan towards Aberporth. In connection with this, it is worth noting that the hill approximately 300m N of Banc-y-Warren (forming part of the same range of hills) is called 'Cnwc y Saeson', literally translated as 'hillock of the English'. The earliest reference to this place name (as Knwck y Saeson) occurs in a deed of 1697 and no direct link can be established with the 1136 battle, but it certainly is suggestive of a possible association with the events of the battle.[31] Examination of the field names contained in the Llangoedmor and Cardigan tithe apportionments (dated 1838 and 1839 respectively) revealed no further references to place names with an obvious military association in the vicinity of Crug Mawr/Banc-y-Warren.

The account of the battle contained in the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae* offers a radically different location from that given by Gerald, specifically referring to 'the battle being joined in front of the castle' (*proelio coram castellum initio*).[32] This must almost certainly refer to Cardigan Castle and consequently this would necessitate relocating the scene of the main battle from NE of Cardigan to somewhere close to the castle. Assuming the statement in the *Annales* is correct, the most likely location for the battle would presumably have been to the E or NE of the castle and the medieval town of Cardigan.[33]

However it is difficult to determine precisely to where the phrase '*coram castellum*' actually refers; it could denote the shoreline of the Afon Teifi immediately in front of the castle, or it could refer to somewhere further inland to the NE, but nevertheless within sight of the castle. None of the other chronicle sources explicitly corroborate the location of the battle given in the 'B' text of the *Annales*, however the *Chronicle of John of Worcester* does refer to the flight of the defeated Anglo-Norman/Flemish forces across a bridge traversing the Afon Teifi.[34]

The location of the bridge referred to in the chronicle sources is unclear, Speed's map of 1610 shows a bridge located approximately on the site of the present structure

[30] RCAHMW NPRN 405227 (Banc-y-Warren); RCAHMW AP Refs. AP_2004_065-6
[31] I. Wmffre, *The Place Names of Cardiganshire*, BAR British Series 379, 3 vols (Oxford 2004), I, 4
[32] *Annales Cambriae*, ed. J. Williams ab Ithel (London 1860), 40
[33] See R.A. Griffifths,'The Making of Medieval Cardigan' in *Conquerors & Conquered in Medieval Wales*, (New York 1994) 277-302 for a detailed account of the origins and development of medieval Cardigan.
[34] *Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. McGurk, III, 220-1

immediately S of the Castle, although there appears to have been a ferry crossing further to the E which was reputedly the site of an earlier bridge.[35]

It is difficult to reconcile the divergent battle locations given in Gerald's *Itinerary* and the *Annales Cambriae* since both appear to reflect authentic traditions regarding the battle. Gerald's reference to Crug Mawr, though not repeated by the English or Welsh chronicle sources, is lent weight by the fact that his family were leading participants in the battle. The reference in the *Annales* to the battle 'commencing in front of the castle' is again not specifically corroborated by any of the chronicle sources, however they do indicate that fighting probably took place at some point close to the castle and the nearby crossing of the Teifi, which could perhaps represent a rearguard action following the main engagement further to the NE.

Discussion of Primary Sources

The battle is mentioned in several English and Welsh monastic annals, the descriptions of which vary in detail and emphasis. The earliest accounts which appear to have been written roughly contemporary with or shortly after the events described are those contained in the Gloucester continuation to the *Chronicle of John of Worcester* and the *Gesta Stephani*, both of which appear to have been compiled in the mid to late 1140s. The main accounts of the battle in the Welsh chronicle sources consist of the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae*, the majority of which appears to have been compiled at Strata Florida at some point between 1255 and 1264,[36] and the Penarth MS 20, Red Book of Hergest and Breinhenedd y Saeson texts of the *Brut y Tywysogion*, the existing manuscripts of which are 14th-15th century date but appear to be derived from an original Latin chronicle, also probably compiled at Strata Florida in the mid to late 13th century.

There are close similarities between the account of the battle given in the 'B' text of the Annales and those given in the various texts of the Brut which further suggests that they obtained their information from a single source, although there are also notable differences; in particular the statements in the *Annales* concerning the battle taking place before the castle (of Cardigan) and the fact that the castle was not taken by the Welsh, which do not appear in the *Brut*. However, the accounts given in the *Brut* provide fuller lists of the respective leaders of the Welsh and Anglo-Norman/Flemish armies, compared to those given in the *Annales*.

Apart from the annalistic sources, there are two other accounts of the battle that are of particular importance. The poem 'In Praise of Owain Gwynedd' compiled by Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr (fl. c. 1155-1200) who served as a bard in the court of Madog ap Maredudd prince of Powys (d.1160), contains a vivid description of the battle which was probably composed at some time between 1157 and 1167.

Gerald of Wales's *Itinerarium Kambriae*, written in about 1191, also contains a description of the battle, which is of particular importance as it is the sole authority to

[35] E.M. Pritchard, *Cardigan Priory in the Olden Days* (London 1904), 35

[36] The original manuscript of the 'B' text is contained in NA E164/1. P.M. Remfry, *Annales Cambriae* (Shrewsbury 2007), 16-26 contains a useful discussion of the origins of the 'B' chronicle.

specifically locate the site of the engagement at Crug Mawr. Its particular value is based on the fact that it was presumably based on reliable, first hand information as Gerald's father, William fitz Odo de Barri and his two uncles (Maurice and William fitz Gerald) apparently participated in the battle.

Discussion of Secondary Sources

Somewhat surprisingly, in view of the considerable historic importance of the battle, which resulted in a significant reassertion of Welsh lordship over much of W and SW Wales, it has received only moderate attention in antiquarian and modern scholarly accounts. David Powel's account of the battle in his *Historie of Cambria* (written in 1584) is largely derived from the *Brut* and the *Chronicle of John of Worcester* and does not mention the traditional location of Crug Mawr referred to by Gerald of Wales.[37] Samuel Meyrick, in his 'History of Cardiganshire' (1810) quotes Gerald's account at length, placing the scene of the battle at Crug Mawr and this tradition is repeated in Lewis's 'Topographical Dictionary of Wales' (1833) and other 19th century antiquarian accounts.[38]

The fullest modern scholarly account of the battle remains that given in Lloyd's 'History of Wales', which extensively utilised both the English and Welsh chronicle sources for the battle.[39] Lloyd also appears to have accepted Gerald of Wales's location of the battle site at Crug Mawr without qualification, which is somewhat puzzling in view of his extensive knowledge of the various texts of the *Annales*; however he also contributed some important observations regarding the precise dating of the battle in a series of lectures on the history of Ceredigion.[40] The battle has received relatively little attention in more recent general histories or scholarly monographs and would certainly merit detailed reassessment.

Archaeology and Historic Terrain Assessment

The two possible battle locations indicated by the documentary evidence represent two quite different areas, both in terms of topography and geomorphology.

The site described by Gerald of Wales at Crug Mawr is traditionally presumed to refer to Banc-y-Warren, which represents the southernmost of a series of conical hills forming a glacial massif extending N of Cardigan, although the possibility that it could refer to one of the other hills forming part of this massif cannot be discounted. The predominant soil type in this area has been identified as consisting of the typical brown sands (non-calcareous sandy soils) of the NEWPORT 1 series (551d) comprising deep well-drained sandy and coarse loamy soils over glaciofluvial drift which generally have a slightly acidic pH.[41]

[37] D. Powel, *Historie of Cambria* (1811 ed.), 118
[38] S.R. Meyrick, *The History and Antiquities of Cardiganshire* (London 1810), 176
[39] S. Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* (London 1833).
[40] J.E. Lloyd, *The Story of Ceredigion* (Cardiff 1937), 54n
[41] SSEW, *Soil Survey of England and Wales* (Silsoe 1983)

Both Banc y Warren and, to a much greater extent, the hill further to the N at Banc Cwm-llwyd/Cnwc y Saeson have been impacted by 19th-20th century sand quarrying activity. Banc-y-Warren is currently laid out to pasture although traces of earlier quarrying activity (marked on the OS 1st-3rd edition maps) are still plainly visible while the latter site at Banc Cwm-llwyd/Cnwc y Saeson is currently occupied by an extensive modern sand and gravel quarry. It is likely that any significant archaeological deposits which might exist in this area will have been heavily disturbed by quarrying activity and in view of the slightly acidic nature of the soils in this area, the potential for the preservation of human bone and artefactual evidence relating to the battle is limited.

The other possible battle site, located in the vicinity of Cardigan Castle, now presumably lies within the urban area of Cardigan, possibly extending to the E of the Castle and the river crossing. In this connection, it is worth noting a statement in E.M. Pritchard's history of Cardigan Priory, referring to 'some skulls which were dug up some years ago (in the vicinity of Cardigan Bridge) when rebuilding a house, which skulls had been cleft by battle axes'. [42]

Pritchard interpreted these skulls as evidence of victims of one or several Danish raids on Cardigan; however it is equally possible that they could represent victims of the 1136 battle, particularly in view of the testimony of several of the chronicle sources to the slaughter of the defeated Anglo-Norman/Flemish troops in the vicinity of the river crossing.

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

The battle of Crug Mawr was aptly described by Lloyd as a 'signal victory for the Welsh', largely reversing the territorial gains made by the Anglo-Norman and Flemish lords in Ceredigion which had been made during the reign of Henry I.[43] Taken together with the defeat of the Norman lords of Gower by Hywel of Brycheiniog in January 1136 and the death of the powerful Marcher lord Richard de Clare, they represented a significant revival of native Welsh lordship in South and West Wales, a fact which was commented on in several of the Welsh chronicle sources.[44]

The battle of Crug Mawr was also of importance in that it represented the first occasion when the Welsh inflicted a significant defeat on a substantial Anglo-Norman/Flemish force in a pitched battle. The significance of this victory and the considerable losses sustained by the Anglo-Norman/Flemish forces were not lost on contemporary annalists with a particular interest in affairs on the Welsh Marches, who uniformly appear to have viewed this defeat with considerable alarm. The Gesta Stephani, the Chronicle of John of Worcester and the Winchcombe Annals all agree in their estimation of the battle as a serious reverse and emphasize the heavy losses sustained by the Anglo-Norman/Flemish troops.

[42] E.M. Pritchard, *Cardigan Priory in the Olden Days* (London 1904), 35
[43] J.E. Lloyd, A History of Wales, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 473
[44] *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952) *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973)

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(All maps were obtained from the National Library of Wales unless otherwise stated)

Map of Cardigan by John Speed - 1610

Plan of Crigmawr lying in the parishes of Cardigan and Llangoedmor – 1800 (Plas Llangoedmor Schedule No. 86)

OS Surveyors Drawing of Cardigan (Scale: 2 in. to the mile) - 1810

Tithe Map of the Parish of St Mary Cardigan - 1839

Tithe Map of the Parish of Llangoedmor - 1838

OS 1st edition 25 inch map (Cardiganshire 38.1, 38.5) - 1888

OS 1st edition 6 inch map (Cardiganshire 38 NW)- 1891

OS 2nd edition 25 inch map (Cardiganshire 38.1, 38.5)- 1906

OS 2nd edition 6 inch map (Cardiganshire 38 NW)- 1907

OS provisional edition map (Cardiganshire 38 NW)- 1953

5.3 Maes Gwenllian (precise date not known; January-October 1136)

5.3.1 Site of Battle

Traditionally reputed to be situated near to Maes Gwenllian Farm (NGR SN 4252 0883), situated on the E bank of the Gwendraeth Fach, NW of Mynydd y Garreg, approximately 2km NE of Kidwelly (Carmarthenshire). A monument commemorating the battle is located outside the entrance to Kidwelly Castle (NGR SN 413 072)

5.3.2 Summary

Historical Context of Battle

The battle of Maes Gwenllian should be viewed in the context of the breakdown of Anglo-Norman dominance across much of central and south Wales following the death of Henry I in December 1135. In January 1136, the Welsh of Cantref Bychan and western Glamorgan descended on Gower and there inflicted a significant defeat on the English, located by Gerald of Wales in the vicinity of Loughor.[1]

This defeat appears to have spread alarm throughout much of the southern Welsh Marches, based on the evidence of contemporary English accounts (such as the Gesta Stephani and the Chronicle of Florence of Worcester) and was the first of a series of major uprisings against Anglo-Norman rule in Wales during 1136, culminating in the decisive victory of Crug Mawr, resulting in native Welsh lords re-establishing authority over much of central and southern West Wales.[2]

According to Gerald of Wales, writing in the late 12th century, the Welsh prince of Deheubarth, Gruffydd ap Rhys (whose territory then only consisted of the lordship of Cantref Mawr in northern Carmarthenshire) was engaged in obtaining military assistance from Gwynedd, presumably to instigate a similar revolt, which appears to either have been contemporary with or very shortly after the defeat of the English at Gower.[3]

Curiously, it was actually during Gruffydd's absence in North Wales that his wife Gwenllian, daughter of Gruffydd ap Cynan prince of Gwynedd (described by Gerald as 'like the queen of the Amazons, a second Penthesilea') is said to have led an army into the commote of Kidwelly, presumably to attack the newly built castle which had been established there by Roger bishop of Salisbury before c.1115.[4]

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[1] Two near contemporary accounts of the battle at Gower are contained in the Gesta Stephani (*Gesta Stephani*, ed. & trans. K. R. Potter & R.H.C. Davis (Oxford 1976), 16-7) and the Gloucester continuation of the Chronicle of John of Worcester (*Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. P. McGurk, 3 vols (Oxford 1998) 221-3). For the reference to the battle at Loughor, cf. Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J. Dymock, 8 vols (London 1861-77) VI, 78

[2] J.E. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, 2 vols (London, 1939), II, 469-71

[3] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J. Dymock, 8 vols (London 1861-77) VI, 78-9

[4] For the history of the castle see J.R. Kenyon, *Kidwelly Castle*, 2nd rev. ed. (Cardiff 2002); for Roger of Salisbury's grant of a carucate of land at Kidwelly to Sherborne Priory, issued 'in the hall of the castle (of Kidwelly)' see C. Johnson & H.A. Cronne (eds.) *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* II (Oxford 1956) no. 1042 (dated 19 July 1114). The Latin text of the charter with commentary is printed in B.R. Kemp (ed.) *English Episcopal Acta Vol. 18: Salisbury 1078-1217* (Oxford 1999) no. 18

It is usually assumed that the lordship of Kidwelly had been transferred to Maurice de Londres lord of Ogmore at some point before the end of Henry I's reign. Significantly, however, Gerald of Wales states that the castle was held not only by Maurice but Geoffrey, the Bishop's Constable (*praesulis constabulario*) who may be identified with Geoffrey the constable of the Bishop of Salisbury who was granted land by the Bishop at Ludgate in London in a charter dated to c.1116-39.[5] This suggests that Roger of Salisbury continued to maintain a presence at Kidwelly for some time after Henry I's death; it is possible that Roger may have continued to garrison the castle even after handing over control of the lordship to Maurice de Londres.[6]

5.3.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

The precise date of the battle of Maes Gwenllian is uncertain; it is not recorded by Gerald of Wales, the sole authority for the battle, or in any of the contemporary English or Welsh monastic annals. Gerald of Wales specifically states that Gwenllian's attack took place after the death of Henry I (December 1st, 1135) and appears to be either contemporary with or shortly after the Welsh victory at Gower in January 1136, but probably before the battle of Crug Mawr in October of the same year.[7]

The account by Gerald of Wales gives no indication as to the movements of Gwenllian's forces or those of Maurice de Londres and Geoffrey the Constable prior to the battle. It is reasonable to assume that Gwenllian and her army were advancing southwards from Cantref Mawr though from precisely where is unknown, while the Anglo-Norman forces presumably advanced NE from Kidwelly Castle along the Gwendraeth Fach to engage the Welsh army. The two armies appear to have met in battle in fields to the E of the Gwendraeth Fach.

The Battle and its Aftermath

The only near contemporary account of the events of the battle is contained in a brief passage in Gerald of Wales's Itinerary through Wales, written some fifty years afterwards, which reads as follows.[8]

[5] E.J. Kealey, *Roger of Salisbury, Viceroy of England* (London 1972) 235-7

[6] E.J. Kealey, *Roger of Salisbury, Viceroy of England* (London 1972) 106-7. Also see the comments by J.E. Lloyd, *History of Wales* (London 1939), II, 470n

[7] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J. Dymock, 8 vols (London 1861-77) VI, 78-9 'Anglorum rege Henrico primo rebus humanis exempto'.

[8] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J. Dymock, VI, 78-9. 'In partibus istis, Anglorum rege Henrico primo rebus humanis exempto, dum Griphinus Resi filius, Sudwallie tunc princeps, in Norwalliam auxilium corrogaturus ivisset, uxor eius Guendoloena, tanquam Amazonum regina et Pentesilea secunda, in partes illas exercitum ducens, a Mauricio Londoniensi, loci illius tunc domino, et viro egregio Gaufrido, praesulis contabulario, bellico in certamine confecta, interempto ibidem filio eiusdem Morgano, et altero capto, scilicet Mailgone, quos pueros secum in expeditionem arroganter adduxerat, cum aliis multis ipsa demum ferro confossa caput amisit'

'We crossed the Loughor and the two Gwendraeth streams, and so came to Kidwelly Castle. It was in this region, after the death of Henry I, King of the English, and at a moment when her husband Gruffydd ap Rhys, Prince of South Wales, had gone to North Wales for reinforcements, that the Princess Gwenllian rode forward at the head of an army, like some second Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons. She was beaten in battle by Maurice de Londres, who ruled over the district at that time and by Geoffrey the Bishop's constable. She was so sure of victory that she had brought her two sons with her. One of them, called Morgan, was killed and the other called Maelgwn was captured. Gwenllian herself had her head cut off, and so did many of her followers.'

From Gerald's account, it would appear that the battle was clearly a decisive victory for Maurice de Londres and his allies, and it appears likely that few of the Welsh survived the battle or its immediate aftermath.

A possible allusion to the ruthless treatment of Gwenllian and other captured Welsh prisoners after the battle is contained in a later passage in the Itinerary, in which Gerald refers to 'the terrible vengeance exacted in our own times by the King's Troops on the subject people of the commote of Caeo in Cantref Mawr'.[9] This passage has been interpreted by some scholars as referring to the execution of Gwenllian and her followers after the battle; however while this is certainly plausible it is not explicitly stated in the text.[10] Moreover Gerald's reference to this event having taken place 'in our own times' suggests that it occurred during his own lifetime, which would seem to rule out a direct association with the events of the battle

Troops and Casualties

No detailed information is available on the respective size of the English and Welsh forces.

Gerald of Wales specifically mentions Gwenllian's overconfidence in bringing her two sons, Morgan and Maelgwn, which suggests that she was leading a substantial army, possibly superior in numbers to the Anglo-Norman force. It is reasonable to assume that the Welsh casualties, both during the battle and its aftermath, were severe, based on Gerald of Wales' specific allusion to the beheading of Gwenllian and many of her followers.

5.3.4 Assessment

Battle Location

The probable site of the battle is located approximately 2km NE of Kidwelly Castle, within an extensive area known since the late medieval period as Maes Gwenllian

[9] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J. Dymock, 8 vols (London 1861-77) VI, 81; In his autem de Cantrefmaur finibus, kemmoto videlicet de Kaoc, illud ad animum revocans…quam enormiter in subditos, curia vindictam exercuerit, noster explicare stilus abhorruit'. See comment in Giraldus Cambrensis, *The Journey through Wales and The Description of Wales*, trans. L. Thorpe (London 1978), 139n.

[10] See comment in Giraldus Cambrensis, *The Journey through Wales and The Description of Wales*, trans. L. Thorpe (London 1978), 139n

(Gwenllians Field), situated on the valley slope of the Afon Gwendraeth Fach, its eastern border defined by the upland plateau of Mynydd y Garreg.

The earliest definite reference found to the place name 'Maes Gwenllian' occurs in a deed dated Oct 1432 relating to the mortgage of lands described as lying in 'Wenllian Feld', although it is possible that an earlier reference to land at 'Wenwilhey' in a grant to Kidwelly priory dated 1407-8 may refer to the same place.[11] It is evident from this record and other late 15th/16th century deeds relating to Kidwelly, as well as a rental of the borough dated 1500 that the name 'Maes Gwenllian' referred to a large open field, one of several open fields surrounding the town, within which parcels of land were held by various tenants that were not necessarily contiguous.[12]

Unfortunately the Duchy of Lancaster rentals for Kidwelly dated 1500 and 1609 provide no specific information concerning the names and locations of the various individual parcels of land within the field of Maes Gwenllian,[13] however these field names are specified in a series of late 16th-17th century deeds contained in the Brigstock and Muddlescombe collections held at the National Library of Wales.[14]

The fullest list of these field names is contained in a deed dated 20 Sep 1647 concerning the lease of lands at Maes Gwenllian, which refers to 'all those four several closes or parks of lands commonly called and knowen by the several and respective names of Park y Maen Lloyd (Llwyd), Park Tyr Hyr, Park y Gundum Glas and Park y Groth (Croft) Gam' described as 'being part and parcel of the messuage called Maes Gwenllian' as well as 'all that other part of Maes Gwenllian now in the occupacion of Owen ap Owen which contains one messuage and four closes commonly called and known by the several names of Parke y pound, Park y Werne Greate Parke and Colemans Wood'.[15]

Based on the information contained in these and other late 16th-17th century deeds, it is clear that there were two distinct estates at Maes Gwenllian, one of which was located in the vicinity of the present farm of Maes Gwenllian, while the other was situated further to the NW, close to the E bank of the Gwendraeth Fach.

This is confirmed by the evidence of the OS surveyors drawing of 1811 which depicts two farmsteads, the northernmost 'Maesgwynllean Fach' situated just to the E of the Gwendraeth Fach and the southernmost 'Maesgwynllean Fawr' located some 300m to the SE in the vicinity of present-day Maes Gwenllian Farm.[16] Both farmsteads are shown on the Kidwelly tithe map of 1840, however 'Maesgwynllean Fach' appears to have been demolished before 1880, as it is not shown on the OS 1st edition map of that date.

[11] NLW Muddlescombe Deeds No. 1991 (Mortgage by John Ailward the elder to Thomas Balhed of lands in Wenllian Feld in Kedwelly dated 6 Oct 1432); NA E210/2023 (Grant to John Higdon Prior of Kidwelly of an acre called 'Wenwilhey' adjoining a common pasture called Cadockesmore dated 9 Henry IV)
[12] NA DL 43/13/13; A translation of the survey with useful notes is printed in W.H., Morris 'A Kidwelly town rental of the early sixteenth century', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, Vol. 11 (1975), 55-70
[13] W.Rees (ed.) *A Survey of the Duchy of Lancaster Lordships in Wales* 1609-13 (Cardiff 1953)
[14] NLW Evans George & Sons MSS Brigstock Deeds Nos 38-77 (1577-1702) & NLW Muddlescombe Deeds (1432-1596)
[15] NLW Evans George & Sons MSS. Brigstock Deeds No. 68
[16] NLW OS Surveyors Drawing (2 in to the mile) – 1811; Kidwelly tithe map and apportionment - 1840

Based on the evidence of the deeds and historic mapping, it is clear that Maes Gwenllian refers not only to the area immediately surrounding the present farm at Maes Gwenllian but a more extensive area of fields, interspersed with pockets of enclosed woodland and parkland.

The boundaries of Maes Gwenllian are roughly defined by the edge of the plateau of Mynydd y Garreg to the E, extending down to the Afon Gwendraeth Fach to the W; the N tip of Maes Gwenllian appears to be defined by Wenallt Wood while its southern extent appears to have reached as far as the site of the Kidwelly tinplate works. Consequently it is difficult to establish a precise location for the battle; unfortunately none of the field names referred to in the extant 16th-17th century deeds concerning land in Maes Gwenllian appear to have any direct association with the battle or its aftermath.

Discussion of Primary Sources

The primary written documentation relating to this battle is limited in scope. No reference to the battle is made in the English chronicle sources such as the *Gesta Stephani* or the *Chronicle of John of Worcester* or Welsh authorities such as the *Annales Cambriae* or the various texts of the *Brut y Tywysogion*. Welsh court poets of the time, such as Meilyr Brydydd and Cynddelw Bryddyd Mawr, are also noticeably silent concerning the battle.

The brief description of the battle in Gerald of Wales's *Itinerarium Kambriae*, compiled in about 1191, some fifty five years after the battle took place, is the sole surviving source for the engagement and its aftermath and appears to represent the basis for all subsequent accounts. Gerald provides little detail regarding the deployment of the troops and the course of the battle itself, although his reference to the execution of Gwenllian and many of her followers clearly indicates the ruthless treatment of the defeated Welsh after the battle.

No information is provided in Gerald's account regarding the location of the battle; the presumed siting of the battlefield is based on the place name evidence, which is derived from accounts, rentals and deeds relating to Kidwelly which are relatively plentiful from the 15th century onwards. Important collections of 15th-17th century deeds relating to the battlefield site at Maes Gwenllian are held in the Muddlescombe MSS and the W.Evans George & Sons MSS (Brigstock Deeds), while 16th-17th century rentals of the borough of Kidwelly which make reference to Maes Gwenllian are contained in the records of the Duchy of Lancaster (held at the National Archives).

Discussion of Secondary Sources

The secondary sources for this battle are extremely variable in quality and prone to embellishing details, which appear to have no substantial basis in fact. There appears to have been a significant resurgence of interest in the story of Gwenllian around the middle of the 19th century, with the publication in 1841 of a tragedy entitled 'Gwenllian or the Siege of Kidwelly', authored by local schoolmaster and playwright Evan Andrews

(d.1869).[17] A biographical chapter on Gwenllian in 'The Heroines of Welsh History', published in 1854 by T.J. Llewelyn Prichard (d.1862) provides a lengthy, highly romanticised account of the battle, which appears to be wholly conjectural and not based on documentary evidence.[18]

The antiquarian Rev. D. Daven Jones in his history of Kidwelly, published in 1908, provides an account of the battle which appears to be a highly embellished version of that given in Gerald of Wales's *Itinerarium Kambriae* (also including some inspiration from Andrews' 'Tragedy') recounting that 'after a hot engagement with Maurice de Londres' forces, which took up their position on the slope of a hill about a mile and a half north of Kidwelly on the west bank of the Gwendraeth Fach river, which to this day is called The King's Wood, the Welsh under Gwenllian's command, were defeated and Gwenllian herself, together with her son Morgan, was put to death. The battlefield is still called Maes Gwenllian (the field of Gwenllian) and is situate on the eastern bank of Gwendraeth Fach river, opposite King's Wood'.[19]

In marked contrast to the highly conjectural and romanticised accounts given in the majority of 19th century literature regarding the battle (excepting G.T. Clark's brief note in his History of Kidwelly Castle) modern historical accounts, for instance that given in J.E. Lloyd's *History of Wales* are restrained and limited in scope, being based on the brief account given in Gerald of Wales's *Itinerary*.[20]

Archaeology and Historic Terrain

It is clear from the above documentary sources that the place name 'Maes Gwenllian' refers to an extensive swathe of land extending E-W from Mynydd y Garreg down to the flood plain of the Afon Gwendraeth Fach to the W, and N-S from Wenallt Wood to Llangadog (near the site of the Kidwelly Tinplate Works). Consequently it is difficult to establish a specific site for the battle, particularly as the field-name evidence does not appear to demonstrate any specific association with the battle.

The RCAHMW Inventory (compiled in 1917) makes reference to a low crescent shaped earthwork, some 80ft in length and about 3 feet high, on the north side of the field (which) is traditionally said to mark the burial place of Gwenllian and her son'.[21] The field referred to in the RCAHMW appears to be that immediately N of present-day Maes Gwenllian Farm, extending northwards up to an unclassified lane immediately S of a farm named Cwmsal. No trace of the earthwork was apparently identified during a field visit undertaken by the Ordnance Survey in 1967, which perhaps suggests damage by ploughing.

It is worth noting that both the OS surveyors drawing of 1811 and the Kidwelly tithe map of 1840 both show the northern boundary of this field was originally crescent shaped;

[17] E. Andrews, *Gwenllian or the Siege of Kidwelly: A Tragedy* (London 1841)
[18] T.J. Llewelyn Pritchard, *The Heroines of Welsh History* (Bristol 1854) 358-63
[19] D. Daven Jones, A History of Kidwelly (Carmarthen, 1908) 20-1
[20] G.T. Clark, A History and Description of Kidwelly Castle (London 1851), 22-23; Lloyd, History of Wales, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 470
[21] RCAHMW, *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Carmarthenshire* (London 1917), 56 (no. 156)

however this appears to have altered following regularisation of the field boundaries at some point during the mid 19th century.

Two main soil types have been identified in this area, consisting of the typical reddish brown, stoneless alluvial soils of the LUGWARDINE (561d) series in the flood plain of the Afon Gwendraeth Fach while further up-slope, the soils consist of the typical brown earths of the MILFORD series (541a) comprising well-drained fine loamy reddish soils overlying Devonian sandstone, siltstone, mudstone and slate. A diverse range of artefactual and ecofactual material is likely to be encountered within these deposits, including bone, charcoal and other charred plant remains, pollen/spores and molluscs (including wood and plant remains etc if waterlogged).

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

In regional terms, the victory of Maurice de Londres and his allies at Maes Gwenllian was of considerable importance, effectively securing Anglo-Norman control of the commote of Kidwelly for a generation, although it did not prevent further Welsh raids on the castle and town and its capture (albeit briefly) by the Lord Rhys ap Gruffydd, youngest son of Gwenllian and Gruffydd ap Rhys, in 1190.

In a national context, however, Gwenllian's defeat at Kidwelly appears to have been of relatively little political significance compared to the substantial victories gained by the Welsh in Gower and at Crug Mawr (also in 1136), both of which are comparatively much better covered in both English and Welsh chronicle sources, and which can be demonstrated to have substantially undermined Anglo-Norman hegemony in South and West Wales.

However, the battle of Maes Gwenllian is nonetheless important, as it represents the only major battle in medieval Wales in which a woman is documented as having directly commanded one of the opposing armies. It has been plausibly suggested that Gwenllian's actions might have been the inspiration for Gwendolen, one of the warlike queens in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Brittonum*.[22]

The brutal summary execution of Gwenllian, a princess of the house of Gwynedd, together with many of her captured followers clearly left a lasting legacy of fear and resentment in the surrounding region, as evidenced by Gerald of Wales's account written in the early 1190s. However, the present cultural importance of Gwenllian is largely due to the efforts of 19th century antiquaries, authors and playwrights, which can ultimately be traced back to the brief, dramatic account of her military activities and subsequent demise in Gerald of Wales's Itinerary.

[22] J. Gillingham, 'The Context and Purposes of Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 13 (1991), 99-118 (esp. 113). M. Aurell, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain and the Twelfth Century Renaissance', in S. Morillo et al. (eds.) *Haskins Society Journal: Studies in Medieval History* Vol. 18 (2006), 1-18

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OS 3rd edition 6 inch map (Carmarthenshire 46 SE, 53 NE)- 1922

OS provisional edition 6 inch map (Carmarthenshire 46 SE, 53 NE)- 1953

5.4 Coleshill (late July-early August 1157)

5.4.1 Site of Battle

The site of the battle of Coleshill remains uncertain, the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25 inch map of 1873 and subsequent maps of the area mark the battle site in a field immediately SW of Coleshill Farm, the site of which is now occupied by the Aber Park Industrial Estate. However this identification has been disputed and another possible site for the battlefield has been suggested in the vicinity of Ewloe Green, W of Hawarden.

5.4.2 Summary

Historical Context of Battle

The battle of Coleshill represents the single major engagement fought during Henry II's campaign in North Wales. The object of the campaign was to check the advances of Owain Gwynedd, prince of Gwynedd, in north-east Wales, specifically in the *cantref* of Tegeingl or Englefield (the district stretching east of the River Clwyd to the Dee estuary), which had been largely under Anglo-Norman control for several generations. Owain had secured control over most of Tegeingl following a decisive victory over Madog ap Maredudd, prince of Powys at Coleshill in 1150 and his position was further strengthened by the death of Ranulf earl of Chester three years later.[1]

The expedition to North Wales may be viewed as one of a series of campaigns waged by Henry II following his accession to establish his overlordship in Wales and the Marches, during 1155 he had waged a successful campaign against the Marcher lords in Herefordshire and Shropshire, retaking the castles of Bridgnorth, Wigmore and Cleobury, while in 1158, he launched an expedition to South Wales against Rhys ap Gruffudd prince of Deheubarth.[2]

5.4.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

No information has been found to establish the exact day on which the battle was fought, although it appears likely that the battle was fought at some point during late July or early August of 1157. It is not altogether easy to establish when and where the battle was fought and information regarding the movements of the English and Welsh forces prior to the engagement is similarly limited.

Henry II's expedition to Wales is presumed to have occurred following a royal council held at Northampton on July 17th, 1157, when, according to Lloyd, 'measures against Owain Gwynedd were finally resolved upon'.[3] It appears more likely that Henry II's

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[1] For accounts of Owain Gwynedd's activities in north-east Wales in the early 1150s, see J.E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the earliest times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 494-5 and R.R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063-1415* (Oxford 2000), 48-50

[2] R.R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063-1415* (Oxford 2000), 52

[3] J.E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the earliest times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 496

preparations were actually set in motion some time before this date; the well-informed contemporary chronicle of Robert de Torigni mentions that 'around the feast of St John the Baptist (June 24th), King Henry prepared a great expedition, so that throughout the whole of England two knights were to equip a third, to assault the Welsh by land and sea'.[4]

Robert de Torigni's testimony implies that this was a substantial expedition, ambitiously planned with land-based and seaborne components, and his account of Henry II's preparations can be confirmed by references to expenditure recorded in the Pipe Roll for 1157-8. The scale of the expedition is confirmed by Henry II's utilisation of the feudal levy, although it is significant that the King, instead of resorting to the traditional expedient of raising the entire body of knights to serve their legal term of forty days, only raised one third of the host (presumably for a threefold term of service).[5] Evidence for preparations associated with the seaborne part of the expedition is indicated by a reference in the account of the Pipe Roll for 1157-8 to a payment of £4 to Roger the Constable (of Winchester) for hiring a ship to carry the King's supplies (*corredium Regis*) to Pembroke'.[6]

The principal objective of the seaborne expedition, which was apparently led by Henry fitz Henry, lord of Narberth (illegitimate son of Henry I by Nest of Pembroke) and Robert fitz Stephen of Cardigan, is unclear. It has been suggested by Lloyd and other authors that the fleet was originally intended to support the advance of the main force (led by the King himself) presumably by landing at Deganwy or Rhuddlan, however the seaborne force appears to have landed in Anglesey and plundered the surrounding district, subsequently being routed by the local inhabitants.[7]

Following the council of Northampton (July 17th, 1157), it is presumed that Henry II proceeded to Chester - a date in late July/early August appears most likely. The King appears to have been accompanied by a substantial force, described by the majority of the English and Welsh monastic chronicles as an immense army. Several of the chronicles report that the English army encamped outside Chester, the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae* and the RBH version of the Brut both state that the encampment was situated in the open field of Chester, while the *Brenheinedd y Saeson* states that the encampment was situated in the marsh of Chester.[8] Powel's version of the Brut specifically locates the encampment at Saltney Marsh, W of Chester, which may have been influenced by the description of the locale in the Brenheinedd.[9]

The movements of Owain Gwynedd and his army prior to the battle are more consistently attested by the chronicle sources. The 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae* and the *Brut y*

[4] P.M. Remfry, Annales Cambriae: A Translation of Harleian MS 3859, PRO E 164/1, Cottonian Domitian A.1 Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3514 and MS Exchequer DB Neath PRO E 164/1 (Shrewsbury 2007), 87.
[5] *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett, 4 vols (London 1889), IV, 193
[6] *Pipe Roll 3 Henry II*, 108
[7] *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973), 135-6
[8] P.M. Remfry, Annales Cambriae (Shrewsbury 2007), 87. *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973), 135-6; *Brenhinedd y Saeson*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1971), 158-9
[9] D. Powel, *Historie of Cambria* (London 1811), 150

Tywysogion essentially all agree on the fact that Owain, together with his sons Dafydd and Cynan, assembled a substantial army, encamped at 'Dinas Basing' and established earthwork fortifications (described in the *Annales* as a castle and by the RBH and Peniarth MS 20 versions of the *Brut* as a ditch or ditches) there to await the advance of the King's forces.[10] The location of Owain's fortified position at 'Dinas Basing', however, remains uncertain, some scholars have placed it in the vicinity of Basingwerk Abbey near Holywell while it has also been tentatively identified with the defended enclosure at Hen Blas.[11]

The Battle and its Aftermath

Accounts of the battle are given in both Welsh and English monastic annals and in Gerald of Wales's *Itinerary,* all of which vary in detail and emphasis. In spite of these variations, it is nevertheless possible to determine the principal events of the battle although it is difficult to establish precise details as to chronology and the location of the events described.

The fullest description of the battle, contained in the RBH text of the Brut, states that Henry II, on hearing of the location of Owain's forces, 'divided his host and sent many knights and barons beyond number with a strong multitude along the shore. And the King himself unperturbed and armed forces most ready to fight along with him, advanced through the wood that was between them and the place where Owain was'.[12] The account in the Peniarth MS, although it does not explicitly refer to the division of Henry II's forces, agrees with the RBH account in most respects, with the important exception that it specifically states that King Henry and his portion of the army 'came through the wood which was between them, which was called the wood of Hawarden (*coed Pennardlaoc*)'.[13]

The 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae* provides a slightly different account, stating that 'the King with diligence acted cunningly, he pressed on along the shore road towards Owain's entrenchment but before reaching it he turned aside'.[14] From these accounts it would appear likely that the main body of the army advanced along the shoreline of the Dee towards Owain's fortified position at 'Dinas Basing', while Henry II advanced with a smaller portion of his army through woodland which lay between them and Owain's fortification, presumably to outflank it.

The English chronicle sources do not provide as detailed a description of the movements of the English army, although both William of Newburgh and Gerald of Wales make reference to Henry II's advance through woodland (which Gerald refers to as 'the wood

[10] P.M. Remfry, Annales Cambriae (Shrewsbury 2007), 87. *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973), 135-6; *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952), 58-9

[11] D.J. C. King, 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill', *Welsh History Review*, Vol. 2 no. 4 (1965), 367-73; J.G. Edwards, 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill: Some Further Reflections', *Welsh Historical Review*, Vol. 3 no. 3 (1967), 251-63

[12] *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973), 135-6

[13] *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952), 58-9

[14] P.M. Remfry, *Annales Cambriae* (Shrewsbury 2007), 87

of Coleshill'). It is clear from the majority of the chronicle accounts that Henry II was ambushed by the Welsh during his advance through this area of woodland; the precise location of the ambush, however, remains an issue of considerable uncertainty.

The narratives of the battle contained in the RBH and Peniarth MS versions of the *Brut* and the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae* all agree that Henry's forces were ambushed by Dafydd and Cynan the sons of Owain Gwynedd and suffered heavy losses. The text of the RBH states that 'Cynan and Dafydd, sons of Owain, encountered him in the wild wood and gave the King a severe battle. And after many of the King's men had been slain, it was with difficulty that he escaped back to the plain'.[15] The 'B' text of the *Annales* contains a slightly different version of events, stating that Cynan and Dafydd 'with those guarding against this, gave a sharp battle, and many of the King's men were killed, those who pressed on escaping death'.[16]

The account in the *Brenhinedd y Saeson*, though briefer, is markedly different from that given in other versions of the *Brut*, stating that 'against them came Dafydd ap Owain, and he pursued them as far as the strand of Chester, slaughtering them murderously'.[17] This reference to a pursuit as far as the shore of the Dee is of considerable interest as it appears to be corroborated by a source independent of the *Brut* and contemporary with the events described, namely an elegy composed by Cynddelw on the death of the bard Bleddyn Fardd of Powys.[18]

The most detailed contemporary English source for the battle, namely William of Newburgh's *History of English Affairs,* largely corroborates the Welsh chronicle accounts of Henry II and part of his army being ambushed in woodland by the Welsh.[19] It describes how 'the King, entering their confines after much opposition, through the nature and difficulties of the country, met with a very inauspicious commencement to his plans, for a portion of the army, proceeding incautiously through a wooded and marshy district, was much endangered by falling into an ambush, which the enemy had laid for him on his route'.

William adds further details about the losses inflicted upon Henry's forces, specifically mentioning the death of two eminent nobles - Eustace fitz John, constable of Chester (described as 'a great and aged person, highly renowned for wealth and wisdom, among the noblest chiefs of England') and Robert de Courcy, who 'with many others unfortunately perished'. William further relates how 'those who has escaped the danger, supposing that the King had fallen among the rest (though by the favour of God, he had forced his way through and was now in safety), related his death to the troops, as they approached, and hastening to the defile induced a large portion of the army, ingloriously to fly, insomuch that Henry of Essex, a man of the highest distinction, and hereditary

[15] *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973), 135-6
[16] P.M. Remfry, *Annales Cambriae* (Shrewsbury 2007), 87
[17] *Brenhinedd y Saeson*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1971), 158-9
[18] Printed with discussion in G.R. Gruffydd, 'A Welsh poet falls at the battle of Coleshill, 1157: Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr's elegy for Bleddyn Farrd of Powys', *Flintshire Society Journal*, Vol. 36 (2003), 52-58
[19] *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett, 4 vols (London 1889), I, 105-9

standard-bearer to the king, throwing down the royal banner by which the army was to be animated, took to flight, and proclaimed to all he met that the king was dead.'
William's account of how reports of Henry's supposed death induced Henry of Essex, the King's standard bearer and part of the English army to flee in disorder is confirmed by several contemporary chroniclers, including Gervase of Canterbury and Robert de Torigni.[20] Further details about the ambush are supplied by a slightly later account in Jocelin of Brakelond's Chronicle of Bury St Edmunds (compiled c.1210), which is of considerable value as its source was apparently none other than Henry of Essex himself.[21] Jocelin relates that Henry 'had falsely cast away the standard of the King in the difficult passage of Coleshill, and had cried out in a loud voice that the King was dead, causing those who were coming to his defence to turn and flee'. At this point Jocelin adds material which does not appear in William of Newburgh's account, stating that 'this (the King's death) indeed would have come to pass, had not Roger Earl of Clare, a man of famous birth and yet more famous in the field of war, hastened betimes with his men of Clare and raised the King's standard to rally and hearten the whole host'.

Precise details of Henry II's movements following the ambush are unclear; the RBH and the Peniarth MS 20 texts of the *Brut* both state that the King and his remaining forces escaped to the open country, but precisely where is unclear. However, the 'B' text of the *Annales* and the RBH and Peniarth MS 20 versions of the Brut all appear to agree that Henry's contingent had emerged from the woodland either on the rear or flank of Owain's entrenched position.[22] The RBH text states that 'and when Owain heard that the King was coming against him from the rear side and saw the knights approaching from the other side, and with them a mighty host under arms, he left that place and retreated as far as the place that was called Cil Owain.[23]

The 'B' text of the Annales Cambriae and the Peniarth MS 20 and RBH texts of the Brut all concur that Henry II subsequently appears to have rejoined the main force and continued along the coast to Rhuddlan, while Owain appears to have retreated southwards to the vicinity of St Asaph, 'harrassing the King by day and night', first retreating to Cilowen (presumably identifiable with the settlement located 2km to the S of Llanfair Talhaiarn) then proceeding to 'Tal Llwyn Pinna' (identifiable with Bryn y pin Farm S of Bodelwyddan).[24]

Troops and Casualties

None of the English or Welsh annalists provide precise details regarding the respective size of Henry II or Owain's forces, although both are described as being of considerable size. The fact that Henry II summoned one third of the entire feudal host would appear to

[20] J.E. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 497; *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (London 1879-80), I, 165
[21] *The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond*, ed. & trans. H.E. Butler (London 1949), 69-70
[22] P.M. Remfry, Annales Cambriae (Shrewsbury 2007), 87. *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973), 135-6; *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952), 58-9
[23] *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973), 135-6
[24] *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973), 135-6; *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952), 58-9

lend weight to the chronicle descriptions of the English army as 'mighty' and 'immense'; further evidence for the composition of the English forces is provided by a reference in the account of William fitz Alan sheriff of Shropshire in the Pipe Roll for 1157-58, relating to a payment of 47s to a contingent of royal archers 'in exercitu', almost certainly referring to Henry II's expedition to Wales.[25] Henry's forces were further augmented by a contingent of troops led by Madog ap Maredudd of Powys, the presence of which is attested by the 'C' text of the *Annales Cambriae* and the evidence of an elegy composed by the Welsh bard Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr, commemorating one Bleddyn Farrd, a court poet to Madog ap Maredudd who fell during the battle.[26]

It is noticeable that the Welsh chronicle sources specifically describe the composition of the main body of the English force which advanced along the shore of the Dee as consisting of 'many earls and barons' accompanied by 'a strong force fully equipped'. Unfortunately the portion of the army led by the King himself is much less clearly described by the Welsh chronicles, the Peniarth MS 20 version of the *Brut* refers to it as consisting of 'armed forces most ready to fight' while the RBH text describes 'an innumerable armed host, fearless and ready for battle'.[27]

The composition of Henry's flanking force has been a subject of speculation by modern scholars; Lloyd's account describes how Henry 'plunged himself, with a body of light armed troops, into the thick of the forest', while a more recent study by J.D. Hosler suggests that 'the force led into the woods by Henry was primarily infantry'.[28] There is, however, insufficient documentary evidence to support either of these assumptions. Moreover, it is clear from William of Newburgh and Jocelin de Brakelond's account of the Welsh ambush that the King was accompanied by at least four nobles of the first rank, which suggests that his detachment consisted, at least in part, of heavily armed, mounted knights rather than merely lightly armed skirmishers.[29]

Henry of Essex was the King's constable and standard bearer and a prominent figure at Henry's court during the first three years of his reign, a position which he appears to have rapidly lost following rumours of his conduct during the Welsh expedition, finally resulting in a formal accusation of cowardice and treason by Robert de Montfort and his defeat in judicial combat in 1163 after which he took the monastic habit at Reading.[30]

Roger de Clare, Earl of Hertford, was a leading magnate with extensive landed interests in Wales and the Marches, who subsequently played a significant role in the campaign to re-conquer Ceredigion in 1158-9.[31] The two barons who are recorded by William of Newburgh as having been slain in the ambush, Robert de Courci and Eustace fitz John,

[25] *Pipe Roll 3 Hen II*, 89. 'Et in liberatione archiarorum Regis in exercitu – 47s'
[26] G.R. Gruffydd, 'A Welsh poet falls at the battle of Coleshill, 1157: Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr's elegy for Bleddyn Farrd of Powys', *Flintshire Society Journal*, Vol. 36 (2003), 52-8
[27] *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973), 135-6
[28] J.D. Hosler, 'Henry II's Military Campaigns in Wales', *The Journal of Medieval Military History*, Vol. 2, ed. B.S. Bachrach *et al*. (2004), 63-4
[29] A point emphasised in D.J. Cathcart King, 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill', Welsh History Review Vol. 2 (1964-5), 372.
[30] For an account of Henry of Essex's career, see E. Amt, *The Accession of Henry II in England: royal government restored 1149-1159* (Woodbridge 1993), 73-4
[31] J.E. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 506

were also men of the first rank; Robert de Courci served as steward in the household of the Empress Matilda and Henry II while Eustace fitz John (c.1100-1157) held extensive estates in Yorkshire and Northumberland and inherited the barony of Halton (Cheshire) and the constableship of Chester by marriage to Agnes, daughter of William fitz Nigel.[32]

Regrettably, there is little information from either the English or Welsh chronicle sources concerning the size or composition of the forces commanded by Owain Gwynedd and his sons. From the references in the various texts of the Brut to a 'mighty host' it would appear that Owain had assembled a substantial force, which also appears to have been divided into two portions, the main part of which, under Owain's leadership, was based at his fortified position at Dinas Basing while another portion, under the command of his sons Cynan and Dafydd was apparently stationed in woodland protecting Owain's flank.

The majority of the English and Welsh chronicle sources appear to agree that the ambush of Henry II's detachment by the Welsh resulted in heavy casualties for the English forces with several prominent nobles being slain, although no specific numbers are given. No information is available on the number of Welsh casualties suffered during the battle.

5.4.4 Assessment

Battle Location

As previous scholars have recognized, there are two key problems to be addressed in establishing the movements of the English and Welsh forces and the location of the principal battle site, the first being the location of Owain's fortified position at Dinas Basing, the second being the location of the ambush of Henry II's forces by the sons of Owain Gwynedd.

The Site of 'Dinas Basing'

It was originally assumed by Lloyd and Cathcart-King that 'Dinas Basing' referred to a site in the vicinity of the ruins of Basingwerk Priory at Greenfield near Holywell,[33] which would agree with the evidence for Owain having encamped in a fortified position to meet the English force approaching along the coast road from Chester towards Rhuddlan, and there is evidence of a modest earthwork motte (Bryn-y-Castell) established on a naturally defensible site at Holywell, approximately 1km SW of the Priory site which could possibly be interpreted as the site of 'Dinas Basing', although this identification has been questioned, on the basis that this motte is more likely to have been associated with Holywell.[34]

[32] For a brief biography of Robert de Courci see H.A. Cronne & R.H.C. Davis (eds.) *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum Vol. III Regesta Regis Stephani ac Mathildis imperatricis* (Oxford 1968), xxx. For biographical details of Eustace fitz John, see K.S.B. Keats Rohan, *Domesday Descendants: A prosopography of persons occurring in English documents 1066-1166, II, Pipe Rolls to Cartae Baronum* (Woodbridge 2002), 918-9.

[33] J.E. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 497; D.J. C. King, 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill', *Welsh History Review*, Vol. 2 no. 4 (1965), 367

[34] D.J.C. King Castellarium Anglicanum, 2 vols (London 1983), II, 559

Indeed, it has been convincingly argued that, although the monastic community of Basingwerk was in existence by c.1131, it did not come into occupation of the Greenfield site until shortly after Henry II's campaign of 1157 and that while the monks certainly occupied a place called 'Basingwerk' prior to 1157, the original 'Basingwerk' was almost certainly not situated at Greenfield and, in fact, was more likely to have been situated somewhere in the vicinity of Coleshill.[35]

A plausible candidate for the location of Dinas Basing is represented by the earthworks of Hen Blas (NGR SJ 222 734), another naturally defensible site located on the spur of two streams, commanding what is aptly described by King as the 'almost impassable ravine' of the Nant-y-Ferm extending NE and coming to an end only some 300m from the present shoreline. The earthwork remains consist of an inner enclosure defined by steep natural slopes except to the W, where it is separated by a ditch from a larger outer enclosure also defended by a ditch to the W. The origins of the fortification are uncertain; the promontory site suggests an Iron Age origin although it could well have been the site of an early medieval *llys* or princely residence.

Archaeological investigations during the mid-late 1950s revealed the remains of a stone chapel dating from late 11th-early 12th century situated within the outer enclosure.[36] A small motte and bailey castle was established there at an unspecified point in the 12th century, with evidence for a later phase of activity represented by stone buildings dated to the 13th-late 14th century.

It should be noted that no archaeological evidence was found to indicate a specific phase of hurried fortification of the site as suggested by the chronicle sources, nor was any evidence found indicative of activity which might be associated with an attack or siege, although the limited extent of the investigations undertaken by Leach in the mid 1950s should be taken into account. There is nevertheless potential for further investigation of the Hen Blas site to determine whether a more precise phasing for the outer enclosure and the motte and bailey castle could be established.

While the identification of Hen Blas with 'Dinas Basing', the original site of the Priory of Basingwerk, is certainly feasible, it has not been possible, based on the available documentary and cartographic sources, to confirm this identification, consequently the site of Owain's 'entrenchments remains undetermined.

The Site of Ambush of Henry II's Forces

The location of the ambush of Henry II's forces by the sons of Owain Gwynedd has been an issue of considerable scholarly discussion. The English and Welsh chronicle sources largely agree that the detachment of the army led by King Henry was attacked by the Welsh in dense woodland, while three authorities, namely Gerald of Wales, William of

[35] J.G. Edwards, 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill: Some Further Reflections', *Welsh Historical Review*, Vol. 3 no. 3 (1967), 254-6 G. Lloyd, 'Excavations at Hen Blas, Coleshill Fawr near Flint', *Flintshire Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 18 (1960), 55-60 (including an important contribution by A. Taylor)
[36] G.B. Leach, 'Excavations at Hen Blas, Coleshill Fawr near Flint', *Flintshire Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 17 (1957), 1-15; G. Lloyd, 'Excavations at Hen Blas, Coleshill Fawr near Flint', *Flintshire Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 18 (1960), 13-60

Newburgh and Jocelin de Brakelond are more specific in their description of the locale of the ambush, describing it as taking place in a narrow, heavily wooded defile or pass.[37]

However there is considerable divergence between the various chronicle sources as to the precise location of this heavily wooded pass where Henry's forces were ambushed. The Chronicle of Jocelin de Brakelond describes the ambush as taking place 'in the difficult passage of Coleshill' while the Itinerary of Gerald of Wales provides more detail, describing how, after spending the previous night at Basingwerk Abbey and riding across an extensive quicksand (presumably referring to the route along the shoreline of the Dee estuary) 'on our right we passed the forest of Coleshill, the hill of coal (where) in our own time Henry II, King of the English, was badly mauled when he made his first assault on Wales'.[38] Gerald again refers to the 'wood of Coleshill' as being the site of the ambush in a later part of the same chapter, describing the story of a young Welshman who had been killed 'while passing through the King's army' and whose body was guarded by his dog from the attacks of dogs, wolves and birds of prey.

Some scholars have taken Coleshill to refer specifically to the vill of Coleshill, W of Flint, the earliest being the late 16th century antiquarian David Powel who describes the battle as taking place 'not far from Flynt'.[39] This would appear to account for the siting of the battle on the OS 1st edition map in the vicinity of Coleshill Farm, presumed to have been the manorial centre of the vill of Coleshill; a similar location was also suggested by D.J.C. King, in his article on 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill'.[40]

However, as J.G. Edwards observed in his rejoinder to King's article, the name Coleshill not only related to the vill but also to a *commote* or district within the cantref of Tegeingl. The extent of the medieval forest of Coleshill is difficult to determine precisely, it may well have been roughly coterminous with the *commote* of Coleshill, encompassing a substantial area to the S of the Dee Estuary, extending from Holywell as far SE as Hawarden.[41] Assuming this to be the case, then it appears that the allusion to Coleshill in Gerald of Wales, Jocelin de Brakelond and the Annales Cestriensis could just as well refer to a much broader area rather than a particular location NW of Flint. However, it would seem from the accounts given by Gerald, Jocelin and William of Newburgh that the ambush took place in a narrow defile or pass located somewhere within this once extensive tract of woodland.

Another, entirely different location for the ambush site has been suggested by the historians J.E. Lloyd and J.G. Edwards based on the evidence of the Peniarth MS 20 text of the Brut, which specifically refers to King Henry and his portion of the army coming 'through the wood which was between them (and Owain's fortified position), which was called the wood of Hawarden (*koed Pennardlaoc*)'.[42] Based on the reference to the wood

[37] Giraldus Cambrensis, Opera, ed. Dimock, VI, 137
[38] Giraldus Cambrensis, Opera, ed. Dimock, VI, 138
[39] D. Powel, *Historie of Cambria* (London 1811), 151
[40] D.J. C. King, 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill', *Welsh History Review*, Vol. 2 no. 4 (1965), 367
[41] J.G. Edwards, 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill: Some Further Reflections', *Welsh Historical Review*, Vol. 3 no. 3 (1967), 259-61
[42] J.E. Lloyd, History of Wales 2 vols (London 1939), II, 497; J.G. Edwards, 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill: Some Further Reflections', *Welsh Historical Review*, Vol. 3 no. 3 (1967), 258-9

of Hawarden, Edwards located the scene of the Welsh ambush to the locality of Ewloe, approximately 2km NW of Hawarden; certainly there are a number of place names in both Ewloe and Hawarden which have traditional associations with the battle, most notably Trueman's Hill, which was traditionally reputed to be 'a fortification to prevent Henry II from advancing by this pass into Wales'.[43]

Moreover two poems composed by the Welsh bard Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr appear to place the scene of the battle in the locality of Hawarden. The first, written on the death of the poet Bleddyn Fardd of Powys in battle at Coleshill specifically describes how 'there has been slain a youth of flawless verse (it is no fault to honour him) *below the court of Pennardd* (*oddis llaw llys Bennardd*)', while the other, composed 'in praise of Owain Gwynedd' refers to how the poet saw the English 'killed splendidly' at the rampart of Hawarden (*rhag Pennardd*). Both poems would appear to locate the battle close to Hawarden Castle; the present fortress appears to have originated as a motte and bailey castle in the 12th century although the existing masonry castle dates from the late 13th century.[44]

While the references in these two poems would seem to refer to a specific location somewhere in the vicinity of Hawarden, the reference to the 'coed Pennardlaoc' in the Peniarth MS 20 text of the Brut must be regarded with some caution. The late 18th century antiquarian Thomas Pennant interpreted it as being synonymous with 'Coed Eulo' (Ewloe Wood); however it is entirely possible, as H. Wyn Owen has observed in his study of Place Names of East Flintshire, that it could denote a much larger area, the extent of which is difficult to establish.[45] It is possible, indeed, that the 'coed Pennardlaoc' mentioned in the Peniarth MS 20 text of the *Brut* could be identical to the 'wood of Coleshill' mentioned in the English chronicle sources.

Another problem in accepting Hawarden as the site of the ambush, as King pointed out subsequently, relates to its considerable distance from Owain's defended position at 'Dinas Basing', which would seem most likely to be located somewhere between Holywell and Flint, close to the coast road (*via littorea*) to Rhuddlan extending along the shore of the Dee along which the main bulk of the English army are said to have advanced, whether at Basingwerk, Holywell or Hen Blas near Bagillt.[46]

The Welsh chronicle sources all state that the ambush occurred as a result of Henry II's forces advancing through dense woodland which lay between them and Owain's hastily raised fortification, and that Owain subsequently withdrew when he learnt that Henry II's troops had emerged either on the flank or to the rear of his position. Consequently, it may be inferred that the woodland where the ambush took place was probably located

[43] H.W. Owen, The Place Names of East Flintshire (Cardiff 1994), 69; RCAHMW, *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Flintshire* (London 1912) no. 106

[44] G.R. Gruffydd, 'A Welsh poet falls at the battle of Coleshill, 1157: Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr's elegy for Bleddyn Farrd of Powys', *Flintshire Society Journal*, Vol. 36 (2003), 57-8. For the text of Cynddelw's poem 'In Praise of Owain Gwynedd' see R. Andrews (ed.), *Welsh Court Poems* (Cardiff 2008) the text of the poem is given on pp. 3-4 (the section describing the battle is contained in l. 60-5) with commentary on pp. 51-5

[45] T. Pennant, *Tours in Wales*, ed. J. Rhys, 3 vols (London 1883), I, 115; H.W. Owen, *The Place Names of East Flintshire* (Cardiff 1994), 62-3

[46] D.J. C. King, 'The Defence of Wales 1067-1283', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, Vol. 126 (1977), 7-8

somewhere reasonably close to the fortification at 'Dinas Basing'. If the site of the ambush was indeed at Ewloe or Hawarden, then this would suggest that Owain's defended position was somewhere in this area. However, this would appear to be too far away from the Dee estuary to have formed an effective obstacle to a force advancing along the coast road from Chester although it cannot be entirely ruled out.

Having reviewed the conflicting evidence for the location of the battle, it is clear that there remains a great deal of uncertainty regarding the site of Owain's fortified position at 'Dinas Basing' and the 'heavily wooded pass' where Henry II and his troops were ambushed. However it is reasonable to assume that 'Dinas Basing' was located somewhere relatively close to the coast road from Chester to Rhuddlan as the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae*, the Peniarth MS 20 and RBH versions of the Brut clearly indicate that the purpose of Owain's earthwork fortifications was provide a defensive position from which he intended to give battle to the English forces advancing along the shore of the Dee. If the defended enclosure of Hen Blas, as Edwards plausibly suggested, represents the site of 'Dinas Basing', then it is possible that Henry II may have attempted to outflank Owain's fortification by advancing along the wooded valley of the Nant-y-Flint to the SW, although no evidence of place names directly associated with the battle has been derived from the Holywell tithe map and apportionment of 1841.

Discussion of Primary Sources

Details of the battle, the events preceding it and its subsequent aftermath primarily consist of references in English and Welsh monastic annals, most of which were compiled in the 13th century with the exception of references in several mid-late 12th century annals, the earliest being Robert of Torigni's *Chronicle* followed by William of Newburgh's *History of English Affairs*, Gervase of Canterbury's *Chronicle* and Jocelin de Brakelond's *Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, the latter being of particular significance as Jocelin apparently relied on the testimony of Henry of Essex who had been Henry II's standard bearer during the battle.[47] A brief but valuable passage describing the location of the battle 'in a heavily wooded pass at Coleshill' appears in Gerald of Wales's *Itinerarium Kambriae* (compiled in about 1191). The battle is also mentioned briefly in the Annals of St Werburgh's Abbey at Chester (*Annales Cestriensis*), compiled in the late 14th-early 15th century.[48]

The events of the battle are described at length in the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae*, the majority of which appears to have been compiled at Strata Florida at some point between 1255 and 1264,[49] and the Peniarth MS 20, Red Book of Hergest (RBH) and Breinhenedd y Saeson texts of the *Brut y Tywysogion*, the existing manuscripts of which are 14th-15th century date but appear to be derived from an original Latin chronicle, also probably compiled at Strata Florida in the mid to late 13th century. The accounts of the battle in the Peniarth MS 20 and RBH texts of the Brut and the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae* show close similarities, suggesting that they are derived from a common

[47] *The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond*, ed. & trans. H.E. Butler (London 1949), 69-70
[48] *Annales Cestrienses or Chronicle of the Abbey of St Werburg at Chester*, ed. R.C. Christie, Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society Vol. 17 (Manchester 1887)
[49] The original manuscript of the 'B' text is contained in NA E164/1. P.M. Remfry, *Annales Cambriae* (Shrewsbury 2007), 16-26 contains a useful discussion of the origins of the 'B' chronicle.

source which appears to have been particularly well informed concerning the activities of the English and Welsh forces during the battle.

Apart from the chronicle sources, there are two other accounts of the battle that are of particular importance, consisting of two poems composed by Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr (fl. c. 1155-1200) who served as a bard in the court of Madog ap Maredudd prince of Powys (d.1160), namely a panegyric 'In Praise of Owain Gwynedd' (dating from c.1157-67) and an elegy for Bleddyn Fardd, a bard of Powys who fell in the battle of Coleshill.[50] Further evidence of the military preparations of the English forces is contained in the Pipe Rolls for 1156-58.[51]

Discussion of Secondary Sources

There is a fairly sizeable body of secondary literature relating to the battle of Coleshill, both in terms of antiquarian descriptions and modern scholarly accounts. The earliest antiquarian account of the battle, in Powel's 'Historie of Cambria', published in 1584, appears to have utilised various texts of the Brut and several English chronicles, in particular the account in William of Newburgh, but also adds details that appear to have been derived from other sources.[52] The late 18th century antiquarian Thomas Pennant, in his *History of the Parish of Holywell* and his *Tours in Wales*, includes some important observations relating to sites traditionally associated with the battle.[53]

Apart from a brief discussion of the evidence for the battle site contained in Egerton Phillimore's footnotes to his edition of Owen's Pembrokeshire and in two DNB articles by T.F. Tout on Owain Gwynedd and his son Dafydd, the first detailed modern scholarly account of the battle is contained in Lloyd's *History of Wales*. Lloyd's initial view expressed in his *History* was that 'no precise indication of the site is at present possible' although (following a suggestion by Phillimore) he did venture the probable identification of the 'Koet Kennadlaoc' as given in the notoriously inaccurate Rolls Edition of the Brut as a misreading of'Coed Pennardd Alaog' (ie. the wood of Hawarden).[54] Following the publication of a modern critical edition of the Peniarth MS. 20 of the Brut, the correct rendering of 'Coed Pennardlaoc' was established and Lloyd subsequently expressed a less qualified view in his entries on Dafydd ap Owain Gwynedd that the ambush of Henry II took place 'in the woods of Hawarden'.[55]

[50] G.R. Gruffydd, 'A Welsh poet falls at the battle of Coleshill, 1157: Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr's elegy for Bleddyn Farrd of Powys', *Flintshire Society Journal*, Vol. 36 (2003), 52-8; For Cynddelw's poem 'In Praise of Owain Gwynedd' see R. Andrews (ed.), *Welsh Court Poems* (Cardiff 2008); the text of the poem is given on pp. 3-4 with commentary on pp. 51-5

[51] *The Great Rolls of the Pipe for the second, third and fourth years of the reign of King Henry the Second*, ed. J. Hunter (London 1844). Also see references cited in J.E. Lloyd, History of Wales, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 497-8

[52] D. Powel, *Historie of Cambria* (London 1811), 151

[53] T. Pennant, *A History of the Parishes of Whiteford and Holywell* (London 1796); T. Pennant, *Tours in Wales*, ed. J. Rhys, 3 vols (London 1883)

[54] J.E. Lloyd, History of Wales, 2 vols (London 1939), II, 497-9

[55] J.G. Edwards, 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill: Some Further Reflections', *Welsh Historical Review*, Vol. 3 no. 3 (1967), 259-60

Further scholarly debate concerning the chronology of Henry II's campaign and the location of the battle site was engendered by an important article by D.J.C. King on 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill' which identified the location of the main scene of fighting immediately to the NW of Flint, essentially in the vicinity of present-day Coleshill Farm.[56]

However, Cathcart King's reconstruction of the campaign and his location of the battle site were seriously challenged by J. Goronwy Edwards in his paper on 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill: Some Further Reflections'.[57] Edwards focused on the problems presented by the various texts of the Welsh chronicles and in particular, Cathcart King's failure to consider the reference in the Peniarth MS 20 text of the Brut to the 'koed Pennardlaoc' and the evidence suggesting a possible location for the Welsh encampment of 'Dinas Basing' at Hen Blas rather than the site of the monastery of Basingwerk. Edwards' article remains the most comprehensive and measured treatment of the documentary evidence although his identification of the site of the ambush of Henry II's forces at Ewloe Green near Hawarden is open to dispute.

King presented a slightly modified version of his interpretation of the battle, while maintaining his location of the main action at Coleshill, in a paper delivered to the Cambrian Archaeological Association in 1977.[58] A recent study of Henry II's campaigns in Wales by J.D. Hosler contains a useful reassessment of the tactics employed by Henry II during the 1157 campaign but does not engage in a detailed discussion of the evidence for the location of Owain's fortified position or the ambush of the King's troops by Cynan and Dafydd ap Owain Gwynedd.[59]

Archaeology and Historic Terrain

Due to the difficulties in establishing the precise locations for Owain Gwynedd's fortification at 'Dinas Basing' and the ambush of Henry II's detachment, variously described as having taken place in the wood of Coleshill or 'Pennardlaoc' (Hawarden), it is difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding the potential of any particular site (specifically in terms of battlefield archaeology).

Two possible locations for the site of Dinas Basing have been suggested; the first being Bryn-y-Castell, a heavily overgrown mound overlooking St Winefride's Well at Holywell (NGR SJ 1857 7630) which awaits detailed archaeological investigation, although the RCAHMW Inventory for Flintshire identifies it with the castle of 'Treffynnawn' (Holywell) built by the earl of Chester in 1209.[60]

The earthworks of the defended enclosure at Hen Blas (NGR SJ 2216 7345), approximately 1km SW of Bagillt, were excavated in the mid 1950s. The remains of a

[56] D.J. C. King, 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill', *Welsh History Review*, Vol. 2 no. 4 (1965), 367-73
[57] J.G. Edwards, 'Henry II and the Fight at Coleshill: Some Further Reflections', *Welsh Historical Review*, Vol. 3 no. 3 (1967), 251-63
[58] D.J. C. King, 'The Defence of Wales 1067-1283', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, Vol. 126 (1977), 1-16
[59] J.D. Hosler, 'Henry II's Military Campaigns in Wales', *The Journal of Medieval Military History*, Vol. 2, ed. B.S. Bachrach et al. (2004), 53-72
[60] RCAHMW, *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Flintshire* (London 1912), no. 123

small, stone-built church were identified within the outer enclosure and it was plausibly suggested that this might represent 'Dinas Basing', the original site of the abbey of Basingwerk before it was re-established at Greenfield, NE of Holywell in the late 1150s. There is potential for further investigation to determine whether there is any evidence for occupation or re-fortification of the site in the late 1150s. The traditional site of the battle marked on the OS 1st edition map at Coleshill Farm is now occupied by a modern industrial estate and has been heavily landscaped, consequently the potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains relating the battlefield in this particular area appears to be limited.

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

The result of the battle and its overall significance in the context of Henry II's campaign against Owain Gwynedd has been the subject of some scholarly debate. J.E. Lloyd, in his account of the battle, stresses the inexperience of Henry II; however the available documentary evidence suggests that Henry's expedition to North Wales was a meticulously planned campaign, with a substantial land-based force supported by a seaborne expedition.

Henry's attempt to outflank Owain's fortifications has also been re-evaluated by more recent writers, while J.E. Lloyd viewed it as evidence of the King's 'youthful heedlessness', King and Hosler both interpreted it as an audacious manoeuvre by a competent commander to outflank a strongly defended position.

Although Henry's manoeuvre resulted in a 'severe battle' (as described in the RBH text of the Brut') with his detachment suffering heavy losses, he nevertheless appears to have succeeded in outflanking Owain's position and forcing the Welsh to retreat. Moreover, while the seaborne expedition appears to have resulted in failure in Anglesey, the bulk of the English army remained intact, subsequently securing possession of Rhuddlan, the strategic objective of the campaign. The English campaign in North Wales in 1157 can therefore be viewed, in many respects, as a success, although it did not prove to be a lasting victory, as Owain Gwynedd would subsequently regain control of Tegeingl between 1165 and 1167.

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Cartography

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Tithe Map for the Parish of Hawarden - 1839

Tithe Map for the Parish of Holywell - 1841

OS 1st edition 25 inch map (Flintshire 6.5, 6.6, 6.9, 6.10, 6.15, 6.16, 9.2-9.4; 10.13-10.14; 14.1-14.3) – 1869-71

OS 1st edition 6 inch map (Flintshire 6 SE, SW; 9 NE, NW; 10 SW; 14 NE, NW)- 1878-81

OS 2nd edition 25 inch map (Flintshire 6.5, 6.6, 6.9, 6.10, 6.15, 6.16, 9.2-9.4; 10.13-10.14; 14.1-14.3) - 1899

OS 2nd edition 6 inch map (Flintshire 6 SE, SW; 9 NE, NW; 10 SW; 14 NE, NW)- 1900

OS 3rd edition 25 inch map (Flintshire 6.5, 6.6, 6.9, 6.10, 6.15, 6.16, 9.2-9.4; 10.13-10.14; 14.1-14.3) - 1912

OS 3rd edition 6 inch map (Flintshire 6 SE, SW; 9 NE, NW; 10 SW; 14 NE, NW)- 1914

OS provisional edition 6 inch map (Flintshire 6 SE, SW; 9 NE, NW; 10 SW; 14 NE, NW)- 1938

5.5 Painscastle (August 13th, 1198)

5.5.1 Site of Battle

The precise site of the battle of Painscastle is unclear but it is presumed to have been situated somewhere in the immediate vicinity of the castle of Painscastle (NGR SO 166 462). The OS 1:25000 map marks the site of the battle in a field situated immediately to the SW of the scheduled earthworks of the castle, while the historian P. Remfry mentions that 'even today bones of the fallen are uncovered during ploughing or road widening operations to the south of the castle'.[1]

5.5.2 Summary

Historical Context of Battle

The battle of Painscastle should be viewed in the context of the protracted struggle for control over the Central Marches (comprising the cantrefs of Elfael, Cedewain and Maelienydd) between the Anglo Norman Marcher lords (in particular the families of Mortimer and de Braose) and the native Welsh princes, which appears to have intensified significantly following the death of the powerful Welsh lord of Deheubarth, Rhys ap Gruffydd, in April 1197.[2]

The previous year, the lord Rhys had led a successful campaign in Elfael in response to the capture of Cymaron Castle by Roger Mortimer in 1195, defeating the Mortimers in a pitched battle near New Radnor and sacking the town and castle, as well as briefly capturing the castle of Painscastle. The death of the lord Rhys resulted in a political vacuum and absence of strong leadership among the Welsh of the central Marches, a situation that was exploited not only by the Marcher lords, but also by other Welsh princes, in particular Gwenwynwyn, who had succeeded his father Owain Cyfeiliog as ruler of southern Powys.[3]

From the outset, Gwenwynwyn (d. 1216) appears to have pursued a policy of territorial aggrandisement; his raids along the English border were serious enough to warrant Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury and justiciar of England to launch a punitive expedition against him in September 1196, capturing Gwenwynwyn's castle at Welshpool (Trallwng) after a long siege.[4] However Gwenwynwyn appears to have swiftly come to terms with the English and, apparently undeterred, continued to acquire further territory in the central Marches, seizing the cantref of Arwystli after the death of its ruler Owain o'r Brithdir in 1197, at which point the kingdom of southern Powys encompassed almost the entire territory lying between the Tanat and the Severn. Gwenwynwyn also intervened in the affairs of the neighbouring kingdom of Deheubarth

[1] P.M. Remfry, *A Guide to Castles in Radnorshire* (Logaston 1996), 31-2.
[2] For accounts of the conflict see J.E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the earliest times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols (London 1939); R.R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063-1415* (Oxford 2000); P.M.Remfry, *A Guide to Castles in Radnorshire* (Logaston, 1996) and P.M. Remfry, *The Castles and History of Radnorshire* (Shrewsbury 2008)
[3] The fullest accounts of Gwenwynwyn's career remain those in Lloyd, *History of Wales* (London 1939), II, 582-7, and Davies, *The Age of Conquest* (Oxford 2000), 227-30
[4] For a useful account of the siege cf. Lloyd, *History of Wales* (London 1939), II, 583n

after the death of the lord Rhys, supporting Maelgwn ap Rhys against his brother Gruffydd, whom he captured and delivered into English custody.[5]

In view of Gwenwynwyn's aggressive policy of territorial expansion, it was probably inevitable that he would attempt to assert his authority over the *cantrefs* of the central Marches, particularly as their ruling dynasties were seemingly weak and engulfed in internecine conflicts, particularly following the death not only of the lord Rhys but also Maelgwn ap Cadwallon, lord of Maelienydd in the same year.

5.5.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

Several accounts of the events prior to the battle are contained in the 'D' text of the *Annales Cambriae* and the Peniarth MS. 20 and Red Book of Hergest texts of the *Brut y Tywysogion*, which all appear to be derived from a common source.[6] The earliest and fullest account is contained in the 'D' text of the *Annales*, a Latin chronicle probably compiled at some time between 1277 and 1283 by a monk of Strata Florida Abbey.[7]

The entry *sub anno* 1198 describes how 'during this year Gwenwynwyn proposed to restore the Welsh to their former dignity and restore their boundaries to their rightful owners, which had been lost by them through the multitude of their sins; and around the feast of St Mary Magdalene assembled a great army, in undertaking this task supported by all the princes of Wales. And having assembled together, they laid siege to Pain's Castle for three weeks with great exhortations of wrath, although in their struggle not having recourse to their machines of war (ie. siege engines)'.[8] The late medieval annals of St Werburgh's Abbey at Chester make reference to a large number of nobles apparently sent by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth prince of Gwynedd who were killed in a battle at 'castellum Pani' (presumably identifiable with Painscastle) in 1198, which may refer to a contingent sent to assist Gwenwynwyn's army.[9]

[5] Lloyd, *History of Wales* (London 1939), II, 584-5

[6] The Latin text of the 'D' text of the Annales Cambriae (Exeter Cathedral MS 3514) is printed in 'Cronica de Wallia' ed. T. Jones, Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies Vol. 12 (1948), 27-44; Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952), 79, Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973), 183. A recent English translation of the Annales with useful notes is contained in P.M. Remfry, Annales Cambriae: A Translation of Harleian MS 3859, PRO E 164/1, Cottonian Domitian A.1 Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3514 and MS Exchequer DB Neath PRO E 164/1 (Shrewsbury 2007),

[7] Jones dates the composition of the 'D' text to c. 1280; for more recent discussion of the dating of the 'Cronica de Wallia' see P.M. Remfry, Annales Cambriae (Shrewsbury 2007)

[8] 'Cronica de Wallia' ed. T. Jones, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* Vol. 12 (1948) 31 'Hoc etiam anno Wenoinun proponens pristinam dignitatem Wallensibus restituere et fines ac terminus sibi quondam exigente peccatorum multitudine subtractos, ad proprios volens revocare heredes, circa festivitatem Beate Marie Magdalene faventibus sibi tocius Wallie principibus opemque ferentibus, grandem collegit excercitum. Quibus coadunatis castellum Paen obsederunt per tres fere ebdomadas cum magna et magna animi exultacione licet minus cauta suis iugiter bellicis oppugnantes machinamentis'.

[9] *Annales Cestrienses or Chronicle of the Abbey of St Werburg at Chester*, Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society Vol. 17 (Manchester 1887)

From the account given in the 'D' text of the *Annales* (which is largely repeated in both the Peniarth MS 20 and RBH versions of the Brut) it would appear that Gwenwynwyn assembled a substantial army around July 22nd, 1198 and then marched directly on the castle of Painscastle (*Castellum Paen*) which he then proceeded to besiege for three weeks. The castle was of key importance, controlling the strategically important Bachawy valley, one of the principal gateways between England and central Wales, and functioned as the *caput* or administrative centre of a lordship encompassing the native Welsh *commote* of Elfael Is Mynydd (Lower Elfael).[10]

It was originally built either by the de Tosny family, who had conquered Elfael in the early 1090s, or by the Norman lord Pain Fitz John, a prominent official in the administration of King Henry I who had acquired the estates of Ralph de Tosny following his forfeiture for rebellion, in addition to other lands in Herefordshire and the Welsh March.[11] After Pain's death in July 1137 it appears that the castle and lordship were regained by the Welsh, who remained in possession until the death of Einion o'r Porth, the last Welsh prince of Elfael, in 1191, shortly after which William de Braose, lord of Radnor seized the castle and apparently rebuilt it.[12] Some late 12th-13th century records refer to Painscastle as 'Matilda's Castle', so named after Matilda de St Valery, wife of William de Braose who defended the castle against a Welsh attack in 1195.[13] The castle was taken by Rhys ap Gruffydd of Deheubarth during his campaign in the central Marches in 1196, who shortly afterwards returned it to the possession of William de Braose.

The Welsh chronicle sources all draw attention to the size of Gwenwynwyn's forces and, significantly, emphasize his poor preparations and in particular his failure to bring the necessary siege engines to besiege the castle. The 'D' text of the *Annales* is particularly sharp in its criticism of Gwenwynwyn's preparations in this respect, remarking acidly that 'in fact they were ignorant and not prepared for the wretched outcome of their undertaking'.[14]

Information concerning the preparations of the English prior to the battle is chiefly contained in the Welsh and English annalistic sources, together with an important statement in the autobiographical work *De Rebus et se Gestis* of Gerald of Wales and some incidental references in the Pipe Roll accounts for 1197-98.[15]

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[10] H.M. Colvin et al. (eds.) *History of the Kings Works Vol. II: The Middle Ages* (London 1963), 774; P.M. Remfry, *Painscastle 1066-1405* (Worcester 1999)

[11] For discussion of the castle's early history see P.M. Remfry, *Painscastle 1066-1405* (Worcester 1999). For Pain fitz John's role in Henry I's administration see *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* Vol. 2, ed. C. Johnson & H.A. Cronne (Oxford 1956) xiii-xv.

[12] Payn fitz John's death is recorded on 10 July 1137 in the Chronicle of John of Worcester (*Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. P. McGurk, 3 vols (Oxford 1998), II, 229); Lloyd, *History of Wales* (London 1939), II, 585

[13] Lloyd, *History of Wales* (London 1939), II, 585-6. Painscastle is referred to as 'Matilda's Castle' in the contemporary accounts of the 1198 battle by the English chroniclers Ralph de Diceto and Roger of Howden

[14] 'Ignorant namque quid sibi prepararent miserabiles rei eventus'. For further commentary on Gwenwynwyn's tactics during the siege of Painscastle, see S. Murray, *Welsh Military Institutions 633-1283* (Cardiff, 2003), 132-3

[15] *The Rolls of the Great Pipe for the 10th year of the reign of King Richard I, Michelmas 1198*, ed. D.M. Stenton, Pipe Roll Society Vol. 44 (London 1932)

According to the 'D' text of the *Annales Cambriae*, the English were initially 'struck with terror' on learning of Gwenwynwyn's attack and promptly released Gruffydd ap Rhys (son of the lord Rhys) whom Gwenwynwyn had surrendered into English hands a year earlier, apparently to persuade Gwenwynwyn or his allies to make peace and abandon the siege, although it may simply have been a delaying tactic in order to enable a sufficiently large army to be raised to relieve Painscastle.[16] The Pipe Roll for 1198 records expenditure for the transportation by boat (*navicule*) of Gruffydd's wife, Matilda de Braose from Bridgnorth (Salop) to Gloucester and for the custody of his son Rhys (a prisoner in the Tower of London) both of whom are explicitly referred to as hostages (*obses*) evidently being held to ensure Gruffydd's good conduct.[17]

This apparent attempt at a peaceful resolution to the conflict evidently failed, for, according to the *Annales Cambriae*, the Welsh defiantly 'declared that after the castle had been taken they intended to burn everything and take all the possessions of the English'.[18] The military preparations of the English are briefly described by the contemporary English annalist Roger of Howden, who relates how Geoffrey fitz Peter, Hubert Walter's successor as Justiciar of England 'on assembling a large army proceeded to Wales to succour the people of William de Braose, whom Gwenwynwyn, the brother of Cadwallon, had besieged in Matilda's Castle (ie. Painscastle)'.[19]

Important evidence as to the progress of the English forces to Painscastle is supplied in a curious anecdotal account contained in Gerald of Wales' autobiographical work *De Rebus a se Gestis*, in which he relates how a nun, purporting to have been sent by one Wechelen, a hermit whose cell was located at Llowes, apparently persuaded the English army to attack the Welsh, predicting a great victory.[20] Of particular significance is Gerald's description of the *locale*, relating how 'it happened that the Welsh had besieged Painscastle (*Castellum Pagani*) recently built in Elfael, a great multitude of the English army had been assembled at Hay and from around those parts'.[21] From Gerald's account several key points can be gleaned, firstly that Geoffrey fitz Peter mustered his forces at Hay (probably advancing along the Wye valley westwards from Hereford) and that a significant proportion of the army was recruited from the locality.

The Pipe Roll for 1198 contains a series of references to military expenditure 'in the King's service in the Marches of Wales' which may be connected with Geoffrey fitz Peter's expedition to relieve Painscastle. Geoffrey fitz Peter himself accounted for a payment of 8 marks from the farm of Worcestershire 'for the keeping of one petrary (catapult) and two mangonels which were carried in the King's service in the Marches of

[16] 'Cronica de Wallia' ed. T. Jones, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* Vol. 12 (1948) 31; Remfry, *Annales Cambriae* (Shrewsbury 2007), 103
[17] *Pipe Roll 10 Richard I*, ed. Stenton
[18] 'Cronica de Wallia', ed. T. Jones *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* Vol. 12 (1948), 31 'verum etiam post predicti castelli dedicionem suas civitates se combussuros et possessions devastaturos asserebant'.
[19] *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Hoveden*, ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols (London,1868-71) III, 53. 'Eodem anno Gaufridus filius Petri, justitiarius Angliae, profectus est in Gualliam ad succurrendum hominibus Willelmi de Brause, quos Wenhunwin frater Chadwalani obsederat in castello Matillis'
[20] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. Dimock, I, 91-2
[21] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. Dimock, I, 91-2 'Contigit autem Walenses castellum Pagani in Elevein Paulo ante constructum obsedisse; et cum multitude Anglicani exercitus apud Haiam et circa partes illas collecta fuisset'

Wales',[22] while in the account of the Sheriff of Shropshire there are payments to William fitz Warin, lord of Whittington, for 120 men at arms on foot (*servientes pedites*) and 10 mounted sergeants (*servientes equites*) and a payment to one Osbert Rieboef for the sustenance of 300 men at arms on foot (*servientes*). [23]

The Battle and Its Aftermath

The fullest accounts of the battle at Painscastle are contained in two English chronicle sources, contemporaneous with the events described, namely the *Ymagines Historiarum* (Images of History) by Ralph de Diceto, dean of St Paul's (fl. c.1152-1202) and the *Chronica* of Roger of Howden (fl. 1174-1201).

Ralph de Diceto's account provides a specific date for the battle, namely October 13th, 1198 (the feast of St Hippolytus) and is the only source to describe the respective order of battle for the English and Welsh forces.[24] He describes how 'in the first battalion (*caterva*) of the Welsh only infantry were assembled, in the second, infantry and cavalry, in the third only cavalry. The first battalion of the French solely consisted of infantry, in the second only cavalry while the third battalion comprised the remaining strength of the army (*totum robur exercitus*)'.

It is unclear whether this represents an accurate depiction of the respective formations of the English and Welsh forces, however Ralph had close contacts with the royal administration (including Hubert Walter Archbishop of Canterbury), which could have provided him with reasonably reliable information on the engagement. Ralph then describes how 'at the first onslaught the Welsh turned tail, their camp being plundered; many were captured and many more killed, it is said, even to the number of three thousand'.[25]

Another contemporary account of the engagement, contained in Roger of Howden's *Chronica*, does not provide details of the order of battle but does indicate that the Welsh force remained numerically superior to the English forces. Roger states that 'although the Welsh in arms were very numerous, still not being able to make resistance to the forces of the English, they were put to flight, and throwing away their arms, that, being less burdened, they might move more swiftly, there were slain more than 3700 of them, besides those who were captured and those who being fatally wounded escaped from the field'.[26]

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[22] *Pipe Roll 10 Richard I*, ed. Stenton, 76

[23] *Pipe Roll 10 Richard I*, ed. Stenton, 108-9. Rieboef was a member of a minor baronial family holding lands in Nottinghamshire of the honour of Peverel

[24] *Radulfi de Diceto decani Londonienis opera historica*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (London 1876), II, 163 'In prima caterva Walensium collocati sunt pedites tantum. In secunda pedites et equites. In tertia, tantum equites. In prima caterva Francorum collocati sunt pedites. Equites in secunda Totum robur exercitus in tertia fuit caterva'

[25] *Radulfi de Diceto decani Londonienis opera historica*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (London 1876), II, 163 'Sub primo congressu terga verterunt Walenses, quorum spolia data sunt in rapinam. Multi capti sunt, interfecti quamplures, quorum numerus excrevit, sicut dicitur, ad tria milia pugnatorum'

[26] *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Hoveden*, ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols (London 1868-71), IV, 53 'quo cum venisset, commisit praelium campestre cum predicto Wenhuwin et suis; et licet plurimi Walanorum armati essent, tamen non valentes resistere exercitui Anglorum, versi sunt in fugam, et projicientes arma sua, ut

The Welsh chronicle sources provide a somewhat terse description of the battle, although they supply particular details that do not appear in the contemporary English accounts. The 'D' text of the *Annales Cambriae* (which is largely followed *verbatim* by the Peniarth MS 20 and RBH texts of the *Brut*), states that the English forces 'in the first onslaught drove the miserable people into flight, capturing some and slitting the throats of others as sheep; and so this unheard of massacre and unaccustomed killing took place'.[27] The *Annales* and the *Brut* list the Welsh leaders killed during the battle, consisting of Anarawd ap Einion, Owain Cascob ap Cadwallon, Rhiryd ap Iestyn and Robert ap Hywel.[28]

Troops and Casualties

No detailed information is available on the respective size of the English and Welsh forces. The *Annales Cambriae* and the Peniarth and RBH texts of the *Brut* all refer to Gwenwynwyn having assembled a 'great army', which probably included contingents from Deheubarth and Gwynedd. The entry relating to a battle at 'Castellum Pani' in the late 14th-15th century *Annales Cestriensis* appears to indicate that Gwenwynwyn's forces probably included a significant contingent sent by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth prince of Gwynedd.[29] From the list of Welsh leaders killed during the battle it is evident that a considerable part of Gwenwynwyn's host consisted of forces raised by the native Welsh lords of Cedewain, Elfael and Maelinydd.

The English forces are described by the contemporary chronicler Roger of Howden as a 'great army' and this appears to be confirmed by the account in Gerald of Wales's Autobiography referring to 'a great number of the English army having been assembled at Hay and from around those parts'.[30] The latter statement is of particular importance as it confirms that there was a substantial Marcher contingent within the royal army (possibly forming the bulk of the English army), a significant proportion of which were William de Braose's own followers from his lordship of Hay.

The Pipe Roll for 1198 includes several payments for soldiers employed 'in the King's service in the Marches of Wales', who probably formed part of Geoffrey fitz Peter's army, including a payment to William fitz Warin, lord of Whittington, for 120 men at arms on foot and 10 mounted sergeants and a payment to Osbert Rieboef for the sustenance of 300 men at arms on foot.

The contemporary English chronicle accounts by Ralph de Diceto and Roger of Howden emphasize the extent of the Welsh casualties, although these must be viewed with a certain degree of scepticism. Diceto states that 'many were captured and many more

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levius citiusque fugerunt, occisi sunt ex illis plusquam tria milia et septingenti, exceptis retentis et illis qui lethaliter vulnerati evaserunt a campo'

[27] 'Cronica de Wallia' ed. T. Jones, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* Vol. 12 (1948) 31; 'in primo congressu miseram gentem in fugam cogentes innumerabiliter ut oves iugulaverunt; dumque hec inaudita strages et insolita cedes agitur'. *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952) *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973)

[28] See notes in P.M. Remfry, *Annales Cambriae* (Shrewsbury 2007) 104n

[29] *Annales Cestrienses or Chronicle of the Abbey of St Werburg at Chester*, ed. R.C. Christie, *Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society* Vol. 17 (Manchester 1887), 44

[30] *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Hoveden*, ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols (London 1868-71), IV, 53

were killed, even to the number of three thousand', while Howden comments that 'there were slain more than 3700 of them'. While these totals may well be grossly exaggerated, it is noticeable that the total of three thousand slain at Painscastle is also repeated by Gerald of Wales on several occasions in his autobiographical work *De Rebus a se Gestis*. The *Annales Cambria*e and the *Brut*, while not giving a specific number, similarly emphasise the heavy losses inflicted upon the Welsh forces.

The casualties suffered by the English forces appear to have been remarkably light, in view of the substantial size of the armies involved. The account of Ralph of Howden relates how 'on the side of the English, only one person was killed, being accidentally wounded by an arrow incautiously aimed by one of his companions'.[31] This might well be regarded as a slightly absurd exaggeration of the limited casualties suffered by the English forces, however a similar statement occurs in a letter written by Hubert Walter Archbishop of Canterbury to Gerald of Wales shortly after the battle, in which he remarks that 'in the encounter at that place neither spear nor bow had power to wound to death one man of all our host'.[32]

5.5.4 Assessment

Battle Location

The site of the battle is placed by both the English and Welsh chronicle sources in the vicinity the castle of Painscastle, although they do not state precisely where the engagement took place in relation to the castle itself. Later evidence of place names near to the castle, derived from deeds, manorial records and historic mapping is extremely limited in scope.

A number of place names in the vicinity of the castle are listed in a lease of the castle site and the surrounding fields (then in the hands of the Crown) to one Roger Vaughan dated May 5th, 1588, which makes reference to '30 acres on the W side of the castle of Paynes castell, another field of arable called Castellfeild, 17 acres on the S of the Park of the Castle of Paynes castell; parcel of land called the Castell yarde and the Castell diche', however no reference is made to field names specifically connected with the battle.[33] Only a small number of manorial accounts for Painscastle appear to have survived (covering the years 1507-8, 1514-18 and 1529-44) and these again make no reference to place names that can be directly connected with the battle.[34] The Llanbedr Painscastle tithe apportionment, dated 1847 unfortunately does not list any of the field names in the immediate vicinity of the castle.

Later antiquarian accounts, such as Leland's *Itinerary*, Powel's *Historie of Kambria* and William's *History of Radnorshire*, are noticeably silent concerning the exact site of the battlefield.[35] The site of the battle is not marked on the OS 1st, 2nd and 3rd edition maps,

[31] *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Hoveden*, ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols (London 1868-71), IV, 53
[32] *The Autobiography of Gerald of Wales*, ed & trans. H.E. Butler (Woodbridge 2005), 136-7
[33] Printed in E.A. Lewis (ed.) *Records of the Court of Augmentations relating to Wales and Monmouthshire* (Cardiff 1954), 518
[34] NA SC6/HenVII/1662; SC6/HenVIII/5296-5299; SC6/HenVIII/5300-5311
[35] J. Williams, *History of Radnorshire* (London 1859), 219-220

however the modern OS 1:25000 map specifically locates the battle in the field lying immediately SW of the castle earthworks, although on what authority is uncertain.
The only authority to indicate a probable location for the main scene of battle is P.Remfry, who states that 'even today bones of the fallen are uncovered during ploughing or road widening operations to the south of the castle', although unfortunately there appears to be no archaeological record of these finds.[36] In view of Gerald of Wales's testimony that the English forces mustered at Hay, it would certainly appear logical to assume that the English approached from the SE, from Hay via Clyro and crossing the Afon Bachawy at Rhyd-lydan.

The ford at Rhyd-lydan was suggested by Dawson as a possible battle site, referring to the previous discovery of 'an ancient sword and cannon ball' at the ford, which he interpreted as 'relics of some of the great battles that raged round Painscastle'.[37] The possibility that part of the 1198 battle may have taken place at Rhydlydan should certainly be considered, the English army, approaching from Hay, are likely to have crossed the Bachawy at this ford on their approach to the castle.

Discussion of Primary Sources

The primary written documentation relating to this battle chiefly consists of entries in various English and Welsh monastic annals, supplemented by some important incidental references in the autobiographical work *De Rebus a se Gestis* of Gerald of Wales, compiled between 1208 and 1216.

The earliest contemporary accounts of the battle are contained in the *Ymagines Historiarum* of Ralph de Diceto, dean of St Paul's (d.1202) and the *Chronica* of Roger of Howden (d.1201). Although neither chronicler appears to have personally witnessed the battle, both of them appear to have had close links with the royal government and would therefore have been in a position to obtain first hand information regarding the battle. Ralph in particular is known to have had important contacts in the royal administration; he was a friend of Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury and Geoffrey fitz Peter's predecessor as Chief Justiciar.[38] Roger of Howden has been tentatively identified with a royal clerk of the same name who appears during the latter years of Henry II's reign and subsequently accompanied Richard I on the First Crusade, returning to England in 1192.[39] Howden's description of the battle does not provide as much detail about the deployment of the English and Welsh troops as does Diceto's account, however it is nevertheless of significance as the only chronicle source which specifically states that Geoffrey fitz Peter was in command of the English forces at Painscastle.[40] Howden's

[36] P.M. Remfry, *A Guide to Castles in Radnorshire* (Logaston 1996), 31-2. A consultation of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record identified no references either to the discovery of buried remains or artefacts associated with the battle.
[37] M.L. Dawson, 'Painscastle and its Story' *Archaeologia Cambrensis* Vol. 78 (1923), 51
[38] For biographical details on Ralph de Diceto, see A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England Vol. 1: c.550 to c.1307* (London 1996), 230-4
[39] A. Gransden, Historical Writing in England Vol. 1: c.550 to c.1307 (London 1996), 222-9
[40] *The Autobiography of Gerald of Wales*, ed. & trans. H.E. Butler (Woodbridge 2005), 125

account of the battle was reproduced almost *verbatim* by the St Alban's chronicler, Matthew Paris, in his *Chronica Majora* (compiled between c.1240-53).[41]

Gerald of Wales's autobiographical work *De Rebus et se Gestis*, compiled between 1208 and 1216, contains several references to the battle at Painscastle, which he appears to have viewed as an event of national significance. He was evidently well acquainted with Hay and the surrounding area and his curious account of a visit made by a nun purporting to have been sent by one Wechelen, a hermit of Llowes and a friend of Gerald's, is of critical importance as it reveals that Geoffrey fitz Peter mustered his forces at Hay before proceeding against the Welsh at Painscastle. Gerald's work also includes correspondence between himself and Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury containing several important incidental references to the battle. [42]

The Welsh chronicle sources primarily consist of the 'D' text of the Annales Cambriae (the fullest account from the Welsh perspective), compiled by a monk of Strata Florida at some time between 1277 and 1283 and the Peniarth MS 20 and Red Book of Hergest versions of the *Brut y Tywysogyon*, compiled in the 14th century.[43] Two brief accounts of the battle are also contained in the 'B' text of the *Annales Cambriae* and the *Brenhinedd y Saeson* text of the *Brut*.[44]

The texts of the Brut agree very closely with the 'D' text of the *Annales*, which suggests that they may have been directly translated from this work or that the Brut and the 'D' text of the *Annales* were derived from a single common source. The Welsh sources provide information on Gwenwynwyn's assembling of his 'great army' prior to the battle and draw particular attention to his failure to bring siege engines to attack the castle; they also provide the only list of the Welsh leaders killed during the battle.

In addition to the chronicles and other literary sources, other information relating to the battle may be gleaned from the records of royal expenditure, in particular the Pipe Roll for 1197-98; the accounts of the sheriffs of Shropshire and Worcestershire contain records of expenditure on troops and other military equipment used 'in the service of the King in the Marches of Wales' which may well refer to preparations for the expedition led by the King's Justiciar, Geoffrey fitz Peter, to relieve Painscastle.

Discussion of Secondary Sources

The secondary sources for this battle, somewhat surprisingly in view of its historic importance, are relatively limited in scope. The account in Powel's *Historie of Kambria* (1584) is largely based on that contained in the *Brut,* with additional details from Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora* (which itself is a copy of the account given in the

[41] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, 7 vols. (London 1872-1881), II, 447
[42] *The Autobiography of Gerald of Wales*, ed & trans. H.E. Butler (Woodbridge 2005), 125, 130, 181, 271
[43] 'Cronica de Wallia' ed. T. Jones, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* Vol. 12 (1948) 31; *Brut y Tywysogion: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952) *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1973).
[44] *Annales Cambriae*, ed. J. Williams ab Ithel (London 1860), 61. *Brenhinedd y Saeson*, ed. & trans. T. Jones (Cardiff 1971)

Chronica of Roger of Howden).[45] An extended account of the battle at the 'Garde Doloureuse' is given by Sir Walter Scott in his novel *The Betrothed* (published in 1832) however this is a highly romanticised account with very little basis in historical fact.[46]

The Victorian antiquarian J. Williams made a brief reference to the battle in his *History of Radnorshire* (1859) while W.H. Howse's subsequent account is likewise sparse in detail.[47] The fullest modern historical accounts of the battle are those given in Lloyd's *History of Wales* (with extensive references to both English and Welsh annalistic sources), M.L. Dawson's 1923 article on 'Painscastle and its story' (the latter based chiefly on information contained in the English chronicle sources and Gerald of Wales's *Autobiography*), and more recently, P. Remfry's recent publication on the history of the castle of Painscastle.[48]

Archaeology and Historic Terrain

The documentary sources clearly place the *locale* of the battle in the immediate vicinity of the castle, however it is difficult to establish its precise location. Very little recent archaeological work has been undertaken either within the castle itself or the surrounding area.[49] The only authorities to indicate a specific location for the battle are the modern OS 1:25000 map and the castle historian P. Remfry, who refers to human remains previously uncovered 'during ploughing or road widening operations to the south of the castle'. Unfortunately no archaeological record of the discovery of these remains appears to have been made.

Clearly there is significant potential for further investigation of the fields immediately surrounding the castle earthworks, which could possibly contain evidence of human remains or artefactual evidence relating to the battle. The soils in this area consist of the typical brown earths of the DENBIGH 1 series (541j) comprising well-drained fine loamy and silty soils overlying Palaeozoic slaty mudstone and siltstone. In terms of acidity/alkalinity such soils are neutral to basic (pH 5.5-7) and being well-drained, the preservation of bone and charcoal and charred plant macrofossils may thus be anticipated, while inorganic material (including metal objects) may also have survived.

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

The battle of Painscastle has been justly described by Lloyd as 'a decisive triumph for the English ascendancy in Mid Wales', a fact which appears to have been recognized by contemporary observers. The accounts by Ralph de Diceto and Roger of Howden (written contemporaneously with the events described) emphasize the overwhelming success of the English forces and the heavy losses sustained by the Welsh, while Gerald

[45] D. Powel, *Historie of Cambria* (London 1811), 182-3
[46] W. Scott, *The Betrothed* (London 1825, repr. 2004) 84-94 for a largely fictional account of the siege and battle at Painscastle
[47] J. Williams, *History of Radnorshire* (London 1859) 219-220; W.H. Howse, *Radnorshire* (Hereford 1949), 319
[48] M.L. Dawson, 'Painscastle and its Story', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* Vol. 78 (1923), 28-52
[49] Based on information supplied by the CPAT Historic Environment Record for PRN 16186 (Painscastle Village) and PRN 381 (Castle Earthworks)

of Wales mentions that Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, ordered public masses to be celebrated on hearing news of the victory while in residence at Bridgnorth.[50]

The English victory at Painscastle had immediate political consequences; establishing the ascendancy of the Anglo-Norman Marcher lords in the central Marches for a generation at the expense of the native Welsh lords of Elfael, Cedewain and Maelienydd (several of whom were killed during the battle). However, the most important and far-reaching consequence of the battle was that it essentially signalled the beginning of the end for Gwenwynwyn's ambitious policy of territorial expansion in the Marches and his attempt to establish Powys as the predominant royal house in Wales. Subsequent raids by Gwenwynwyn on the lands of William de Braose in 1203 and 1208 ended in disaster and in October 1208 he was stripped of his lands by King John and only restored to them two years later, on promise of perpetual service and jurisdictional submission to the English Crown. Gwenwynwyn's power was effectively broken and although he subsequently changed allegiance to Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, Prince of Gwynedd he was subsequently evicted from his kingdom by Llywelyn in 1216 and died soon after in exile in England.[51]

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[50] *The Autobiography of Gerald of Wales*, ed. & trans. H.E. Butler (Woodbridge 2005), 181
[51] R.R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063-1415* (Oxford 2000), 229-30

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Tithe Map of the Parish of Llanbedr Painscastle - 1847

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OS 1st edition 6 inch map (Radnorshire 33 SW; 36 NW)- 1891

OS 2nd edition 25 inch map (Radnorshire 33.13, 33.14; 36.1, 36.2) -1904

OS 2nd edition 6 inch map (Radnorshire 33 SW; 36 NW)- 1905

OS 3rd edition 25 inch map (Radnorshire 33.13, 33.14; 36.1, 36.2)- 1928

OS 3rd edition 6 inch map (Radnorshire 33 SW; 36 NW)- 1929

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5.6 Bryn Glas, Pilleth (June 22nd, 1402)

5.6.1 Site of Battle

The precise site of the battle of Pilleth remains uncertain, the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25 inch map and subsequent OS mapping locates the battlefield site in water meadows between the present B4356 road (to the N) and the River Lugg (to the S), approximately 100m S of the parish church of Pilleth. However, the site of the battle has also been identified as lying on the steep hill known as 'Bryn Glas', marked on OS mapping immediately to the W of Pilleth church, an identification that appears to be supported by the majority of the available documentary and archaeological evidence.

5.6.2 Summary

Historical Context of Battle

The battle of Pilleth should be viewed against the backdrop of the intensification of Owain Glyndwr's rebellion during the years 1401-2 and the failure of the English Crown and the Marcher lords to deal effectively with the revolt. At some point during the summer of 1401, Glyndwr's forces appear to have inflicted a defeat on a sizeable English force (estimated by the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, the sole source for the engagement, as numbering 1500 men) mustered from Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire at Hyddgen to the N of Plynlimon.[1]

Although the victory at Hyddgen is poorly documented in contemporary chronicles, it would appear that this success heralded a significant broadening and intensification of the revolt; Owain subsequently appears to have mounted a substantial raid into Radnorshire, storming the castle at New Radnor and massacring the garrison, followed by attacks on the Marcher strongholds of Montgomery and Welshpool in the autumn, while the important royal castles of Aberystwyth and Harlech were placed under siege.[2]

The increasingly ambitious scale of the uprising is attested by Glyndwr having established diplomatic contacts in late 1401 with Robert III of Scotland and certain Irish princes, proposing an alliance against the English.[3] However, in early-mid April, 1402 Glyndwr achieved an even greater coup, by capturing one of his principal antagonists, the Marcher baron Reginald Grey, lord of Ruthin, whom he ransomed for a substantial sum.[4] The response of the Crown to Grey's capture and the intensification of the uprising during the years 1401-2 appears to be characterised by sporadic punitive expeditions that only achieved limited successes.

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[1] NLW Peniarth MS 135, p.60; The Welsh text with English translation is printed in J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 150

[2] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 40-5; G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston 1995), 52-5

[3] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 46-8; G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston 1995), 59-60; the letters to the Irish chiefs and Robert III are contained in Adam of Usk's chronicle, see C. Given-Wilson (ed.) *The Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 149-52

[4] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 48-50

Following the attack on the lordships of Ruthin and Dyffryn Clwyd in April, Glyndwr's attention appears to have turned once again to Radnorshire, dominated by the extensive estates of the Mortimer family which were then in the possession of the Crown during the minority of Edmund, son of the late Roger Mortimer, fourth earl of March (d.1398).

There appears to have been a pronounced absence of leadership among the gentry and nobility of the central Marches at the time of Glyndwr's attack in June 1402; which is perhaps reflected in the fact that responsibility for countering the Welsh attack was given (possibly in haste) to the late earl of March's younger brother, Edmund Mortimer, who appears to have been a relative non-entity up to this point, holding a fairly sizeable estate in Herefordshire and Shropshire valued at 300 marks. [5] The lack of an effective adult heir to the vast estates of the Mortimer family, whose past representatives had played such a key role in securing Anglo-Norman dominance in the central Marches, doubtless contributed significantly to the political instability of the Welsh border region at the time of Glyndwr's invasion in June 1402.

5.6.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

Information concerning the events preceding the battle is derived from a number of contemporary and near contemporary chronicle sources. Probably the most detailed contemporary account is that contained in the continuation of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, compiled by a monk of Evesham in or shortly after1402.[6] The author of the *Vita* states that Edmund Mortimer, 'at that time present in the town of Ludlow, received news that the said Owain Glyndwr had come down from the Welsh mountains with a small force and that he was upon a mountain next to Pilleth, where a certain image of the Virgin Mary had long been venerated, not far from the town of Ludlow. Edmund therefore hastily sent for his men and tenants of Maelienydd, that they should not fail to come to his aid in this hard necessity'. It may well have not been a coincidence that Glyndwr chose to establish his camp near Pilleth, one of the Mortimer's estates occupying a strategic position commanding the valley of the Upper Lugg. The author of the *Vita* implies that Edmund probably recruited his forces while marching from Ludlow towards Pilleth, although the precise route that Edmund took from Ludlow remains unclear, the most likely being either directly westwards along the N bank of the Upper Lugg via Wigmore, Kinsham and Whitton, or instead striking NW along the Teme Valley to Knighton and thence to Pilleth .[7]

That the target of Owain's invasion was the commote of Maelienydd is corroborated by the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, a brief Welsh chronicle probably compiled in the early-mid 15th century, which survives in a mid 16th century manuscript compiled by the poet

[5] G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston 1995), 64; R.R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford 1995), 179

[6] G.B. Stow (ed.), *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (Haney Foundation Series, University of Pennsylvania, xxi, 1977), 172

[7] For a lucid discussion of the possible routes which Mortimer may have taken to reach Pilleth, see G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston 1995), 72-6

Gruffydd Hiraethog covering the years of Owain Glyndwr's revolt from 1400 to 1415.[8] The *Annals* state that 'Owain rose with a great host from Gwynedd, Powys and the South and made for Maelienydd, where the knights of Herefordshire gathered together against him'. Significantly, however, the account given in the Annals differs from the *Vita* in two critical details, firstly that Owain's force is described as 'a great host', and secondly that Mortimer's army consisted of the 'knights of Herefordshire'.

The contemporary account of the battle compiled by Thomas Walsingham, precentor of St Albans, in his *Annales Henrici Quarti* (a shorter version of which is contained in his *Historia Anglicana*) contains less information about the events preceding the engagement but stresses the sudden nature of Owain's attack and corroborates the prominent role played by the gentry of Herefordshire who may well have provided the bulk of the English force, stating that 'Owain Glyndwr, with a horde (*turba*) of Welshmen suddenly advanced to the attack, causing almost all the militia of Herefordshire to take up arms'.[9] The account contained in the *Chronica Regum Anglie* of Thomas Otterbourne, compiled in or shortly after 1420, is closely related to that in Walsingham's *Annales Henrici Quarti*, although Otterbourne states that 'all the militia from the adjacent counties were called to arms', not only Herefordshire.[10]

Another near contemporary account, contained in a prose version of the English chronicle known as the *Brut*, the relevant section of which appears to have been compiled in or shortly after 1437 by an unknown author who may well have been Welsh (or, at the very least, had a particular knowledge of Welsh affairs) differs in one significant detail from the other contemporary sources, specifically stating that 'Owene brent a towne of the Erls of March in Wales, that hight Kinghton (Knighton). And on the morue (morrow) after was the bataille between Sir Edmond Mortymer and Owyn'. [11]

While it seems unlikely that Mortimer would have been able to raise a sufficiently large force to meet Glyndwr in battle only the following day after receiving news of the sacking of Knighton , it does appear to corroborate the impression given in the Vita Ricardi of a hasty mustering of forces by Edmund Mortimer. The possibility should also be considered that Edmund's rapid advance against Glyndwr was motivated specifically by reports of his attack on Knighton (situated less than 3 miles NE of Pilleth) rather than simply by news of Glyndwr having encamped at Pilleth. An event such as the burning of Knighton, an important English border town (and part of the Mortimer estates) could well explain the apparent haste in which Edmund Mortimer assembled his forces. In connection with this, it is perhaps significant that the near contemporary account given in the chronicle of Adam of Usk, although otherwise disappointingly terse, places the scene of the battle near Knighton (*juxta Knyghton*).[12]

[8] NLW Peniarth MS 135, p.61; The Welsh text with English translation is printed in J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 151-2
[9] H.T. Riley (ed.) *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani*,(London, 1866), 341; H.T. Riley (ed.) *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani: Thomae Walsingham Historia Anglicana*, 2 vols (London 1863-4), II, 250.
[10] T. Hearne (ed.), *Duo Rerum Anglicanum Scriptores Veteres viz Thomas Otterbourne et Johannis Whethamstede ab origine gentis Britannicae usque ad Edwardum IV* (London, 1732), 234-5
[11] F.W.D. Brie, *The Brut*, 2 vols (London 1908), II, 393; for discussion see W. Marx (ed.), *An English Chronicle 1377-1461 A New Edition* (Woodbridge 2003), lxxxiv-lxxxv
[12] C. Given-Wilson (ed.) *The Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 158-9

It is also worth noting a curious account contained in a history of Knighton published in 1947 by a local antiquary, William Hatfield, from which the following extract occurs: 'One writer relates that in 1402, before the battle of Pilleth, the Welsh crossed the hills from Llanidloes towards Knighton, burning and slaying on all sides. Sir Edward (sic) Mortimer sent 400 men to Knighton and found all the men under arms; they had sent their women and children in wagons towards Ludlow, but as the town had a strong wall the men were determined on making a stout defence. A party advanced five miles beyond the town and found a village on fire and attacked the Welsh, who were repulsed and the party returned to Knighton…there is scarce a house left standing between Llanidloes and Knighton.[13]

The source of Hatfield's account remains uncertain; F. Noble's suggestion that the account may have been originally derived from a Norman-French official letter cannot be substantiated, while G. Hodges has suggested that it is more likely that 'some writer of the romantic age embellished the chronicle accounts'. [14] Nonetheless, while Hatfield's account cannot be verified from the available documentary sources, it might represent an authentic local tradition concerning Glyndwr's campaign of June 1402 and cannot therefore be wholly discounted.

While the abovementioned accounts differ sometimes markedly, it is nevertheless possible to establish a plausible chronology of events prior to the battle itself:

At some time in early-mid June, Owain Glyndwr's forces invaded the commote of Maelienydd (north-east Radnorshire), possibly sacking the border town of Knighton before establishing his camp on a hill at Pilleth. Estimates of the size of his forces vary between the small force referred to in the *Vita Ricardi* and the large host comprised of contingents from Gwynedd, Powys and South Wales referred to by the Annals of Owain Glyndwr.

Edmund Mortimer, then residing in Ludlow, received news either of Glyndwr's advance into the commote of Maelienydd or his sacking of the nearby border town of Knighton. On receiving this news, Edmund proceeded rapidly to muster a force to counter the Welsh incursion, composed of his own retainers and tenants from the Mortimer estates in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Radnorshire, as well as a general levy raised by the local sheriffs from among the inhabitants of these counties. It is likely that further troops joined Edmund's army as he advanced towards Glyndwr's position at Pilleth, which he presumably reached by the evening of June 21st. It is difficult to determine, based on the available chronicle evidence, how long it would have taken Edmund to muster his forces to meet Glyndwr's attack. Although the chronicles certainly suggest that his response was swift, it probably would have taken at least several days, possibly a week or more, to assemble an effective force.

[13] W. Hatfield, Knighton (1947), 14-5

[14] G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston 1995), 75; F. Noble, 'Excavations at Bleddfa Church and associated problems of the history of the lordship of Bleddfa', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society*, Vol. 33 (1963), 61-2

The Battle and its Aftermath

The events of the battle itself are described in several contemporary and near contemporary chronicle sources which differ somewhat in content and level of detail, although they appear to agree broadly on the principal details of the engagement and its aftermath. Probably the most informative account of the battle, given in the continuation of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, compiled by a monk of Evesham Abbey either in or shortly after 1402, states that when they (Mortimer's men and the tenants of Maelienydd) came to him (ie. Mortimer), with them and many others in great strength he boldly ascended the hill'.[15] From this account, it would appear that Mortimer gathered his forces as he marched from Ludlow toward Glyndwr's position, meeting the contingent of Maelienydd somewhere close to Pilleth (possibly, as Hodges suggests, at nearby Whitton to the N of the River Lugg) before advancing on Glyndwr's forces, which are explicitly stated as occupying a hilltop position.

Significantly, two other contemporary or near-contemporary accounts, which otherwise provide little detail as to the course of the engagement, corroborate the statement in the *Vita* that the battle took place on a hill. Of particular importance is the account given in the Mortimer family chronicle compiled at Wigmore Abbey, only 9 miles due E from Pilleth and therefore in a good position to receive reliable information concerning the battle, which explicitly states that the battle took place 'on a mountain called Bryn Glas within Maelienydd, close to Knighton'.[16] The account contained in a prose version of the English *Brut*, probably compiled in about 1437 and including interpolations by someone who clearly had a knowledge of Welsh affairs and particularly the Glyndwr revolt, states that 'this battle was in the Blak Hill beside Pymaren'.[17]

The account of the battle in the *Vita Ricardi* then relates how 'having come together with great impetus, the said Welshmen of Maelienydd, not of the tribe of Judah, but born to be similar traitors, traitorously turned their faces and weapons against their own lord'. It would appear from this passage that the battle commenced with Mortimer advancing with the bulk of his army against Glyndwr's position, presumably intending to overwhelm the Welsh by sheer force of numbers. However it would seem that, in the midst of battle, the contingent of troops from Maelienydd suddenly defected to Glyndwr's cause, which immediately turned the tide of the battle.

The *Vita* further describes how 'ill fortune therefore befell our men, the Lord Edmund was captured immediately and many others with him. Then there came on Owain's part a certain Welshman named Rees a Gytch, who was harsher than the others, he either killed, mutilated or captured all who resisted him'. Following an account of the casualties suffered by the English during the battle (giving the relatively small estimate of 200 dead), the chronicler provides a remarkably vivid description of the carnage of the battlefield, stating that 'the corpses were left lying under the horses hooves, weltering in their own blood, as burial was forbidden for a long time afterwards'.

[15] G.B. Stow (ed.), *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (Haney Foundation Series, University of Pennsylvania, xxi. 1977), 172-3

[16] Printed in W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. Caley & Ellis, 6 vols (London 1817-30) Vol VI pt. 1, 354

[17] F.W.D. Brie, *The Brut*, 2 vols (London 1908), II, 393

If the author of the *Vita* is to be believed, it would appear that the capture of Edmund Mortimer probably led to a general rout of the English forces, of which the Welsh appear to have taken full advantage, inflicting heavy casualties. The Welshman named 'Rees a Gytch' has usually been identified with Rees Gethin, one of Glyndwr's most prominent lieutenants.[18] The vivid description of the carnage following the battle may well have been derived from a survivor of the English army; there is a decidedly bitter, resentful tone in the description of how the Welsh reputedly forbade burial of the dead for some time after the battle.

Another lengthy account of the battle is given in Thomas Walsingham's *Annales Henrici Quarti*, a shorter version of which appears in his *Historia Anglicana* and which is reproduced almost *verbatim* in Thomas Otterbourne's *Chronica Regis Anglie* (compiled in about 1420).[19] Walsingham's account does not provide as much information about the prelude to the battle as does the author of the *Vita Ricardi*, however the basic description of events appears to be broadly similar although certain incidental details present in the Vita are omitted. Walsingham describes the initial advance of the English in terms similar to that contained in the Vita (although he omits the reference to Mortimer advancing *uphill* against the Welsh position), stating that 'clearly, being the stronger force in the field, they were not afraid of the Welsh, who were in retreat'. He then describes, in quite similar terms to the Vita, the betrayal of Mortimer by part of his army, relating that 'alas, as they hastened to the attack they were betrayed by treachery in their midst. They were unexpectedly defeated by their own archers who turned their arms against them, those who resisted were killed'. It seems reasonable to identify the treacherous contingent of archers mentioned by Walsingham with the Welshmen of Maelienydd referred to in the *Vita*.

Walsingham then proceeds to describe the capture of Edmund Mortimer 'together with many other knights, esquires and valets, whose names we hold'; this latter phrase is particularly tantalising as it suggests that Walsingham perhaps had access to a document describing the battle and listing the names of the principal leaders who had been captured or slain. The total of the slain given by Walsingham (more than 1100 dead) is much greater than that given by the Evesham annalist; there follows a considerably more detailed and grisly account of the obscene mutilation of the English corpses after the battle (which is only hinted at in the *Vita*), 'a crime unheard of in that age', which he specifically ascribes to certain Welshwomen. Walsingham also repeats and elaborates on the Evesham annalist's reference to a prohibition on the burial of the English dead, adding that 'nor were the bodies of the dead released for burial without the payment of rewards and ransoms'.

Clearly, while the accounts of the *Vita Ricardi* and Walsingham's *Annales Henrici Quarti* differ frequently in points of detail (the former, in particular, containing much more information relating to the local geography which is generally omitted from Walsingham's account), the narrative structure of both accounts is extremely similar.

[18] G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston 1995), 80
[19] H.T. Riley (ed.) *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani*, (London 1866), 341; H.T. Riley (ed.) *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani: Thomae Walsingham Historia Anglicana*, 2 vols (London 1863-64), II, 250. T. Hearne (ed.), *Duo Rerum Anglicanum Scriptores Veteres viz Thomas Otterbourne et Johannis Whethamstede ab origine gentis Britannicae usque ad Edwardum IV* (London 1732), 234-5

This suggests that both accounts may well have been derived from a common exemplar, which was then embellished by the Evesham annalist and Walsingham respectively. Precisely from where this common source was derived is unclear but two possibilities may be suggested, firstly a source close to the King's court and secondly, a source close to the Mortimer family. The former appears to be a more likely source, particularly in view of the fact that King Henry IV is known to have been staying at Berkhamsted Castle (not far from St Albans) at the time when he received news of Mortimer's defeat and capture, subsequently issuing a letter on June 25th notifying the Council that he had just received news from Wales that 'certain rebels had lately taken our very dear cousin Edmund Mortimer and many knights and squires of his company, which has weighed heavily upon us'.[20] Although the King's letter provides little specific detail regarding the battle itself, it is nonetheless important as it corroborates the chronicle accounts describing the severity of the losses incurred by Mortimer's forces and that many prominent Marcher gentry were killed or captured during the battle.

The remaining contemporary or near contemporary chronicle accounts (primarily the Wigmore Abbey chronicle, the English prose *Brut* and the Annals of Owain Glyndwr) provide little information regarding the actual course of the battle; the Wigmore annalist and the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* both, however, concur that the majority of Mortimer's forces were either captured or killed.

Troops and Casualties

It is difficult to establish the respective size of the English and Welsh armies at Pilleth, based on the available documentary evidence. The author of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* described Glyndwr as having come down from the Welsh mountains with a small force (*cum paucis*). Thomas Walsingham, in his *Annales Henrici Quarti*, describes Glyndwr's force as a horde or rabble (turba) of Welshmen, which might imply a large number of troops, although in the *Historia Anglicana* he uses the more non-committal term of 'comitiva', denoting a band or company.

However the description of Glyndwr's army in the Annals of Owain Glyndwr differs markedly from that given in the Vita, stating that he 'rose with a great host from Gwynedd, Powys and the South'. The account in the *Annals*, the only near contemporary source to provide a uniquely Welsh perspective on the events of the revolt, is much more specific than that given in any of the other chronicle accounts, suggesting that Glyndwr's army was no mere raiding party but a substantial invasion force, mustered from various parts of Wales.

The size and composition of Edmund Mortimer's army is similarly difficult to establish, however the chronicle sources appear generally to agree that it was a substantial force. The author of the *Vita Ricardi* states that Mortimer 'sent for his men and tenants of Maelienydd', perhaps suggesting that the bulk of Mortimer's force consisted of two distinct elements, comprising his own household retainers and the 'tenants of Maelienydd'. The latter term is somewhat ambiguous; it could simply denote the tenants

[20] The letter is printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England,* 7 vols. (London 1834-7), I, 185-6

of the Mortimers' estates in north-east Radnorshire although it might also refer in a general sense to the tenants of the Mortimer honour of Radnor, which encompassed lands in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Radnorshire.

Thomas Walsingham and the author of the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* both specifically state that Mortimer's force was drawn primarily from Herefordshire. Walsingham, in particular, emphasises the large size of Mortimer's army, describing it as consisting of 'almost all the militia of Herefordshire'. It is noticeable that the leading knights mentioned by the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* and the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* as having been captured or slain at Pilleth, namely Sir Thomas Clanvowe, Sir Kynard de la Bere, Sir Robert Whitney were all prominent landholders in Herefordshire.[21] This clearly suggests that Mortimer's force was substantial in size, comprising not only the Mortimers' own tenantry but also a county levy raised by the local sheriff, and that Edmund's lieutenants chiefly consisted of prominent tenants of the Mortimer estates in Herefordshire. However, the contemporary chronicler Thomas Otterbourne describes Edmund Mortimer's force as consisting of 'almost all the militia of the adjacent counties (to Wales)', suggesting that Mortimer's force represented a general muster of available troops not only from one county but several (including Herefordshire, Shropshire and Radnorshire).

The available documentary sources provide no indication as to the extent of Welsh casualties at the battle of Pilleth, although they generally agree that the English casualties were severe. Henry IV's letter of June 25th, 1402 reporting news of the defeat to the Privy Council emphasises the seriousness of the losses, stating that 'certain rebels had lately taken our very dear cousin Edmund Mortimer and many knights and squires of his company'. The author of the *Vita Ricardi* Secundi estimated the number of English dead at 200, which seems to be a remarkably low total and appears to be somewhat at odds with his subsequent description of the field of slaughter. Thomas Walsingham's total of the English casualties is clearly higher (although his estimate, as with all numerical estimates given by medieval chroniclers, must be regarded with some caution); in the *Annales Henrici Quarti* he stated that 'on that field more than 1100 of our people were killed', while in the *Historia Anglicana* he gave a vaguer estimate of 'far more than 1000 men killed'. Adam of Usk's statement that 'more than 8000 persons died miserable deaths' at Pilleth appears to be little more than wild exaggeration. The suggested total of 800 English casualties given in G. Hodges's recent analysis of the battle may be regarded as a plausible, though slightly high estimate.[22]

While it is impossible to reach an accurate estimate of the English casualties at Pilleth, it may be reasonably assumed that the majority of Mortimer's army was either captured or killed during the battle. It is noticeable that the author of the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, with admirable caution, did not provide a numerical estimate of the English dead, instead merely stating that 'most of the English host were slain'; a similar verdict is given in by

[21] For biographical information concerning the Herefordshire knights slain at Pilleth, see J.E. Lloyd, Owen Glendower (Oxford 1931), 51-2 and G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston 1995), 70; In addition to these knights, Sir Walter Devereux of Weobley and his kinsman Sir John Milborne are documented as having been slain at Pilleth (see J.S. Roskell et al (eds.) *The Commons 1386-1421* (Woodbridge 1993), 783

[22] G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston, 1995), 78-80

the chronicle of Wigmore Abbey, which comments that Edmund Mortimer 'was captured together with the majority of the host, with many being killed'.[23]

5.6.4 Assessment

Battle Location

There remains an understandable degree of uncertainty about the precise location and extent of the battlefield site, which is primarily due to the limited documentary evidence available. Two principal locations for the battle have been proposed; the traditional siting (marked on the OS mapping) being located on the low-lying ground lying to the S of Pilleth, on the N bank of the Lugg, while the other location is on the hill called Bryn Glas, immediately W of St Mary's Church at Pilleth.

The OS 1st edition 25 inch map places the site of the battlefield in the low-lying water meadows lying between the present B4356 road and the River Lugg (to the S), approximately 100m S of Pilleth church. The RCAHMW Inventory for Radnorshire (1913) supports this identification, stating that the battle 'is traditionally said to have taken place along the low-lying ground on the left bank of the river Lugg' and identifies a series of mounds situated along the N bank of the Lugg as being 'probably the burial places of the slain'.[24]

An earlier antiquarian account contained in the *History of Radnorshire* by the Rev. Jonathan Williams (d. 1829), contains a curious description of the battlefield which is extremely difficult to relate to the existing topography of the area, but appears to relate to earthwork features located on the water meadows to the N of the Lugg.[25] He states that ' on the field of action are to be seen two straight lined parapets of earth, thrown up to the height of above five or six feet, facing each other, and at a distance of 300 or 400 yards from one another. These two lines of breastworks or redoubts, were occupied, it is supposed, by the two hostile armies, and that the battle was fought on the level ground between these breastworks –man to man – by main strength and not by manoeuvring'.

In this connection, it is worth noting a later paper on the history of Pilleth church by Evan Williams, published in 1847, which mentions certain 'circular intrenchments in that part of the vale bordering on the river...tradition says these were occupied by Mortimer's forces previous to the engagement'.[26] The 'redoubts' or 'intrenchments' mentioned by both of these writers might actually refer to the four oval and sub-rectangular earthwork features known as Cuckoo Pen Mounds, dotted along the N bank of the Lugg to the S of Pilleth. The origin and function of these mounds remains uncertain, however; while the RCAHMW Inventory identified them as 'burial places' other writers, most notably the Radnorshire historian W.H. Howse, dismissed them as 'natural formations'.[27] It should

[23] J.E. Lloyd, Owen Glendower (Oxford 1931), 151-2; W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. Caley & Ellis, 6 vols (London 1817-30) Vol VI pt. 1, 354
[24] RCAHMW, An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Radnorshire (London 1913), 135 (No. 558)
[25] J. Williams, *History of Radnorshire* (London 1859), 282-3
[26] E. Williams, 'On the church etc. at Pilleth', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, Vol. 2 (1847), 329-32
[27] W.H. Howse, *Radnorshire* (Hereford 1949), 43

also be noted that the Pilleth tithe map and apportionment of 1843 contains no evidence for field names associated with the battle in this area.

The traditional location of the battlefield in the floodplain between Pilleth and the River Lugg appears to be at odds with several of the contemporary chronicle accounts of the battle, which appear to suggest the engagement took place on a hillside at Pilleth; which has been identified by the majority of scholars with the hill of Bryn Glas, located to the W of the parish church.

The account in the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* states that Mortimer's forces advanced uphill towards the Welsh position, while the Wigmore chronicler, who would presumably have had the benefit of local knowledge and his connections with the local Mortimer tenantry, specifically states that the battle took place on a certain mountain called Bryn Glas. Bryn Glas, translated from the Welsh as 'Green Hill', is clearly marked on the Pilleth tithe map of 1843 as representing an extremely large pasture field extending immediately S and W of the churchyard, its N boundary represented by the stream running NW from Pilleth Court towards Lower and Upper Graig Farms, while its southernmost boundary extended down almost as far as the road to Whitton towards Monaughty (the present B4356). It is likely that the name Bryn Glas also applied originally to the sloping ground extending down from the parish church towards Pilleth Court.

Further evidence suggesting that the battle took place on the sloping ground in the immediate vicinity of the church is provided by the testimony of a local antiquarian, Evan Williams of Knighton, writing in 1847, who drew attention to the exceptionally large quantities of human remains interred in the churchyard, which, as he plausibly suggests, may have 'been the resting place of many of those who fell in the severe conflict hereafter noticed'.[28] Moreover, another possible burial site is represented by a square patch of six fir trees planted by the late Sir Richard Green-Price to mark the location where human bones, presumed to represent the remains of persons slain during the battle, were apparently identified. J.A. Bradney's brief account of the discovery of these remains, written in 1923, states that they were found 'some fifty years ago', indicating a date of around 1873; the square plot of fir trees is shown to the W of the church on the OS 1st edition 25 inch map of 1889.[29]

Based on the archaeological and documentary evidence cited above, there appears to be strong evidence to suggest that the principal scene of the fighting, where Mortimer's forces advanced against Glyndwr's position, took place on the slopes of Bryn Glas, which originally appears to have encompassed an extensive area lying to the E, W, and S of St Mary's church, its southern edge approximately defined by the present B4356 while its eastern boundary was represented by the manorial complex of Pilleth Court. The possibility cannot be discounted, however, that subsequent fighting could have spread out over a much broader area (particularly following the rout of the English forces) and consequently could have covered much of the floodplain area to the S and SW of Pilleth, extending along the N bank of the River Lugg.

[28] E. Williams, 'On the church etc. at Pilleth', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, Vol. 2 (1847), 330.
[29] J.A. Bradney, 'Pilleth, Nant-y-Groes and Monaughty', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* Vol. 21 (1951), 41

In addition to the two locations discussed above, another possible site for the battle is suggested by a statement in the early 15th century English prose *Brut*, which locates the battle at 'Black Hill', which might possibly be identified with the eponymous hill lying to the NW of Bryn Glas. While there appears to be no other documentary or place name evidence to associate 'Black Hill' with the battle of Pilleth, it is certainly not impossible that the fighting could have extended northwards into this area.

Discussion of Primary Sources

The battle of Usk is covered in several contemporary and near-contemporary English and Welsh chronicles. The most detailed account of the battle is probably that contained in a continuation of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* covering the years 1399-1402, which appears to have been compiled by an unnamed monk of Evesham Abbey. The monk of Evesham appears to have been particularly well informed about Edmund Mortimer's movements prior to the battle, being our only source for Edmund's presence at Ludlow at the time of Glyndwr's attack, he explicitly names Pilleth as the site of the battle and provides invaluable information concerning the course of the battle and the topography of the battlefield.[30] The account in the *Vita* was subsequently reproduced with minor variations in *Giles's Chronicle*, a later compilation of materials covering the reigns from Richard II to Henry VI made in about 1460.[31]

Another detailed account of the battle is contained in the *Annales Henrici Quarti* covering the years 1399-1406, compiled by Thomas Walsingham precentor of St Albans (fl. c. 1360-1420) one of the leading (and most prolific) monastic annalists of the period, who appears to be well informed about affairs in the Welsh March although his work is clearly written from a pro-Lancastrian viewpoint.[32] Walsingham does not appear to have had as much knowledge of the local area as the Evesham annalist, omitting references to place names such as Pilleth or Maelienydd; however he does explicitly state that Mortimer's force consisted of 'almost all the militia of Herefordshire' and his vivid description of the reported mutilation of the English dead by the Welsh in the aftermath of the battle captures the hysteria which appears to have been engendered in the immediate aftermath of Glyndwr's victory. A paraphrase of the longer account in the *Annales* is also given in Walsingham's *Historia Anglicana* and is largely reproduced, with some variations, in the *Chronica Regum Anglie* compiled by one Thomas Otterbourne, rector of Chingford (Essex) in about 1420. [33]

While the accounts of the *Vita Ricardi* and Walsingham's *Annales Henrici Quarti* differ frequently in points of detail (the former, in particular, containing much more information relating to the local geography which is generally omitted from Walsingham's account), the narrative structure of both accounts is extremely similar. This suggests that both

[30] G.B. Stow (ed.), *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (Haney Foundation Series, University of Pennsylvania, xxi, 1977), 172-3
[31] J.A. Giles, *Incerti Scriptores Chronicon de Regnis Henrici IV, Henrici V et Henrici VI* (London 1848), 27
[32] H.T. Riley (ed.) *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani*,(London, 1866), 341; H.T. Riley (ed.) *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani: Thomae Walsingham Historia Anglicana*, 2 vols (London 1863-4), II, 250
[33] T. Hearne (ed.), *Duo Rerum Anglicanum Scriptores Veteres viz Thomas Otterbourne et Johannis Whethamstede ab origine gentis Britannicae usque ad Edwardum IV* (London 1732), 234-5.

accounts may well have been derived from a common source, possibly deriving from the King's court, which was then embellished by the Evesham annalist and Walsingham respectively.

Other near contemporary accounts of the battle include the chronicle of Adam of Usk (fl. c. 1352-1430),[34] a noted Welsh cleric and jurist who compiled a brief description of the battle (probably writing in about 1414). Although Adam had close contacts with the Mortimer family, his initial career having been fostered by the patronage of the earls of March, his account is brief and somewhat disappointing, possibly reflecting the fact that he was abroad when the battle took place. A brief entry relating to the battle is also contained in a continuation to the Mortimer family chronicle, compiled at the Augustinian Abbey of Wigmore, which is nevertheless of value because it explicitly places the scene of the battle 'on the hill of Bryn Glas in Maelienydd, near Knighton' (probably reflecting the chronicler's local knowledge of the area, being only nine miles from Pilleth). Another account in a prose version of the English chronicle known as the *Brut*, the relevant section of which appears to have been compiled in or shortly after 1437 by an unknown author who may well have been Welsh or was employed by a Welsh patron contains a short description of the battle which is of interest as it suggests that it occurred shortly after an attack on the nearby town of Knighton by Glyndwr's forces.

A near contemporary account of the battle of particular interest is contained in the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, a Welsh chronicle covering the years of the Glyndwr revolt between 1400 and 1415. The *Annals* are presumed to have been compiled at some point in the first half of the 15th century although the earliest surviving text (Peniarth MS 135) consists of a manuscript copy made by the poet Gruffydd Hiraethog at some time between 1556 and 1564.[35] The compiler of the *Annals* appears to have been well informed not only about the composition of Glyndwr's army but also Mortimer's forces, specifically naming three leading Herefordshire knights who either fell or were captured at Pilleth, namely Sir Thomas Clanvowe, Sir Kynard de la Bere and Sir Robert Whitney.

Contemporary records of royal government (such as the records of Privy Council proceedings, accounts of royal military expenditure and Patent Rolls) provide some information concerning the battle, specifically Henry IV's letter dated June 25th, 1402 informing the Privy Council of Mortimer's defeat and capture, which gives a good indication of the scale of the Welsh victory and the severity of the English losses. There is a considerable quantity of available documentation relating to measures taken by the Crown to strengthen the garrisons and defences of various castles and towns along the Welsh Marches during the months following the battle of Pilleth.

Discussion of Secondary Sources

The battle of Pilleth has been extensively covered in various antiquarian works and modern historical accounts. Lengthy accounts of the battle appear in several late 16th century English histories, most notably Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (first published

[34] BL Additional MS 10104; C. Given-Wilson (ed.) *The Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 158-9

[35] NLW Peniarth MS 135; The Welsh text with English translation is printed in J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 149-53

in 1577) and Sir John Hayward's *Life and Reign of King Henry IV* (1610); the former appears to have been used by William Shakespeare for his vivid description of the battle in Henry IV Part 1, written no later than 1597.[36]

'But yesternight, all athwart there came
A post from Wales loaden with heavy news,
Whose worst was that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
Against the irregular and wild Glendower
Was by the rude hands of that Welshmen taken
A thousand of his people butchered,
Upon whose dead corpse there was such misuse
Such beastly shameless transformation
By those Welshwomen done, as may not be
Without much shame retold or spoken of.'
(Act 1, Scene 1, lines 36-46).

These accounts all appear to ultimately to be derived from the account in Thomas Walsingham's *Annales Henrici Quarti,* with particular emphasis on the barbarous treatment of the English dead in the aftermath of the battle.

The earliest antiquarian account of the battle from a Welsh perspective is contained in the *Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr* compiled by the 17th century scholar Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt (d. 1667), who appears to have derived his account from English chroniclers (chiefly Walsingham) and the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*.[37] Vaughan's *Memoirs* were largely reproduced as an Appendix to the Rev. J. Thomas's *History of the Island of Anglesey* (1775).[38] Thomas Pennant's account, contained in his *Tours in Wales (*1776) is based on a wider consultation of the English chronicle sources and appears to be particularly concerned with disassociating Glyndwr from the reputed mutilation of the English dead after the battle, instead placing this 'heavy charge' on Glyndwr's lieutenant Rhys Gethin. Pennant's account is largely followed by Rev. Thomas Thomas in his *Memoirs of Owen Glendower* (1822).[39]

The first modern scholarly account of the battle is contained in J.E. Lloyd's study of Owain Glyndwr, which makes extensive reference to the available chronicle and other documentary sources.[40] Lloyd draws particular attention to the contradiction between the traditional site of the battle on the floodplain to the N of the Lugg, as given in the RCAHMW Inventory for Radnorshire (1913) and the descriptions in several of the contemporary chronicle sources, in particular the *Vita Ricardi* and the Wigmore chronicle, both of which place the main field of battle on a hill (the latter source specifying Bryn Glas).[41]

[36] H. Ellis (ed.), *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* 6 vols (London 1807-8), 520
[37] NLW Panton MS 53
[38] J. Thomas, *A History of the Island of Anglesey* (London 1775)
[39] T. Pennant, *Tours in Wales* (1883 ed.) 314-5; T. Thomas, *The Memoirs of Owen Glendower* (Haverfordwest 1822), 92-4
[40] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 51-2
[41] RCAHMW, *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Radnorshire* (London 1913), 135

A later description of the battle in W.H. Howse's *History of Radnorshire* (1949) specifically asserts that the battle was fought on the hill of Bryn Glas, while E. Dunn's account in her article on 'Owain Glyndwr and Radnorshire' is more circumspect, stating that, 'probably the battle covered a considerable area on the right hand side of the river (Lugg)' encompassing both the hill of Bryn Glas and the valley plain below.[42] Probably the most exhaustive modern account of the battle is that contained in Chapter 6 of G. Hodges's study of *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence of the Welsh Borders* (1995), which discusses in the detail the events leading up to the battle, the course of the battle itself and its aftermath, with a valuable discussion of the available primary and secondary sources.[43]

Archaeology and Historic Terrain

It is difficult, based on the available documentary evidence, to determine exactly where the battle was fought. The Wigmore chronicle specifically states that the battle took place 'on the mountain called Brynglase', which is identifiable with the hill immediately to the W of the parish church of St Mary. This location would best match with that given in the account in the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, which specifically describes Mortimer's army as 'boldly ascending the hill'. It is certainly possible that the main scene of fighting took place on the intermediate slopes, in the vicinity of Pilleth church and Pilleth Court.

Evidence for at least two burial sites associated with the battle has been identified in this area, one within the churchyard itself and another further up the hillside. A local antiquarian, Evan Williams of Knighton, in a short paper on Pilleth church published in 1847, makes particular reference to the exceptional number of corpses buried in the churchyard, stating that 'in digging out graves here, great quantities of human bones are always discovered, and it is conceived there can be but little doubt of this having been the resting place of many of those who fell in the severe conflict hereafter noticed'.[44] Hodges mentions that some of these skeletal remains were buried inside an unmarked stone kerb in the churchyard, which is presumably identifiable with a rectangular kerbed area immediately SE of the church itself.

Further up the hillside to the W of the church, another burial site is marked by a square patch of six Wellingtonia fir trees which were apparently planted by the late Sir Richard Green-Price to mark the location where human bones, presumed to represent the remains of persons slain during the battle, were apparently identified. J.A. Bradney's brief account of the discovery of these remains, written in 1923, states that they were found 'some fifty years ago', indicating a date of around 1873; the square plot of fir trees is shown to the W of the church on the OS 1st edition 25 inch map of 1889.[45] E. Dunn casts some doubt on this apparent discovery of human remains, commenting that 'it is always

[42] W.H. Howse, *Radnorshire* (Hereford 1949), 43; E. Dunn, 'Owain Glyndwr and Radnorshire', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society*, Vol. 37 (1967), 33
[43] G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston 1995), 63-88.
[44] E. Williams, 'On the church etc. at Pilleth', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, Vol. 2 (1847), 330.
[45] J.A. Bradney, 'Pilleth, Nant-y-Groes and Monaughty', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* Vol. 21 (1951), 41

questionable, however, exactly how long uncremated bones will survive in an acid soil'.[46] Nevertheless, it would seem that this plot of fir trees may well represent a burial site and could merit further investigation to determine whether any further remains might be identified in the immediate vicinity.

While there appears to be strong evidence to suggest that the principal site of the battle was located on the slopes of Bryn Glas, stretching down towards St Mary's Church and Pilleth Court, it should be noted that recent archaeological work carried out in this area has produced limited results. A metal detector survey and watching brief on cable trenching work undertaken in January 2006 within an area immediately to the SE of the churchyard revealed no evidence of finds or features which could be identified as battlefield debris from the battle of Pilleth although a small quantity of 14th-15th century pottery was recovered from the ploughsoil.[47] In spite of the negative result in this specific area, there nevertheless remains significant potential for further archaeological remains associated with the battle to be identified in this locality.

However, while the slopes of Bryn Glas may well have represented the main locale of the battle, it is not unlikely that the fighting could have spread out over a much broader area (particularly following the rout of the English forces) and consequently could have encompassed much of the floodplain area to the S and SW of Pilleth, extending along the N bank of the River Lugg. This may, to some extent, explain the traditional siting of the battle by Williams, the RCAHMW Inventory and the Ordnance Survey mapping, within a broad expanse of water meadows between the B4356 road and the N bank of the River Lugg.

Within this area are four oval and sub-rectangular raised earthworks known as Cuckoo Pen Mounds, located at NGR SO 2445 6770, SO 2470 6770, SO 2545 6758 and SO 2580 6776. The Cuckoo Pen mounds range between 2.3m and 5m in height, and all have substantial diameters. The RCAHMW Inventory for Radnorshire specifically identifies these mounds as 'the burial places of the slain'.[48] However the origin and function of these mounds remain uncertain; the Radnorshire historian W.H. Howse dismissed them as 'natural formations and not burial mounds, as sometimes supposed'.[49] These mounds would certainly merit further investigation to determine whether they in fact are natural or anthropogenic in origin. Recent archaeological work carried out in the floodplain area to the N of the Lugg has so far produced negative results, a metal detector survey carried out in 1999 prior to the construction of a farmhouse at NGR SO 2540 6780, immediately S of the B4356 and approximately 300m S of St Mary's Church, revealed no evidence of metal debris or other artefacts associated with the battle.[50]

[46] E. Dunn, 'Owain Glyndwr and Radnorshire', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society*, Vol. 37 (1967), 33.
[47] P. Frost, *Pilleth Court Farm, Pilleth, Whitton, Powys: Metal Detector Survey* Castlering Archaeology Report No. 160 (2003)
[48] RCAHMW, *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Radnorshire* (London 1913), 16-7
[49] W.H. Howse, *Radnorshire* (Hereford 1949), 43
[50] Border Archaeology, *Pilleth Whitton, Powys, Archaeological Desk Top Survey and Battlefield Survey* (WHIT 99/ 02-03), February 1999

The battle site of Pilleth occupies two distinct soil zones. The upper slopes consist of the typical brown earths of the 541j (DENBIGH 1) consisting of well drained fine loamy or silty soils overlying Palaeozoic slay mudstone and siltstone. In terms of acidity/alkalinity such soils are neutral to basic (pH 5.5-7) and being well-drained, the preservation of bone and charcoal and charred plant macrofossils may thus be anticipated, while inorganic material (including metal objects) may also have survived.

Within the lower-lying section of the battlefield (within the valley floor of the Upper Lugg) the predominant soil type consists of the typical alluvial gley soils of the 811b CONWAY series, comprising deep stoneless fine silty and clayey soils variably affected by seasonal groundwater flooding. In terms of acidity/alkalinity, such soils may be neutral to acid (pH 5.5-7) or acid to basic in anoxic conditions, including wetlands and river floodplains. A range of material is likely to be present within such deposits, including bone, charcoal and other charred plant remains, pollen/spores and molluscs (wood, plant remains etc if waterlogged).

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

There can be little doubt, as R.R. Davies observed in his study of Glyndwr's uprising, that 'the battle of Bryn Glas or Pilleth was the one of the most momentous of the revolt'.[51] A substantial English county levy had been annihilated by the Welsh in a pitched battle, with several prominent Marcher lords either being captured or slain. The central Marches, including border towns such as Hereford, Leominster and Ludlow, were now exposed as potentially vulnerable to Welsh attacks. The shock of this defeat is reflected in Henry IV's letter to the Privy Council relating news of the battle and particularly in the hysterical anti-Welsh tone of contemporary chroniclers such as Thomas Walsingham and the author of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, both of which place particular emphasis on the reputed savagery of the Welsh both during and after the battle.

The gravity of the situation following Glyndwr's victory at Pilleth is also reflected in the swift measures taken by Henry IV to strengthen the defences of key Marcher towns and strongholds against the imminent threat of attack by the Welsh; garrisons were placed at the important border castles of Clifford, Hay and Radnor while the defences of towns such as Brecon, Hereford and Leominster were also hurriedly strengthened during this period. However in spite of these measures, it was nonetheless clear that the initiative lay with the Welsh rebels; Glyndwr launched another substantial campaign against Glamorgan in August 1402 and a large-scale expedition led by Henry IV against the Welsh at about the same time appears to have resulted in ignominious failure.[52]

Glyndwr's ambitious plans following the victory at Pilleth are further illustrated by the fact that he married his daughter Catherine to the captured lord Edmund Mortimer in November 1402. Edmund appears to have become Glyndwr's ally once it became clear that Henry IV, who appears to have had a long-held antipathy towards the Mortimers (probably for dynastic motives, as the claim of the earl of March to the throne was stronger than his own) was unwilling to pay his ransom. Edmund Mortimer's letter dated

[51] R.R, Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford 1995), 107
[52] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 54-5, 151

December 14th, 1402 appealing to his tenants in the Welsh Marches to support the revolt of Glyndwr indicates the extent to which Glyndwr's revolt had intensified and broadened in scope following the defeat at Pilleth, from being merely a regional conflict it had acquired distinct dynastic overtones and now represented a serious threat to the Lancastrian regime.[53]

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5.7 Campston Hill (June-November 1404?)

5.7.1 Site of Battle

The precise site of the battle remains uncertain, the modern OS 1:25000 edition map locates the site of the battle in a field currently laid out to pasture, situated to the W of Campston Wood, approximately 200m to the NE of Great Campston Farm and 30m SE of the unclassified lane leading over Campston Hill from Grosmont towards Llanfihangel Crucorney; however the evidence supporting this location is uncertain.

5.7.2 Summary

Historical Context of Battle

The battle of Campston Hill represents the first of two recorded engagements fought in 1404 between English and Welsh forces in Monmouthshire, the second being at Craig-y-Dorth, S of Monmouth. Information concerning both of these battles is extremely limited, but they should be viewed in the context of evidence for a major campaign waged by the Welsh in the southern Marches during the summer of 1404.

5.7.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

The specific date of the battle is not attested by the evidence of the chronicle sources or royal governmental records (ie. Patent Rolls or Proceedings of the Privy Council). The only documentary source to refer specifically to the battle is *The Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, a brief chronicle covering the years of Owain Glyndwr's revolt from 1400 to 1415, which dates the battle to 1404, describing how 'in the same year was the slaughter of the Welsh on Campston Hill'.[1]

J.E. Lloyd, in his classic study of Owain Glyndwr's career, placed the date of the battles of Campston Hill and Craig-y-Dorth subsequent to reports of a substantial armed incursion by the Welsh into southern Herefordshire, which appears to have occurred in June or early July of 1404.[2] The precarious situation is summarised in a hastily written letter from the Sheriff, Escheator and other gentry of Hereford to the King's Council dated June 10th, 1404, describing how a great multitude of Welsh had entered Archenfield (the name of the Welsh *cantref* of Ergyng, covering much of south-west Herefordshire), causing considerable destruction.[3]

Moreover, the letter mentions that the Welsh were planning 'within eight days' to attack the 'March of Wales' presumably referring to the English-held lordships of Abergavenny, Monmouth and the Three Castles; specific mention is made of William Beauchamp, lord of Abergavenny, who was described as being 'on the point of destruction' (presumably

[1] NLW Peniarth MS 135, pp. 61-2; Printed in Appendix I to J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 152
[2] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 87-8
[3] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 223-5

under siege in his castle of Abergavenny). Another missive from Henry Prince of Wales, written from Worcester on June 26th, 1404 appears to corroborate the evidence of the previous letter, stating that a substantial contingent of rebels, consisting of 'all the force from South and West Wales which they could raise', had descended into Herefordshire, 'burning and destroying the said county'.[4]

Henry IV's reaction to reports of the Welsh attack and the imminent fall of Abergavenny appears to have been immediate; on June 14th he ordered the sheriff of Hereford 'to assemble all the King's lieges of the county, esquires, archers and other fencible men, to go with the King's kinsman Richard of York, whom the King has ordered to go with all speed to the castle and town of Bergavenny for their rescue.'[5]

At some point before June 26th it appears that Prince Henry had arrived at Worcester and had been joined there by Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick and 'a fine company of people'; according to the Prince's letter he had sent for Richard Duke of York and Thomas Mowbray Earl Marshal to meet with him and 'other most sufficient people of the county from this March' at Worcester on the following Thursday (July 4th, 1404). It is unclear whether this represents a general muster of the English forces before proceeding to the Welsh Marches, or whether this actually took place at Hereford or Leominster.

A surviving account book of the controller of Prince Henry's household shows that Prince Henry, his household and a substantial body of troops were stationed in Hereford and Leominster from early July to November of 1404, prior to launching an expedition for the relief of Coety Castle in late November of that year; however there is little other information available on the respective movements of the English and Welsh troops prior to the battle of Campston Hill.[6]

The Battle and its Aftermath

Information on the events of the battle is extremely limited; the contemporary English chronicles (including Adam of Usk's *Chronicle* and Walsingham's *Historia Anglicana*) make no reference to the battle; the only source to refer specifically to the battle is the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, a Welsh chronicle covering the years 1400-1415, which only survives in a manuscript compiled by the poet Gruffydd Hiraethog between 1556 and 1564.[7] The entry in the *Annals* tersely states that 'in the same year (1404) was the slaughter of the Welsh on Campston Hill ('ar vynydd kamstwm').

The account given in the Annals appears to have formed the basis of later antiquarian accounts, although the details of the battle (in particular place-names) appear to have been somewhat garbled in transmission. The *Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr*, compiled in the 17th century by the scholar Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt (d.1664), refers to how Glyndwr 'met with the English at Mynydd Cwm Du (*sic*) who put him to retreat killing

[4] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 229-31
[5] *Calendar of Patent Rolls Henry IV*, Vol, II, 403
[6] NA E101/404/24 Account Book of John Spenser, controller of the household of Henry Prince of Wales
[7] NLW Peniarth MS 135. The Welsh text with English translation is printed in J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 152 ('Yn yr un flwyddyn hono y bv y lladdfa ar gymru ar vynydd kamstwm')

many of his men'.[8] In the version of Vaughan's *Memoirs* published as an appendix to Thomas's *History of the Island of Anglesey* (1775), Mynydd Cwm Du is further corrupted to 'Mynyddlamsdusy'.[9]

The description of the battle given in Thomas Pennant's *Tours in Wales* appears to rely in part on Vaughan's Memoirs, placing Mynydd Cwm-du (erroneously) in Montgomeryshire. However some of the information contained in Pennant's account does not appear in the Welsh Annals or Vaughan's *Memoirs* and must therefore have been derived from a different source. Pennant specifically refers to Richard Beauchamp earl of Warwick as the commander of the English forces at Campston and to the capture of Glyndwr's standard-bearer, whom he mentions by name (Ellis ap Richard ap Howel ap Morgan Llwyd).[10]

Pennant cites William Dugdale's *Baronage of England* (published in 1675-6) as the source associating Warwick with the battle of Campston Hill. Dugdale refers to the earl of Warwick putting the forces of Glyndwr to flight and taking his banner, an event that he appears to place chronologically before the battle of Shrewsbury (July 21st, 1403), but does not mention the site of the battle.[11] Dugdale's information appears to have been derived (at least in part) from the late 15th century illustrated life of Richard Beauchamp known as the *Beauchamp Pageant*, compiled by the antiquary John Rous between 1485 and 1490.

One particular illustration in the *Pageant* consists of a scene showing Beauchamp, identified by the crest of the bear and ragged staff on his visored sallet, with several companions charging towards the enemy forces, who are depicted in headlong retreat, while in the background beyond the hillock a similar rout is depicted.[12] The earl is shown with full plate armour aiming his lance at the horse carrying Glyndwr's bannerer (who is depicted wearing a mail shirt and jack with plate vambraces and leg-harness) causing the horse to stumble.

The inscription above the drawing reads as follows: 'Here shews howe at thies daies appered a blazing sterre, called stella comata, which after the seiying of clerkys signified greet deth and blodeshede. And sone upon beganne the warre of Wales by oon Owen of Glendour, their chief capteyn, whom emonges other Erle Richard so sore sewed, that he hadde nerehande taken hym and put hym to flight, and toke his banner and moche of his people and his bannerer'.

The evidence of the drawing and accompanying inscription is somewhat misleading as the comet depicted by Rous is one which appeared in January-March 1402, as recorded by several contemporary chroniclers including Adam of Usk.[13] If this illustration does

[8] NLW Panton MS 53, 56-6b.
[9] J. Thomas, *A History of the Island of Anglesey* (London 1775), 70
[10] T. Pennant, *Tours in Wales*, 3 vols, rev. ed. (London 1883), III, 331
[11] W. Dugdale, *The Baronage of England*, 2 vols (London 1675-6), I, 243
[12] A. Sinclair (ed.), *The Beauchamp Pageant* (Donington 2003), 63; BL Cotton Julius E. IV
[13] J.H. Wylie, *History of England under Henry IV*, 4 vols (London 1884-1898), I, 274-5; *The Chronicle of Adam of Usk*, ed. C. Given Wilson (Oxford 1997), 156n

relate to the battle of Campston, then it would appear that Rous has misdated this event by inserting the occurrence of the comet, which appeared more than two years previously. Unfortunately, Rous does not make a specific reference to where this battle occurred; consequently the scene as depicted cannot be positively associated with Campston, although the fact that mention is made of the capture of Owain Glyndwr's standard bearer suggests that it does indeed relate to a specific event, rather than a generalised depiction of the Earl of Warwick's campaigns in Wales.

It therefore remains to be determined whether there is any further evidence to establish a conclusive link between Richard Beauchamp and the battle of Campston Hill. Certainly Richard Beauchamp had a strong familial and landed interest in the Welsh Marches, his inheritance included the lordship of Elfael in Radnorshire while his great-uncle, William Beauchamp (d.1411) was in possession of the castle and lordship of Abergavenny.[14] Moreover, Richard Beauchamp was certainly present in the Marcher counties during 1404, as evidenced by Prince Henry's letter of June 26th, in which he states that 'I have removed with my little household to the town of Worcester, and at my request there is come with me in very good heart my dear and well-beloved cousin the Earl of Warwick, with a fine company of his people, at his very great expense, for which is worthy to be well thanked by you for his good will at all times'.[15]

It is unclear whether Beauchamp remained with the Prince and his household throughout the summer of 1404. From the evidence of the account of John Spenser, the controller of the Prince's household in 1403-4, Prince Henry is known to have stayed at Hereford and Leominster between July and November of 1404 although no specific reference is made to the presence of the earl of Warwick.[16]

Having considered the sparse information provided by the Annals and later antiquarian accounts, is it possible to draw any further conclusions regarding the battle? The supposed site at Great Campston is located approximately 8km NE of Abergavenny and 3km SW of Grosmont, on a long established routeway leading from Hereford, crossing the Monnow at Llangua and then proceeding SW across the ridge of Campston Hill towards Llanfihangel Crucorney and thence to Abergavenny. It is possible that the Welsh were heading towards either Abergavenny or Grosmont, both of which were in English hands, and were intercepted by the English forces at Campston, or it may have been that an English force sent from Hereford to relieve the castle of Abergavenny encountered the Welsh at this point and gave battle.

It is also worth noting that Great Campston, the farmstead closest to the reputed battlefield, occupies the site of the monastic grange of Llyncoed belonging to the Cistercian Abbey of Dore, which had been granted to them by King Henry III and confirmed by Hubert de Burgh in 1230.[17] It is not entirely implausible that the proximity of the battle site to the grange might not be coincidental, although the fact that the abbot of Dore had previously been granted a licence to negotiate with the Welsh rebels for the

[14] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 87n
[15] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 229-31
[16] NA E101/404/24 Account Book of John Spenser, controller of the household of Henry Prince of Wales
[17] D.H. Williams, *White Monks in Gwent and the Border* (Pontypool 1976), 36

safety of his house, this would not necessarily mean that the outlying estates of Dore would have been immune from attack.[18]

Troops and Casualties

No detailed information is available on the respective size of the English and Welsh troops present at Campston Hill. Based on the evidence of the letter from the Sheriff and Escheator of Hereford to the King's Council dated June 10th, 1404, it would appear that the Welsh force that had invaded southern Herefordshire in the summer of 1404 was substantial in size although no precise figures are available.[19] Prince Henry's letter to his father dated June 26th relates how he had 'lately certified that the Welsh had descended into the county of Hereford, burning and destroying the said county in very great force, and were provisioned for 15 days'. In a letter bearing the same date, from Prince Henry to the King's Council, Henry describes the Welsh force in slightly different terms, consisting of 'all the force of South Wales and North Wales which they could raise'. [20]

The size of the English army present at the battle cannot be determined precisely from the limited documentary evidence available. However it is possible to obtain a rough impression of the size of the English force commanded by Prince Henry in the southern Marches during mid to late 1404. A record of proceedings in the King's Council dated August 29th, 1404 records that provision was made for the Prince 'in gratitude for his good defence of the county of Hereford and for the salvation of that county and the county of Gloucestershire...and to override Overwent and Netherwent and Glamorgan and Morgannwg', for the wages of 500 men at arms and 2000 archers for three weeks and for 300 men and 2000 archers for three more weeks.[21]

Further information concerning the size of the forces at Prince Henry's disposal is provided by an account book of the controller of the Prince's household covering the period July 20th - November 21st, 1404 when he was resident at Hereford and Leominster 'for the ordinance of the Marches'. The account book contains a section entitled 'vadia guerre' listing the wages paid to various commanders, including Richard Duke of York, Lord Audley, Gilbert Lord Talbot, William Newport and lesser knights, as well as a list of the forces under the command of the Prince and various leaders in both North and South Wales.[22]

It is difficult to establish clearly what was the size of the forces under the command of the Prince at any one particular time, as the account book does not provide a continuous

[18] R.R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford 1995), 235
[19] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 223-5
[20] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 229-31
[21] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 232-6
[22] NA E101/404/24; For detailed discussion of the financial and logistical issues relating to Prince Henry's campaigns during the Glyndwr rising, see W.R.M. Griffiths, 'Prince Henry, Wales and the Royal Exchequer, 1400-13', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 32 (1985), 203-13 and Griffiths, 'Prince Henry's War: Armies Garrisons and supply during the Glyndwr rising', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 34 (1987), 164-75

daily record of wages from July to November. Specific payments are recorded to the Duke of York for 35 men at arms and 70 archers, to Lord Audley for 30 men at arms and 60 archers, to Gilbert Lord Talbot for 12 men at arms (*scutiferi*) and 24 archers (*sagitarii*) and to William Newport for 23 men at arms and 50 archers, all described as being stationed in the County of Hereford 'for the safe keeping of the March' for 28 days during October and November. The men at arms each received a wage of 12d daily, while the archers only received 6d daily. The list of the troops under the command of the Prince and various commanders in North and South Wales records 42 'lancers' (*lances*) and 232 archers pertaining to the Prince's own retinue (*les gents entour les corps de monsieur*) and another 159 'lancers' and 788 archers divided among 6 contingents serving in South Wales (commanded by John Greyndor, Rowland Leinthall, John Membury, John Gargrave, Watkin and John Felde, Thomas Tonstall and William and James de Haryington). It is likely that those troops described as '*scutiferi'* (lit. squires) and 'lances' were mounted men at arms who were not of knightly status; significantly, the bulk of the force is described as consisting of archers, rather than other types of infantry.

There is no detailed information available concerning the numbers of casualties incurred by the English and Welsh forces, although, if the testimony of the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* is to be believed, then it would appear likely that the Welsh casualties were severe.

5.7.4 Assessment

Battle Location

The location of the battle at Campston Hill is difficult to establish precisely. The site of the battlefield marked by the RCAHMW and on the modern 1:25000 Ordnance Survey map is located at NGR SO 362 224, approximately 200m NE of Great Campston Farm, in a field lying to the SE of the unclassified lane leading E-W from Grosmont to Llanfihangel Crucorney, forming part of a long established route from Hereford to Abergavenny.

The evidence for this identification is unclear, however it is worth noting that the battlefield site is not indicated on the OS 1st –4th edition maps, which only mark the site of a 'Supposed Camp' to the NW of Great Campston Farm. This 'camp', occupying roughly the highest point of Campston Hill, appears to be the remains of a sub-rectangular defended enclosure of possible Iron Age or Roman date known as Pwll-y-Bala, a plan for which appears in Coxe's *Historical Tour in Monmouthshire* (published in 1801). Coxe's account, somewhat surprisingly, makes no reference to the battle of Campston Hill or any traditions associated with it. Likewise Bradney, in his History of Monmouthshire devotes a lengthy section to the history of Great Campston but makes no reference to the battle.[23]

[23] W. Coxe, *An Historical Tour in Monmouthshire*, 2 vols (London 1801), I, 23 (Plan of Pwll-y-Bala); II, 223; J.A. Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire Vol. 1, pt. 1 The Hundred of Skenfrith* (London 1904), 78-9

The available cartographic evidence relating to the area (the earliest being a pictorial survey of the manor of Grosmont drawn up by the Duchy of Lancaster in 1588) unfortunately provides little evidence to help establish a precise location for the battlefield site.[24] The Duchy of Lancaster survey of Grosmont manor, drawn up c.1588 delineates the lane leading from Grosmont to Llanfihangel Crucorney, described as 'the gret lane upon Camstone' and the farmhouse at Great Campston is also indicated, surrounded by open, rolling pasture. No indication of the battlefield site is given on the 1588 map, neither does any reference appear in Bromley's survey of the manor of Grosmont dated 1613 which does however mention the estate at Campston.[25]

The Grosmont tithe map and apportionment of 1841 are similarly unhelpful in terms of providing information on field names that might help to establish the site of the battlefield; no field names are listed in the tithe apportionment for the Great Campston estate. The records of the Scudamore family of Kentchurch Court (who held the Great Campston estate from 1765 to 1839) likewise appear to contain no references to field names associated with the battle site.[26] A record of a marriage settlement dated 1837 (in the Penpont MSS) provides a detailed list of the fields (with names) pertaining to the 'capital messuage at Campston', however this is more likely to relate to the estate of Gaer Farm, lying N of Campston Hill, which is recorded as being in the possession of Philip Penry Williams of Penpont in 1841.[27] None of the field names detailed in the marriage settlement appear to have any obvious military associations.

Discussion of Primary Sources

No mention of the battle is made in the English chronicle sources or in royal governmental records (eg. Proceedings of the Privy Council, Patent Rolls, royal household accounts etc), although they do provide important information concerning the movements of Prince Henry and the strength of the English forces in the Welsh Marches around the time of the battle. The only contemporary account of the battle is contained in the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, a brief chronicle covering the years of the Glyndwr revolt between 1400 and 1415. The *Annals* are generally presumed to have been originally compiled at some point in the first half of the 15th century although the earliest surviving text (Peniarth MS 135) consists of a manuscript copy made by the poet Gruffydd Hiraethog at some time between 1556 and 1564.[28] The *Annals* are of considerable importance as representing the only near contemporary source for the Glyndwr revolt to depict the events from a Welsh perspective.

Discussion of Secondary Sources

Most published accounts of the battle of Campston Hill are indebted to the *Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr* compiled by the 17th century antiquarian Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt (d. 1667), which relied heavily upon the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* but also incorporated

[24] NA MPC 1/251
[25] W. Rees, *A Survey of the Duchy of Lancaster Lordships in Wales 1609-13* (Cardiff 1953), 72-91
[26] NLW Grosmont Tithe Map and Apportionment (1841); Herefordshire Record Office, Kentchurch Court MSS (Scudamore)
[27] NLW Penpont MSS Deed No. 2340
[28] The Welsh text with English translation is printed in J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 149-53

evidence from other sources which no longer appear to be extant. Vaughan's *Memoirs* were largely reproduced as an Appendix to the Rev. J. Thomas's *History of the Island of Anglesey* (1775).

The account of the battle contained in Pennant's *Tours in Wales*, although mistakenly assigning the site of the battle to Montgomeryshire, is of particular value as it explicitly refers to Richard Beauchamp earl of Warwick as the leader of the English army and to the capture of Glyndwr's standard-bearer, Ellis ap Richard ap Howel ap Morgan Llwyd.[29]

One of sources used by Pennant appears to be the biographical account of Richard Beauchamp in Dugdale's *Baronage of England* (1675-6) which refers to Beauchamp putting Glyndwr to flight and taking his banner, while the specific reference to Glyndwr's standard bearer, Ellis ap Richard ap Howel ap Morgan Llwyd, appears to be derived from the pedigrees held by the Griffiths family of Wrexham.[30] Dugdale's account appears to be based on the entry in Rous's *Beauchamp Pageant*, placing his brief reference to Warwick's defeat of Glyndwr before the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403; moreover he does not specifically refer to the site of the battle. It remains uncertain, therefore, from what source Pennant was able to link Beauchamp specifically with the battle at Campston Hill, or whether it represented inspired guesswork on his part based on the available evidence at his disposal.

Pennant's placing of the battle site in Montgomeryshire was largely followed uncritically by scholars until the early 20th century, when the historian J.E. Lloyd, in his classic study of Owain Glyndwr, printed the text of the earliest manuscript copy of the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* which demonstrated that the correct reading of the battlefield was 'mynydd Camstwm' (ie. Campston Hill between Abergavenny and Grosmont).[31]

Lloyd's account remains the fullest discussion of the battle and the documentary sources relating to it; brief references to it occur in G. Hodges and R.R. Davies's study of the Revolt of Owain Glyndwr, which largely follow Lloyd's interpretation of events.[32] It is noticeable that the two major antiquarian works on Monmouthshire, namely Coxe's *Historical Tour* and Bradney's *History*, both contain no references to the battle.

Archaeology and Historic Terrain

There are clearly problems in establishing a precise location for this battle site, based on the limited documentary and place-name evidence. The justification for the location of the battle site to the NE of Great Campston Farm as given on the modern OS 1:25000 map is unclear, it could just as well have been located anywhere along the ridge of Campston Hill. No obvious evidence of earthwork features was identified within the field to the S of the unclassified lane running NE of Campston Farm. The sub-rectangular defended enclosure site on the summit of the hill to the NW of Great

[29] T. Pennant, *Tours in Wales*, 3 vols, rev. ed. (London 1883), III, 331
[30] W. Dugdale, *The Baronage of England*, 2 vols (London 1675-6), II, 243; The Griffifths collection of North Wales pedigrees is contained in NLW MS 7007
[31] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 152
[32] G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston 1995), 115; R.R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford 1995), 116

Campston could possibly have been used during the battle and further investigation of this feature would perhaps be merited.

The predominant soil type in the vicinity of Campston Hill consists of the stagnogleyic argillic brown earths of the MIDDLETON (572b) series, consisting of reddish fine silty soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging overlying Devonian shale and siltstone. In terms of acidity/alkalinity such soils are neutral to basic (pH 5.5-7). If well-drained, then preservation of bone and charcoal could be anticipated; wood will only survive in waterlogged conditions (together with a range of environmental indicators, such as fruits/seeds, molluscs and pollen/spores), while charcoal and other charred plant macrofossils may be present in intermittently wet condition, while inorganic material is also likely to survive.

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

It is difficult to assess the significance of the battle, based on the limited available documentation. If the entry in the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* is correct, then it represented a relatively short-lived triumph for the English; for shortly afterwards the Welsh inflicted a defeat on the English at Craig-y-dorth, pursuing them to the gates of Monmouth. The fact that the description of the Welsh victory at Craig y Dorth is placed by the Annals immediately after the account of the 'slaughter' at Campston Hill suggests that Craig-y-dorth probably occurred shortly after Campston. The interpretation of Campston as a brief check to Welsh fortunes in the southern Marches appears to correspond reasonably well with the available documentary information; the English forces do not appear to have seized the initiative in the struggle for control of the southern Marches until 1405, scoring significant victories at Grosmont and Usk (Pwll Melyn).[33]

5.7.5 Bibliography & Cartography

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[33] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 152. For a slightly different view, see G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston 1995), 115, who interprets Campston Hill as a 'serious defeat'.

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J.H. Wylie, *History of England under Henry IV*, 4 vols (London 1884-1898)

Cartography

(All maps were obtained from the National Library of Wales unless otherwise stated)

National Archives MPC 1/251 Plan of the Manor of Grosmont - 1588

OS Surveyors Drawing of Monmouth (Scale: 2 in. to the mile) - 1813

Tithe Map of the Parish of Grosmont - 1841

Tithe Map of the Parish of Llangattock Lingoed- 1841

OS 1st edition 25 inch map (Monmouthshire 4.9, 4.10) - 1880

OS 1st edition 6 inch map (Monmouthshire 4 NW, 4 SW)- 1891

OS 2nd edition 25 inch map (Monmouthshire 4.9, 4.10) 1906

OS 2nd edition 6 inch map (Monmouthshire 4 NW, 4 SW)- 1907

OS 3rd edition 25 inch map (Monmouthshire 4.9, 4.10) 1915

OS 3rd edition 6 inch map (Monmouthshire 4 NW, 4 SW)- 1922

OS provisional edition 6 inch map (Monmouthshire 4 NW, 4 SW)- 1953

5.8 Craig-y-Dorth (June-November 1404?)

5.8.1 Site of Battle

The site of the battle has been traditionally located at Craig-y-dorth (NGR SO 4832 0895), a steep promontory forming a spur of the Trellech range, located approximately 6km SW of Monmouth and 1km to the W of the road leading S from Monmouth via Trellech to Chepstow. The OS 1st-4th edition maps specifically mark the site of battle in a pasture field on the summit of Craig-y-Dorth (243m AOD) immediately W of an unclassified lane marking the boundary between the parishes of Cwmcarvan (to the W) and Mitchell Troy (to the E).

5.8.2 Summary

Historical Context of Battle

The battle of Craig-y-Dorth appears to represent the second of two engagements fought in 1404 between English and Welsh forces in Monmouthshire, the first being at Campston Hill near Grosmont, where the English had gained a victory. Information concerning both of these battles is extremely limited, but they should be viewed in the context of evidence for a substantial, protracted campaign waged by the Welsh on the Herefordshire/Monmouthshire border during the summer of 1404.

5.8.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

The specific date of the battle is not attested by the evidence of the chronicle sources or royal governmental records (ie. Patent Rolls or Proceedings of the Privy Council). The only documentary source to refer specifically to the battle is *The Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, a brief chronicle covering the years of Owain Glyndwr's revolt from 1400 to 1415, which dates the battle to 1404.[1]

J.E. Lloyd, in his classic study of Owain Glyndwr's career, placed the date of the battles of Campston Hill and Craig-y-Dorth subsequent to reports of a substantial armed incursion by the Welsh into southern Herefordshire, which appears to have occurred in June or early July of 1404.[2] The precarious situation is summarised in a hastily written letter from the Sheriff, Escheator and other gentry of Hereford to the King's Council dated June 10th, 1404, describing how a great multitude of Welsh had entered Archenfield (the name of the Welsh *cantref* of Ergyng, covering much of south-west Herefordshire), causing considerable destruction.[3]

Moreover, the letter mentions that the Welsh were planning 'within eight days' to attack the 'March of Wales' presumably referring to the English-held lordships of Abergavenny,

[1] NLW Peniarth MS 135, pp. 61-2; Printed in Appendix I to J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 152
[2] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 87-8
[3] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 223-5

Monmouth and the Three Castles; specific mention is made of William Beauchamp, lord of Abergavenny, who was described as being 'on the point of destruction'. Another missive from Henry Prince of Wales, written from Worcester on June 26th, 1404 appears to corroborate the evidence of the previous letter, stating that a substantial contingent of rebels, consisting of 'all the force from South and West Wales which they could raise', had descended into Herefordshire, 'burning and destroying the said county'.[4]

Henry IV's reaction to reports of the Welsh attack and the imminent fall of Abergavenny appears to have been immediate; on June 14th he ordered the sheriff of Hereford 'to assemble all the King's lieges of the county, esquires, archers and other fencible men, to go with the King's kinsman Richard of York, whom the King has ordered to go with all speed to the castle and town of Bergavenny for their rescue.'[5]

At some point before June 26th it appears that Prince Henry had arrived at Worcester and had been joined there by Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick and 'a fine company of people'; according to the Prince's letter he had sent for Richard Duke of York and Thomas Mowbray Earl Marshal to meet with him and 'other most sufficient people of the county from this March' at Worcester on the following Thursday (July 4th 1404). It is unclear whether this represents a general muster of the English forces before proceeding to the Welsh Marches, or whether this actually took place at Hereford or Leominster.

A surviving account book of the controller of Prince Henry's household shows that Prince Henry, his household and a substantial body of troops were stationed in Hereford and Leominster from early July to November of 1404, prior to launching an expedition for the relief of Coety Castle on November 25th of that year; however there is little other information available on the respective movements of the English and Welsh troops prior to the battle of Craig-y-Dorth.[6]

The Battle and its Aftermath

Information on the events of the battle is extremely limited; the contemporary English chronicles (including Adam of Usk's *Chronicle* and Walsingham's *Historia Anglicana*) make no reference to the battle; the only source to refer specifically to the battle is the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, the earliest text of which survives in a manuscript compiled by the poet Gruffydd Hiraethog at some time between 1556 and 1564.[7] The Annals entry for 1404 states that 'in the same year was the slaughter of the Welsh on Campston Hill (*ar vynydd kamstwm*) and another of the English at Craig y Dorth (*ar graic ydorth*), between Penclawdd and Monmouth town. Here the more part of the English were slain and they were chased up to the town gate'.

It is difficult to deduce much from this terse reference in the Annals, except that it would appear that the battle took place not long after the English success at Campston Hill and

[4] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 229-31
[5] *Calendar of Patent Rolls Henry IV*, Vol, II, 403
[6] NA E101/404/24 Account Book of John Spenser, controller of the household of Henry Prince of Wales; J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 89
[7] The Annals are printed *in extenso* as Appendix I to J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 149-54

that the battle resulted in a victory for the Welsh, pursuing the defeated English forces as far as the 'town gate' of Monmouth, presumably referring to the gate at Monnow Bridge guarding the southern approach to the town from the suburb of Overmonnow.

Apart from this brief entry in the Annals, little else is known about the battle and the subsequent retreat of the defeated English forces to Monmouth. The account of the battle in the *Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr* compiled by the 17th century antiquary Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt (d.1667) merely states that Glyndwr 'gathering his men suddenly together overtook the English at Craig-y-Dorth near Monmouth, gave them a defeat and pursued them to the very gates of the towns, villages, castles, forts and all places of strength'.[8]

Vaughan's account, which appears to be based on the *Annals* and on other materials no longer extant, is largely repeated in later antiquarian accounts, such as those contained in Pennant's *Tours in Wales* (1778) and the Rev. Thomas Thomas's *Memoirs* (1822).[9] It appears from the account given by Vaughan that the Welsh, apparently under the direct command of Owain Glyndwr, were pursuing an English force that was presumably retreating towards Monmouth (though from which direction is unclear), eventually catching up with the English and forcing them to fight at Craig-y-Dorth. It may be inferred from this that the English took up a defensive position on the summit of Craig-y-Dorth but it is difficult to draw any further conclusions in view of the limited nature of the available records.

The account of the battle given in Wylie's *History of England under Henry IV* differs somewhat from that given by Vaughan and other antiquarian writers, referring to Glyndwr attacking 'an English outpost planted on the hills of Craig-y-Dorth' which suggests a fixed fortification, although no obvious evidence for earthwork fortifications on the summit of the hill has been identified to date.[10]

Troops and Casualties

No detailed information is available on the respective size of the English and Welsh troops present at Craig-y-Dorth. Based on the evidence of the letter from the Sheriff and Escheator of Hereford to the King's Council dated June 10th, 1404, it would appear that the Welsh force that had invaded southern Herefordshire in the summer of 1404 was substantial in size.[11] Prince Henry's letter to his father dated June 26th relates how he had 'lately certified that the Welsh had descended into the county of Hereford, burning and destroying the said county in very great force, and were provisioned for 15 days'. In a letter bearing the same date, from Prince Henry to the King's Council, Henry describes

[8] NLW Panton MS 53, 56-6b
[9] T. Pennant, *Tours in Wales* (1883 ed.) 330-1; T. Thomas, *The Memoirs of Owen Glendower* (Haverfordwest 1822), 125.
[10] J.H. Wylie, *History of England under Henry IV*, 4 vols (London 1884-98), II, 13
[11] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 223-5

the Welsh force in slightly different terms, consisting of 'all the force of South Wales and North Wales which they could raise'. [12]

The size of the English army present at the battle cannot be determined from the available documentary evidence. However it is possible to obtain a rough impression of the size of the English force commanded by Prince Henry in the southern Marches during the period from July to November 1404. A record of proceedings in the King's Council dated August 29th, 1404 records that provision was made for the Prince 'in gratitude for his good defence of the county of Hereford and for the salvation of that county and the county of Gloucestershire...and to override Overwent and Netherwent and Glamorgan and Morgannwg', for the wages of 500 men at arms and 2000 archers for three weeks and for 300 men and 2000 archers for three more weeks.[13]

Further information concerning the size of the forces at Prince Henry's disposal is provided by an account book of the controller of the Prince's household covering the period July 20th - November 21st, 1404 when he was resident at Hereford and Leominster 'for the ordinance of the Marches'. The account book contains a section entitled 'vadia guerre' listing the wages paid to various commanders, including Richard Duke of York, Lord Audley, Gilbert Lord Talbot, William Newport and lesser knights, as well as a list of the forces under the command of the Prince and various leaders in both North and South Wales.[14]

It is difficult to establish clearly what was the size of the forces under the command of the Prince at any one particular time, as the account book does not provide a continuous daily record of wages from July to November. Specific payments are recorded to the Duke of York for 35 men at arms and 70 archers, to Lord Audley for 30 men at arms and 60 archers, to Gilbert Lord Talbot for 12 men at arms (*scutiferi*) and 24 archers (*sagitarii*) and to William Newport for 23 men at arms and 50 archers, all described as being stationed in the County of Hereford 'for the safe keeping of the March' for 28 days during October and November. The men at arms each received a wage of 12d daily, while the archers only received 6d daily. The list of the troops under the command of the Prince and various commanders in North and South Wales records 42 'lancers' (*lances*) and 232 archers pertaining to the Prince's own retinue (*les gents entour les corps de monsieur*) and another 159 'lancers' and 788 archers divided among 6 contingents serving in South Wales (commanded by John Greyndor, Rowland Leinthall, John Membury, John Gargrave, Watkin and John Felde, Thomas Tonstall and William and James de Haryington). It is likely that those troops described as '*scutiferi'* (lit. squires) and 'lances' were mounted men at arms who were not of knightly status; significantly, the bulk of the force is described as consisting of archers, rather than other types of infantry.

There is every reason to believe that a significant proportion of Glyndwr's force may well have consisted of inhabitants of the surrounding area, in view of the documentary

[12] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 229-32
[13] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 232-6
[14] NA E101/404/24

evidence supplied by the Duchy of Lancaster records for the general breakdown of authority within the lordship of Monmouth during the period of the Glyndwr revolt, as witnessed by the blunt statement in the manorial accounts for Grosmont, Dingestow and Whitecastle that no courts were held 'because the tenants were rebels'.[15]

5.8.4 Assessment

Battle Location

The location of the battle is marked on the OS 1st edition 25 inch map and subsequent Ordnance Survey maps of the area as 'Craig-y-dorth Site of Battle AD 1404', within a large irregular L-shaped field occupying the summit of Craig-y-Dorth Hill (standing at a height of 243m AOD) approximately 100m W of Wern Farm. The OS 1st-4th edition map all depict a raised oval feature located roughly in the centre of the field, described by several antiquarian writers as an 'artificial mound' vaguely associated with the battle.[16] This identification remains undetermined; it appears just as likely to be a natural feature although it would certainly merit further investigation. It is worth noting that the oval feature is also marked on the Cwmcarvan tithe map of 1843.

Further evidence concerning the site of the battle at Craig-y-Dorth can be derived from the Cwmcarvan tithe map and apportionment of 1843.[17] The tithe apportionment lists the irregular L-shaped field at the summit of Craig-y-Dorth as Cae Blethrin (no. 176 in the tithe apportionment), which could be literally translated as 'Field of the Promontory of the Wolf' incorporating the Welsh place name elements 'blaidd' (wolf) and 'rhyn' meaning promontory or headland. It is important to note that the spelling of field names in the tithe apportionment is not entirely consistent, as the field immediately S of 'Cae Blethrin (marked as No. 177 in the tithe apportionment) is described as 'Little Cae *Blethin'*. The place name element 'blaidd' could simply be used in a purely descriptive sense in this context, however it also appears to have military associations, possibly referring to outlaws or warriors. No other field names in the vicinity of Craig-y-Dorth appear to have an obviously identifiable association with the battle.

Discussion of Primary Sources

No mention of the battle is made in the English chronicle sources or in royal governmental records (e.g. Proceedings of the Privy Council, Patent Rolls etc). The only contemporary account of the battle is contained in the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, a brief chronicle covering the years of the Glyndwr revolt between 1400 and 1415. The *Annals* are generally presumed to have been originally compiled at some point in the first half of the 15th century although the earliest surviving text (Peniarth MS 135) consists of a manuscript copy made by the poet Gruffydd Hiraethog at some time between 1556 and 1564.[18] The *Annals* are of considerable importance as representing the only near

[15] Discussed in R.R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford 1995), 215 and R.A. Griffiths & R. Howell (eds.) *The Gwent County History: The Age of the Marcher Lords 1070-1536* (Cardiff 2008), 232-4.
[16] W.H. Thomas, *Tinterne and its Vicinity* (London 1839), 73. R.N. Worth, *Tourist's Guide to the Wye and its Neighbourhood* (London 1892), 24
[17] NLW Cwmcarvan tithe map and apportionment (1843)
[18] The Welsh text with English translation is printed in J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 149-53

contemporary source for the Glyndwr revolt to depict the events from a Welsh perspective.

Discussion of Secondary Sources

Most published accounts of the battle of Craig-y-Dorth are indebted to the *Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr* compiled by the 17th century antiquarian Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt (d. 1667), which relied heavily upon the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* but also incorporated evidence from other sources which no longer appear to be extant. Later works such as Pennant's *Tours in Wales* (1778), Coxe's *Historical Tour in Monmouthshire* (1801) and the Rev. Thomas Thomas's *Memoirs* (1822) rely largely on Vaughan's work.[19] Other antiquarian works, such as W.H. Thomas's *Tinterne and Its Vicinity* (1839) make reference to the 'artificial mound' at Craig-y-Dorth and its suggested association with the battle; presumably this represents local tradition as it is not mentioned by Vaughan.[20] Bradney's account makes a brief reference to the battle at Craig-y-Dorth but misdates it to 1402.[21]

The battle has received only limited attention in modern historical accounts, Lloyd appears to have viewed it as an unqualified success for Glyndwr after the reverse inflicted by the English at Campston Hill, whereas the military historian G. Hodges interpreted Craig-y-Dorth as a short-lived 'Pyrrhic victory' for the Welsh.[22]

Archaeology and Historic Terrain

Based on the documentary and cartographic evidence discussed above, the site of the battle appears to be fairly securely located within a large pasture field occupying the summit of the promontory of Craig-y-Dorth. A raised oval feature is marked in the centre of the field on the Cwmcarvan tithe map of 1843 and OS maps from the OS 1st edition up to the present day; this feature is interpreted in several antiquarian accounts as an artificial mound somehow associated with the battle (possibly a burial mound) however the supposed anthropogenic origin of this 'mound' remains undetermined and it could just as well represent a natural feature. The mound has not been recorded as an archaeological feature in the GGAT Historic Environment Record and the RCAHMW Coflein databases; however it would merit further investigation to determine its origin, whether anthropogenic or natural.

The predominant soil type in this area consists of the typical brown earths of the MILFORD (541a series) comprising well-drained fine loamy reddish soils over Devonian sandstone, siltstone and shale. In terms of acidity/alkalinity such soils are neutral to basic (pH 5.5-7); consequently if well-drained, then preservation of bone and charcoal could be anticipated; wood will only survive in waterlogged conditions (together with a range of environmental indicators, such as fruits/seeds, molluscs and pollen/spores), while

[19] T. Pennant, *Tours in Wales* (1883 ed.) 330-1; W. Coxe, *An Historical Tour in Monmouthshire*, 2 vols (London 1801), II, 325; T. Thomas, *The Memoirs of Owen Glendower* (Haverfordwest 1822), 125.
[20] W.H. Thomas, *Tinterne and its Vicinity* (London 1839), 73. R.N. Worth, *Tourist's Guide to the Wye and its Neighbourhood* (London 1892), 24
[21] J.A. Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire Vol. 2 pt. 2 The Hundred of Trellech* (London 1904), 180
[22] G. Hodges, *Owain Glyndwr and the War of Independence in the Welsh Borders* (Logaston 1995), 115

charcoal and other charred plant macrofossils may be present in intermittently wet conditions. Inorganic material is likely to survive

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

It is difficult to assess the significance of the battle, based on the limited available documentation. The testimony of the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* suggests that it represented a significant Welsh victory after the temporary reverse suffered at Campston Hill. Glyndwr's forces inflicted heavy losses on the English and sent them in a disorderly retreat to Monmouth. If the defeat at Craig-y-Dorth was as calamitous as suggested in the Annals, however, one might expect there to be some mention of it (even obliquely) in the records of the Privy Council or the Duchy of Lancaster, which are noticeably silent on the matter.

It is difficult to reach a fully considered view due to the lack of available evidence; however it may be suggested that the Welsh victory at Craig-y-Dorth should be viewed within the context of the wider breakdown of royal authority within the lordship of Monmouth as a result of the Glyndwr revolt, as indicated by the documentary sources. In late 1404, Monmouth appears to have remained a somewhat isolated outpost and it would not be until March-May 1405, with substantial victories at Grosmont and Pwll Melyn (Usk), that the English finally gained a decisive and permanent initiative in the struggle for control of the southern Marches.

5.8.5 Bibliography & Cartography

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5.9 Grosmont (March 11th 1405)

5.9.1 Site of Battle

The site of the battlefield remains undetermined. It is marked on the OS 1:25000 map within a large, elongated pasture field lying immediately N of Grosmont Castle (known as 'Castle Green'), which is located to the W of a belt of woodland adjacent to the River Monnow. However, the evidence supporting this identification is unclear.

5.9.2 Summary

Historical Context of Battle

The battle of Grosmont represents one of two significant victories gained by the English over the forces of Owain Glyndwr in Monmouthshire during the first half of 1405, the second, more decisive battle occurring at Pwll Melyn, N of Usk, in May of that year. The years 1404-5 had witnessed a substantial breakdown of royal authority in the southern Marches, with substantial Welsh raids being launched into southern Herefordshire. The English-held castle-boroughs at Abergavenny, Monmouth, Usk, Grosmont, Skenfrith and White Castle appear at this time to have been largely isolated outposts within hostile territory, the majority of the inhabitants within the surrounding lordships having apparently sided with Glyndwr.[1] Prior to the battles of Grosmont and Usk, it may therefore be fairly stated that the Welsh held the initiative in the struggle for control of the southern Marches.

5.9.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

Relatively little documentary evidence exists relating to the battle; no mention of it is made in the Welsh *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* and one only one English chronicle, the *Annales Henrici Quarti* by Thomas Walsingham, a monk of St Albans (fl. c. 1360-1420), appears to make reference to it, stating that 'in that year (1405), on Ash Wednesday (4th March), a great slaughter of the Welsh was made'.[2] It is likely that this entry does indeed refer to Grosmont as Walsingham immediately follows it with a description of the battle of Usk (Pwll Melyn), to which he assigns a date of May 5th. However, Walsingham's dating of events is contradicted by the evidence of a letter written by Prince Henry to his father, Henry IV, apparently on the evening following the battle, in which he gives the specific date of the engagement as March 11th, 1405.

Prince Henry's letter is of considerable importance as the sole source of detailed information concerning the events of the battle; while it is certainly true that certain statements made in the letter are probably exaggerated, it is nevertheless possible to discern the key details concerning the battle and the events leading up to it. The opening

[1] R.R. Davies 'Plague and Revolt' in R.A. Griffiths & R. Howell (eds.) *The Gwent County History: The Age of the Marcher Lords 1070-1536* (Cardiff 2008), 231-4 for an authoritative account of the collapse of royal and seigniorial administration in much of the SE March (excepting Chepstow) during the years 1402-5 and its slow recovery thereafter.

[2] H.T. Riley (ed.) *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani*, (London, 1866), 399

part of Henry's letter reports on the movements of the Welsh forces prior to the battle and their attack on Grosmont, reporting that 'on Wednesday the 11th of the present month of March your rebels of the parts of Glamorgan, Morgannok, Usk, Netherwent and Overwent, assembled to the number of 8000 men according to their own account. And they went on the same Wednesday, in the morning, and burnt a part of your town of Grosmont within your lordship of Monmouth and Jenvoia (sic)'.[3]

While Henry's estimate of the size of the Welsh force may well be exaggerated, it still probably represented a substantial force; significantly the letter specifies from where the Welsh troops were recruited, namely Glamorgan, the lordship of Usk and Upper and Lower Gwent. Documentary evidence indicates that, with the exception of the lordship of Chepstow, which appears to have remained largely immune from the worst effects of the revolt, that there had been an effective collapse of English royal and seigniorial administration in these areas.

Although the castle-boroughs such as Cardiff, Caerphilly, Grosmont, Monmouth and Usk remained in English hands, the administrative infrastructure in the surrounding rural areas appears to have largely broken down, as attested by the evidence from the manorial accounts for the cessation of the manor courts, the loss of revenue from estates and the destruction of castles, mills and other manorial buildings.[4] While the statement frequently found in manorial accounts for these lordships that 'the tenants are rebels' may be something of an exaggeration, it is probable that most of the Welsh tenantry in these areas either acquiesced in or actively supported Glyndwr's cause (certainly during the years 1402-5) and consequently it is reasonable to assume that they formed the majority of the force which marched on Grosmont on March 11th, 1405.

According to Henry's letter, the Welsh attacked the town of Grosmont on the morning of March 11th, 1405. No reference is made to an attack on the castle, which at this time appears to have been occupied by a small garrison (amounting to six archers), nominally under the joint command of the constables Hugh Waterton and John Skydmore (ie. of the Scudamores of Kentchurch), although whether either individual was present at the castle during the Welsh attack is unclear.[5]

No mention is made of the Welsh having laid siege to the castle although they certainly caused damage to part of the town; four houses are specifically mentioned in Henry's letter as having been burnt by the rebels and there is evidence in later 15th century manorial accounts for abandonment of burgage plots and repairs of damage to buildings (including the court-house) which may (at least in part) be related to the Welsh attack on Grosmont.[6] However, there appears (somewhat surprisingly) to be little record of substantial damage to the castle, the surviving accounts contain only sporadic references

[3] Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 248-50

[4] R.R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford, 1995), 215; W. Rees, *South Wales and the March, 1284-1415* (London 1924), 276

[5] R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster Volume I: 1265-1603* (London 1953), 170-1

[6] NA DL 29/594/9514. The manorial account for Skenfrith for 1420-21 mentions the delivery of timber from Llanfair Wood for repairing the walls of the court house at Grosmont and for the wattling and daubing of the walls within and without at a cost of 10s.

to minor repairs up to the end of the 15th century.[7] Later historical accounts appear to attribute Grosmont's decline in urban status and prosperity specifically to the effects of the attack in 1405; while there is documentary evidence to suggest that the decline of urban settlement at Grosmont probably began well before that date, it is reasonable to assume that the Welsh attack contributed, perhaps significantly, to the steadily declining fortunes of the town.[8]

The Battle and its Aftermath

The account of the engagement given in Prince Henry's letter indicates that it probably took place in the late morning or afternoon of May 11th, following the initial attack on the town of Grosmont by the Welsh. Henry's account of the battle is worth quoting at length, and reads as follows:

'And they (the Welsh) went on the same Wednesday, in the morning, and burnt a part of your town of Grosmont within your Lordship of Monmouth and Jennoia. Presently out were my beloved cousin the Lord Talbot and the small body of my household, and with them joined your faithful and valiant knights Sir William Newport and John Greyndor, the which but formed a small power in the whole; but true it is indeed that victory is not in the multitude of people, and this was well proved there, but in the power of God. And there, by the aid of the blessed Trinity, your people gained the field and vanquished all the said rebels, and slew of them by fair account in the field, by the time of their return from the pursuit, some say eight hundred, others a thousand, upon being questioned on pain of death, nevertheless whether it were one or the other I will not contend'.[9]

Recent scholars have questioned the account of the battle given in this letter, some casting significant doubt on its reliability as a source.[10] However while it may be assumed that Henry's account probably contains a measure of exaggeration, particularly in terms of his description of the size of the Welsh army and the losses inflicted by the English, it is nevertheless possible to identify the main details of the engagement, although there are important questions concerning the precise site of the battlefield and the deployment of the English and Welsh forces which are not addressed in Prince Henry's letter.

It would appear that the battle probably occurred in the late morning or afternoon of March 11th, following the Welsh attack on the town of Grosmont which is said to have

[7] Surviving accounts of the manor of Grosmont cover the years 1419-24 (NA DL 29/594/9514-17) and 1431-67 (NA DL 29/595/9526-9561). For references to minor repairs to the castle during the 15th century also see H.M. Colvin et al. (eds.) *History of the Kings Works Volume II: The Middle Ages* (London 1963), 657-8n.

[8] I. Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales* (Chichester, 1983), 138; A.G. Bradley, *Owain Glyndwr and the Last Struggle for Welsh Independence* (London 1902), 246.

[9] N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 248-50. For translation and commentary see F. Solly-Flood, 'Prince Henry of Monmouth –his letters and despatched during the War in Wales 1402-1405', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 2nd Series, Vol. IV (1889), 136-7

[10] G.J. Brough, *Glyndwr's War: The Campaigns of the Last Prince of Wales* (Cowbridge 2002), 128; N. Thomas-Symonds, 'The Battle of Grosmont 1405: A Reinterpretation', *Gwent Local History*, No. 97 (Autumn 2004), 3-23

occurred in the morning. The English forces are said to have consisted of a force led by Gilbert Talbot, together with the Prince's own household knights, together with a force led by Sir William Newport and Sir John Greyndor, and are specifically described as forming 'a small power in the whole' inferior in size to the Welsh forces. It would appear that Henry himself did not personally take part in the battle.

Precisely from where the English forces arrived (and when) is not stated; it appears from Henry's letter that they set out rapidly upon receiving news of the Welsh attack, most likely from Hereford, since Prince Henry and his household were certainly resident there around the time of the battle.[11] Grosmont itself is only 14 miles distant from Hereford and it is likely that a mobile force consisting of mounted troops and archers could have reached the town in several hours. It appears unlikely that the English were already stationed at Grosmont Castle prior to the arrival of the Welsh army, although their swift arrival, as mentioned in Henry's letter, could mean that they had received intelligence of the Welsh movements shortly before their attack.

Prince Henry provides little detail about the course of the battle, although it would seem likely that the rapid arrival of the English forces caught the Welsh by surprise as they were plundering the town. The battle itself appears to have consisted of a fierce initial engagement in which the English forces 'gained the field and vanquished all the said rebels', followed by a pursuit of the defeated forces. It is worth noting that the letter is specifically described as being written 'at night' on the 11th, from which it may be tentatively inferred that the battle itself probably lasted no longer than the afternoon and certainly no later than the early evening, allowing time for news of the victory to have reached the Prince at Hereford.

Troops and Casualties

The veracity of the statement in Prince Henry's letter that the Welsh force comprised 8000 men has been questioned by recent writers, most notably in G.J. Brough's *Glyndwr's War: The Campaigns of the Last Prince of Wales* and N. Thomas Symonds's recent article 'The Battle of Grosmont: A Reinterpretation'.[12] If the Welsh force did actually amount to 8000 men, this would not have been much smaller than the rebel army commanded by Henry 'Hotspur' Percy at the battle of Shrewsbury in July 1403 (roughly estimated to have amounted to 10000 men).[13]

The numerical estimate given in Henry's letter must be treated with some caution (as with any vague estimates given in medieval chronicles or correspondence), however it is worth noting Henry's statement that the figure actually came from the Welsh themselves 'by their own account'. Assuming Henry's estimate to be correct, this would have represented a very substantial force, considerably larger than a raiding party and sufficient to engage (and possibly defeat) a sizeable English army in pitched battle. It is

[11] N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 248-50.
[12] G.J. Brough, *Glyndwr's War: The Campaigns of the Last Prince of Wales* (Cowbridge 2002), 128; N. Thomas-Symonds, 'The Battle of Grosmont 1405: A Reinterpretation', *Gwent Local History*, No. 97 (Autumn 2004), 3-23
[13] P.J. Morgan, *The Battle of Shrewsbury 1403* (Stroud 2003)

perhaps surprising, however, that there is no report of the mustering of such a large Welsh force in the Privy Council proceedings or other royal governmental records, in striking comparison to the letters detailing the attack made by a 'great multitude' of Welsh on the southern Marches only a year earlier.[14] On the whole, it seems likely that the figure of 8000 as given by Henry is exaggerated, although it nevertheless appears that the Welsh force was substantial and may well have significantly outnumbered the English.

The size of the English force is difficult to determine with precision, although it would appear, based on the account given in Prince Henry's letter, that the English force constituted 'a small power in the whole' inferior in numbers to Welsh. The question remains, however, whether this statement as to the strength of the English army can be corroborated from other sources. Of particular importance is the survival of an account of John Wynter, the receiver-general of the Prince's household of money received from the treasurers of war for the wages of troops serving under the Prince in North and South Wales between November 1404 and April 1405.[15]

Wynter's account records that the sum of £252 was paid for the maintenance of 80 men at arms and 200 archers at Monmouth, Hay and Radnor during this period, while from March 1st to April 27th, 1405, a further 200 men at arms and 500 archers were on service in South Wales at a cost of £1260. More detailed information is supplied in a roll of particulars of account of military expenses in South Wales incurred by Richard Arundell, another of Prince Henry's deputies, showing that from April to October 1405 Arundell was stationed at Hereford with 16 men at arms and 80 archers, which was increased in November-December to 100 men at arms and 300 archers.[16]

Prince Henry provides further valuable details regarding the composition of the English forces, he states that they comprised 'the Lord (Gilbert) Talbot and the small body of my household', together with 'your faithful and valiant knights Sir William Newport and John Greyndor'. From this information, it can be assumed that the English force chiefly consisted of four separate components, Prince Henry's household troops, one company commanded by Lord Gilbert Talbot of Goodrich (Herefs) who appears to have been the overall leader of the English force at Grosmont, along with two other companies commanded by Sir William Newport and John Greyndour. Talbot, Newport and Greyndour all had extensive estates in the Marches and served prominently in the Prince's retinue during his campaign against the Welsh rebels. Gilbert Talbot in particular had led a substantial retinue in the Prince's service since 1403; he took a leading role in the defeat of the Welsh at Pwll Melyn in May 1405 and brought the siege of Harlech to a successful close in February 1409.[17]

[14] N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 223-5; 229-32
[15] NA E101/44/1
[16] NA E101/44/7
[17] For biographies of Talbot and Greyndour see R.R. Davies, The Revolt of Owain Glyndwr (Oxford 1995), 244-5 also see R.A. Griffiths, *The Principality of Wales in the Later Middle Ages* -1277-1536 (Cardiff 1972), 235-7

It is difficult to establish the relative strength of these four components, however an approximate estimate can be gleaned from an account of the controller of Prince Henry's household from March-November 1404, which lists the size of the various companies forming part of the English forces in North and South Wales.[18] The account records 42 'lancers' (*lances*) and 232 archers pertaining to the Prince's own retinue (*les gents entour les corps de monsieur*), while John Greyndour's troop is described as comprising 19 'lancers' and 100 archers. A separate entry in the same account lists payments to Lord Talbot for 12 men at arms and 24 archers belonging and to William Newport for 23 men at arms and 50 archers, all described as being stationed in the County of Hereford 'for the safe keeping of the March' for 28 days during October and November 1404.

Although these accounts provide valuable information about the strength and disposition of the English forces on the Welsh Marches in 1405, they cannot, however, provide specific information as to the size of the force that met the Welsh at Grosmont. The numbers of troops that the English could afford to muster for the purpose of garrisoning towns and castles and for a standing army in the field must have varied depending on the financial resources available, it is clear that a 'standing army' could not have been maintained, even for a couple of months, without considerable expense. It appears unlikely, therefore, that the largest force which the English could have fielded at this time could have amounted to more than the 200 men at arms and 500 archers whose wages were accounted for between March 1st and April 27th, consequently Symonds's estimate that 'the English force was comfortably less than a thousand' seems plausible. [19]

While Henry's estimate of the enemy casualties as between 800 to 1000 slain must be viewed with caution, it is perhaps not as exaggerated as one might expect; it is significant that Henry specifically mentions efforts made to establish the numbers of the enemy slain during the battle. The fact that the letter only mentions one prisoner taken, an un-named 'great chieftain' (*un grant chiefteyn*) who was in the Prince's custody, further suggests that little quarter was given during the battle.

5.9.4 Assessment

Battle Location

The site of the battle has been marked to the N of Grosmont Castle on the modern OS 1:25000 map, within a large, elongated plateau called Castle Green, (currently put out to pasture) extending to the N of Grosmont Castle between the village to the W and separated from the River Monnow by a sinuous belt of woodland to the E. The justification for this siting, however, remains unclear; it is worth noting that the battlefield site is not marked on the OS 1st-4th edition maps.

To further complicate matters, it should be noted that there is evidence for an earlier battle fought at Grosmont in November 1233, when Richard Marshal surprised and routed Henry III's army, which was apparently encamped outside the castle,

[18] NA E101/404/24
[19] N. Thomas-Symonds, 'The Battle of Grosmont 1405: A Reinterpretation', *Gwent Local History*, No. 97 (Autumn 2004), 11

consequently references to field names with a military connotation could be associated with either battle.[20] Indeed it is possible that the location of the battle marked on the modern OS map may result from a confusion of the 1405 battle with that of 1233.

No contemporary documents or later surveys or antiquarian accounts have been identified which specifically locate the site of the 1405 battlefield, although there is limited evidence for field names which could be associated with a battle. The plan of the manor of Grosmont drawn up by the Duchy of Lancaster in 1588 shows the castle and various properties both within the town and the surrounding rural area (the town itself is described as consisting of 18 households), however no indication is given as to the site of the battle.[21]

Bromley's survey of the manor of Grosmont dated 1613 does contain frequent references to field names both within the settlement and its rural hinterland. One entry is of particular interest, referring to 30 acres of arable and pasture called the 'Dreades Lands' in the possession of William Walter and his tenant Hoell (Howell) Phillip.[22] Unfortunately it is difficult to establish a precise location for the 'Dreades Lands' mentioned in the 1613 survey, the name does not appear either on the 1588 map or in the Grosmont tithe map and apportionment of 1841.

While there is a marked dearth of evidence from literary sources, manorial accounts and surveys or antiquarian works relating to the battlefield site, the Grosmont parish tithe map and apportionment does provide some evidence for field names which appear to have military associations.[23] Of possible interest are two field names, 'Cae Dinter' and 'Cae Dinter Orchard' (nos 328 and 329 respectively) located immediately to the SW of Upper Tresenny Farm, on the southern outskirts of the present village of Grosmont.

The field name 'Cae Dinter' comprises two distinct elements, the Welsh term 'Cae' denoting a field and 'dinter', a term that appears to originate from the Old English *dynt* meaning 'blow' or 'stroke' inflicted by a sword, hence 'dinter' appears as an archaic term for a weapon, normally a sword. Assuming this derivation to be correct, then a possible translation of 'Cae Dinter' could be 'field of the sword' which would certainly suggest a military association, although, as mentioned above, this field name could be associated either with the 1405 battle or its predecessor. No other field names were identified which appear to have a specific military connotation.

Discussion of Primary Sources

The battle of Grosmont is poorly covered in the English and Welsh chronicle sources. It receives a solitary reference in one of the English chronicles, the *Annales Henrici Quarti* by Thomas Walsingham, precentor of St Albans (fl. c. 1360-1420) one of the leading (and most prolific) monastic annalists of the period, who appears to be well informed about affairs in the Welsh March although his work is clearly written from a pro-

[20] An account of the battle of Grosmont is given by Roger of Wendover in H.Coxe (ed.) Rogeri de Wendover Chronica sive Flores Historiarum, 4 vols (London 1842), IV, 278
[21] NA MPC 1/251 Plan of the Manor of Grosmont - 1588
[22] W. Rees, *A Survey of the Duchy of Lancaster Lordships in Wales 1609-13* (Cardiff 1953), 79
[23] NLW Tithe Map and Apportionment for Grosmont Parish - 1841

Lancastrian viewpoint.[24] Somewhat surprisingly, no mention of it appears in the Welsh chronicle known as the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, an important source for Glyndwr's activities throughout the period 1400-1415, which however does refer to the subsequent defeat of the Welsh at Pwll Melyn, near Usk.

The most important primary source relating to the battle is undoubtedly the letter written by Prince Henry to his father, which was apparently written at Hereford on the night (*deinz nuit*) of Wednesday March 11th, 1405, the day of the battle. The letter itself survives in a near contemporary transcript contained in a collection of letters and records of proceedings relating to the affairs of the Privy Council during the reign of Henry IV.[25] It is particularly noteworthy that Prince Henry's report reached his father (then residing at Berkhamstead Castle) no later than March 13th, for on that day the King promptly sent a messenger bearing the news of the English victory at Grosmont to the City of London.[26] There has been considerable scholarly discussion about the reliability of the Prince Henry's account of the battle as given in the letter; while there is probably a degree of exaggeration in terms of Henry's estimate of the size of the Welsh force, it is reasonable to assume that the English force was smaller than the opposing Welsh.

The surviving account of the receiver-general of Prince Henry's household for expenses of war between November 1404-March 1405, along with other particulars of account, contain valuable information concerning the relative strength and disposition of the English forces along the Welsh Marches around the time of the battle of Grosmont in March 1405.[27] The ministers' accounts for the manor of Grosmont, covering the years 1419-24 and 1431-67 also contain references to damage caused by the rebels to the town itself and the surrounding area.[28]

Discussion of Secondary Sources

The battle of Grosmont has been patchily covered in antiquarian works and modern historical accounts. Thomas Pennant's account of the battle in his *Tours in Wales* (1776) is heavily indebted to Prince Henry's letter, which had previously been printed in Rymer's *Foedera*.[29] William Coxe's *Historical Tour in Monmouthshire* (1801) contains a lengthy section on the town of Grosmont, however surprisingly no reference is made to the 1405 battle.[30] The Rev. Thomas Thomas's account of the battle in his *Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr* (1822) largely reproduces the version of events given in Prince Henry's letter. Bradney's *History of Monmouthshire* (1904) contains a brief account of the battle although no reference is made to the site of the battle or any local traditions associated

[24] H.T. Riley (ed.) *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani*, (London 1866), 399
[25] BL Cotton MS Cleopatra F.3, f. 59. Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 248-50
[26] BL Cotton MS Cleopatra F.3, f. 50. Printed in N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London 1834), I, 248
[27] The account of Prince Henry's receiver's general for money received from the treasurers for war is contained in NA E101/44/1; For particulars of account see NA E101/44/6-7
[28] Surviving accounts of the manor of Grosmont cover the years 1419-24 (NA DL 29/594/9514-17) and 1431-67 (NA DL 29/595/9526-9561).
[29] T. Pennant, *Tours in Wales*, 3 vols, rev. ed. (London 1883), III, 332-3
[30] T. Thomas, *The Memoirs of Owen Glendower* (Haverfordwest 1822), 131

with it, which is rather surprising in view of Bradney's close association with Grosmont.[31]

J.E. Lloyd's account of the battle in his study of Owain Glyndwr represents the first modern scholarly treatment of the battle with a useful discussion of the sources. A brief reference to the battle occurs in R.R. Davies's *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr*, which highlights the exaggerations contained in Prince Henry's account. A more detailed discussion of the battle is contained in G.J. Brough's *Glyndwr's War: The Campaigns of the Last Prince of Wales*, which contains a sustained attack on the credibility of the version of events given in Prince Henry's letter.[32]

Brough's criticisms were countered to some extent by N. Thomas Symonds's recent article 'The Battle of Grosmont: A Reinterpretation', which contains a valuable re-evaluation of the significance of the letter and its validity as a source. However, while most recent work has focused chiefly on the assessment and interpretation of Prince Henry's letter, there has been relatively little consideration of the evidence for the actual location of the battle and its impact on the urban settlement of Grosmont in social and economic terms.

Archaeology and Historic Terrain

As the previous discussion of the cartographic and documentary evidence has (hopefully) illustrated, the precise location of the battlefield within the town of Grosmont remains uncertain. The modern OS map locates the battlefield immediately N of the Castle, on 'Castle Green', however this could have resulted from confusion with the earlier battle fought in 1233, when Richard Marshal attacked the forces of Henry III which were apparently encamped outside the castle.

Two predominant soil types have been identified within the area of Grosmont:

1/The soil type covering the majority of the village lying to the W of the Castle and Castle Green consists of stagnogleyic argillic brown earths of the MIDDLETON (572b) series, comprising reddish fine silty soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging overlying Devonian shale and siltstone. In terms of acidity/alkalinity such soils are neutral to basic (pH 5.5-7). If well drained, then preservation of bone and charcoal could be anticipated; wood will only survive in waterlogged conditions (together with a range of environmental indicators, such as fruits/seeds, molluscs and pollen/spores), while charcoal and other charred plant macrofossils may be present in intermittently wet condition, while inorganic material is also likely to survive.

2/The soil type covering that part of Grosmont lying within the floodplain of the Monnow, including the site of the Castle and 'Castle Green' consists of typical brown alluvial soils of the LUGWARDINE (561d) series, comprising deep stoneless permeable

[31] J.A. Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire Vol. 1, pt. 1 The Hundred of Skenfrith* (1904), 70
[32] R.R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford 1995), 231; G.J. Brough, *Glyndwr's War: The Campaigns of the Last Prince of Wales* (Cowbridge 2002), 128

reddish fine silty soils variable affected by groundwater, overlying river alluvium. In terms of acidity/alkalinity, such soils may be neutral to acid (pH 5.5-7) or acid to basic in anoxic conditions, including wetlands and river floodplains. A range of material is likely to be present within such deposits, including bone, charcoal and other charred plant remains, pollen/spores and molluscs (wood, plant remains etc if waterlogged).

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

J.E. Lloyd, in his magisterial study of the career of Owain Glyndwr, described the battle of Grosmont as a 'severe check' to the Welsh cause, and this assessment appears to have been largely accepted by recent scholars.[33] While Grosmont probably did not represent a decisive battle by itself; taken together with the even more substantial victory achieved by the English two months later at Pwll Melyn near Usk, the overall result was a significant collapse of support for the Glyndwr revolt in south-east Wales.[34]

Contemporary English and Welsh chroniclers, such as Thomas Walsingham and the author of the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, also commented on how Glyndwr's cause appeared to be on the wane following the defeats of Grosmont and, in particular, Pwll Melyn. It seems reasonable to argue, therefore, that the military initiative in the southern Marches had been seized by the English following those two battles in March-May 1405.

However it should be emphasized that, while the defeats of Grosmont and Usk resulted in a severe check to the Welsh revolt in SE Wales and the Marches, much of North and West Wales remained under Glyndwr's control. Moreover, the fact that Glyndwr, aided by a large expeditionary force sent by his French allies, was able to launch a substantial campaign later in the year, penetrating as far eastwards as Worcestershire, demonstrates that the Welsh rebels were still capable of mounting large-scale military incursions into South Wales and the Marches.

5.9.5 Bibliography & Cartography

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[33] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 96
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5.10 Pwll Melyn, Usk (May 5th 1405)

5.10.1 Site of Battle

The site of the battlefield of Pwll Melyn can be fairly securely located on the basis of documentary and archaeological evidence as being situated on the higher ground to the N and NE of Usk Castle, which appears to have been called Mynydd Pwll Melyn (hill of the yellow pool), deriving its name from a pond feature located at NGR SO 3784 0127 approximately 270m NE of Usk Castle which still survives today (now called Castle Oak pond) although it is surrounded by modern housing development.

5.10.2 Summary

Historical Context of Battle

The battle of Usk represents one of two critical victories gained by the English over the forces of Owain Glyndwr in Monmouthshire during the first half of 1405, the preceding battle having been fought at Grosmont in March of that year. The years 1404-5 had witnessed a significant breakdown of royal authority in the southern Marches, with substantial Welsh raids being launched into southern Herefordshire. The English-held castle-boroughs at Abergavenny, Monmouth, Usk, Grosmont, Skenfrith and White Castle appear at this time to have been largely isolated outposts within hostile territory, the majority of the inhabitants within the surrounding lordships having apparently sided with Glyndwr's cause. [1]

The military strength of the Welsh rebels in South Wales is attested by the fact that they were able to lay siege to important royal strongholds at Coity and Cardiff during the latter months of 1404.[2] Moreover, although a sizeable Welsh army had been routed by the English at Grosmont in March 1405, the rebels were still able to field another substantial force only two months later, this time under the command of Glyndwr's eldest son, Gruffydd ap Owain, to attack the strategically important stronghold of Usk.

The castle and borough of Usk (then held by the Crown during the minority of Edmund Mortimer earl of March) had already been attacked by Glyndwr's forces in 1402, following his victory at Pilleth, when the castle was seized and the settlement burnt. However, it appears that the defences had been repaired and strengthened prior to the second attack by the Welsh rebels in 1405.[3]

5.10.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

[1] R.R. Davies 'Plague and Revolt' in R.A. Griffiths & R. Howell (eds.) *The Gwent County History: The Age of the Marcher Lords 1070-1536* (Cardiff 2008), 231-4

[2] R.R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford 1995), 100, 116, 246; for a detailed study of the several sieges of Coety Castle, see R.A. Griffifths, 'Owain Glyndwr and the siege of Coity', *Morgannwg*, Vol. 45 (2001), 4-28.

[3] G. Given-Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 161; 212-3; For a discussion of the damage caused to Usk in 1402 and 1405 see P. Courtney, *Medieval and Later Usk* (Cardiff 1994), 104-5 and I. Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales* (Chichester 1983) 264-5

There appears to be a measure of confusion in contemporary chronicle accounts regarding the actual date of the battle; Adam of Usk states that it occurred on the feast of St Gregory (March 12th) 1405, however the account of the battle contained in the *Annales Henrici Quarti* of Thomas Walsingham (fl. c. 1360-1420) refers to it having occurred on May 5th.[4]

If the date given by Adam of Usk (a native of the town) is correct, this would place the engagement only a day after the English victory at Grosmont; however this appears unlikely as Adam refers to the presence at Pwll Melyn of Sir John Greyndour, one of Prince Henry's household knights who is specifically mentioned in the Prince's letter as one of the commanders at Grosmont. Consequently, Walsingham's date of May 5th appears more plausible and has been largely adopted by modern scholars.[5]

The events immediately leading up to the battle of Pwll Melyn are described in two sources, the near contemporary chronicle of Adam of Usk and the *Scotichronicon* of Walter Bower, compiled in the 1440s.[6] Adam of Usk's chronicle specifically relates the battle to a substantial attack by the Welsh on the English-held castle of Usk, stating that 'Gruffydd, the eldest son of Owain, attacked Usk Castle with a great host on the feast of St Gregory'. That the Welsh should have attempted to capture an important castle such as Usk is not surprising, the rebels had laid siege to other English-held strongholds in South Wales such as Cardiff and Coity (the former having been captured by Glyndwr in early 1405) and had also achieved some notable successes in North Wales, capturing the fortresses of Aberystwyth and Harlech in the closing months of 1404.

A somewhat different account of events is given in the *Scotichronicon*, a chronicle compiled by the Scottish abbot of Inchcolm Abbey, Walter Bower, during the 1440s. Bower appears to have been reasonably well informed concerning the events of the battle, although his chronology is sometimes confused and the version of events he describes is clearly from the perspective of the Welsh rebels. R.R. Davies suggested that Bower may have derived his information from one of the embassies sent by Glyndwr to the Scots in 1406 and 1407-8; it is not entirely impossible that one of these envoys may have been a member of the Cistercian house of Llantarnam Abbey, whose abbot, John ap Hywel, features prominently in Bower's account of the battle.[7]

Bower firstly describes how Prince Henry had 'cunningly attracted to his side some men of Wales who were at least reputed to be powerful (that is, those from Glamorgan) by corrupting them with gifts and promises so that if and when a multitude of Welshmen happened to be assembled against him, that they would be the first to take to flight and the rest would follow their example'. Following this, Bower relates that 'Henry Prince of England, who also held the title of Prince of Wales, sought with a large army to destroy Wales completely, he set Lord Cobham and Lord Grey of Codnor and David Gam to wipe them out.[8]

[4] G. Given-Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 212-3; H.T. Riley (ed.) *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani*,(London, 1866), 399.
[5] G. Given Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 212-3
[6] D.E.R. Watt (ed.), *Scotichronicon Vol. VIII: Books XV and XVI* (Aberdeen 1987), 94-109
[7] R.R. Davies, The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr (Oxford, 1995), 190
[8] D.E.R. Watt (ed.), *Scotichronicon Vol. VIII: Books XV and XVI* (Aberdeen 1987), 94-7

Adam of Usk's account appears, in this case, to be more plausible than Bower's; the earlier battle of Grosmont similarly involved an English army intercepting a Welsh force engaged in attacking an English-held stronghold.[9] Both chronicles agree that the Welsh assembled a substantial force, Usk describing it as 'a large host' while Bower terms it 'a great multitude'. In contrast to Grosmont, where the English army appears to have marched rapidly from Hereford upon receiving news of the Welsh attack on the town, it would appear that the English already had a substantial force stationed at Usk. Adam of Usk states that 'the defences there had already been strengthened and Lord (Richard) Grey of Codnor, Sir John Greyndour and many more of the King's soldiers were there'.[10]

The size of the garrison at Usk at the time of the attack is unfortunately not documented; however a record of the garrisons of various castles in North and South Wales in 1402-3 refers to Sir John Greyndour holding Usk with 20 'lancers' and 60 archers.[11] The presence of Lord Grey of Codnor, who appears to have held a wide-ranging military commission within south, south-west and central Wales, suggests that the English force was considerably larger than a mere garrison and may well have represented a general muster of available troops from across central and south Wales.[12] It seems unlikely that such a large body of troops would have been present at Usk by mere chance and it may be suspected that the English had received intelligence of the Welsh attack and had made plans accordingly.

The Battle and its Aftermath

Information regarding the course of the battle is contained in several contemporary or near-contemporary chronicle sources, of English, Welsh and Scottish origin; while later antiquarian accounts, in particular the *Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr*, compiled in the 17th century by the scholar Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt (d.1664), contain details concerning the battle which do not appear elsewhere but may (at least in some cases) represent authentic tradition.[13]

The most detailed account of the engagement is contained in the contemporary chronicle of Adam of Usk (c.1352-1430), a prominent Welsh cleric, canonist and native of Usk.[14] Although Adam was not present at the battle, being resident in Rome at the time (until 1406), his account appears to be reasonably trustworthy (except for the dating of the battle to March 15th), certain details can be corroborated from other independent accounts and it contains invaluable references to local place names associated with the battle.

[9] For a recent study of the battle see N. Thomas-Symonds, 'The Battle of Grosmont 1405: A Reinterpretation', *Gwent Local History*, No. 97 (Autumn 2004), 3-23
[10] G. Given-Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 212-3
[11] N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England,* 7 vols. (London 1834-7), II, 68
[12] For a discussion of Lord Grey's military role during the Glyndwr revolt see R.R. Davies, The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr (Oxford 1995), 240.
[13] NLW Panton MS 53
[14] BL Additional MS 10104; for the most recent critical edition of the text see G. Given-Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997)

Adam's account is of particular importance as it describes the key details of the engagement and is worth quoting at length: 'Gruffydd, the eldest son of Owen, attacked Usk castle with a great host on the feast of St Gregory – an evil hour for him; however the defences there had been considerably strengthened, and Lord Grey of Codnor, Sir John Greyndour and many more of the King's soldiers were there, and they made a sortie in force from the Castle and captured him and his men, driving them relentlessly across the River Usk, where many of them – most notably the abbot of Llantarnam – were killed either at the point of a sword or drowning in the river, through Monkswood, where Gruffydd himself was captured, and onto the mountains of Upper Went. Of those whom they took alive, three hundred were beheaded in front of the castle, near Ponfald, although some of the nobler ones, including Gruffydd, were sent as prisoners to the King'.[15]

From Adam's account, it would appear that the actual battle began with the English troops, led by Lord Grey and Sir John Greyndour, sallying out in force to attack the Welsh who presumably had laid siege to the castle. This sortie appears to have been entirely successful, putting the Welsh to flight and driving them westwards across the River Usk towards Monkswood. Adam's account identifies two locations where considerable slaughter of the routed Welsh forces took place, at the river Usk (possibly in the vicinity of the Usk Bridge, first recorded in 1387), and at Monkswood, some 2km NW of Usk, where the principal Welsh commander Gruffydd ap Owain was captured.[16]

Significantly, Adam also refers to the beheading of 300 captured prisoners 'in front of the castle, near Ponfald.[17] The 'Ponfald' referred to by Adam of Usk was erroneously interpreted by Bradney as 'pont ffald' denoting a 'bridge of the enclosure or more generally a sheepfold'. It is much more likely that Adam's reference to 'Ponfald' simply means a pinfold or pound and that it was located somewhere in front of the castle although its precise location remains uncertain.[18]

The only other chronicle account to describe the course of the battle in some detail is contained in the *Scotichronicon* compiled by Walter Bower (fl. 1385-1449), abbot of Inchcolm Abbey in the 1440s. The account contained in the *Scotichronicon* is divided into two parts; the first of which describes the actual course of the battle, while the second describes the prominent role played by the abbot of Llantarnam Abbey, John ap Hywel, who is also mentioned by Adam of Usk as having been killed during the subsequent rout of the Welsh forces. The chronicler firstly describes how 'the Welsh themselves rose in a great multitude against their enemies and planned to fight them in a battle on open ground (*campestri pugna secum certare disposuerunt*)'. This reference to

[15] G. Given-Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 212-3
[16] For the early history of the bridge at Usk, see A.G. Mein, Norman Usk (Usk 1986), 72n; P. Courtney, Medieval and Later Usk (Cardiff, 1994), 101n.
[17] G. Given-Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 212 ('Ac vivos captos, in numero trecentum, ante dictum castrum prope Ponfald decapitaverunt').
[18] J.A. Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire Vol. 3 pts 1 & 2: The Hundred of Usk* (1921), I, 7-9; for further discussion of the location of the 'Ponfald' and the execution site see A.G. Mein, Norman Usk (Usk 1986), 50.

the battle being fought 'on open ground' is particularly important as it suggests a location not within the town itself but in open fields near to the town.[19]

Bower does not (regrettably) provide a detailed account of the engagement but instead focuses on the apparent treachery of the men of Glamorgan, who are described as having withdrawn from the battle at an early stage, leading to the rapid defeat of the Welsh. Bower relates how 'when it came to the actual battle, those native traitors from Morgannwg, who were expected to form the vanguard as had been previously arranged, turned tail and so gave a lesson in ignominious flight to the rest of their countrymen, but in reality, sad to say, they destroyed them'.

Bower corroborates Adam of Usk's account of a considerable slaughter after the battle and also mentions the capture of Gruffydd and another 'distinguished warrior', one Hopkin ap Thomas, about whom little appears to be known.[20] In a later chapter of the *Scotichronicon* which again relates to the battle of Pwll Melyn, Bower gives a lengthy description of the role played by John ap Hywel, abbot of Llantarnam, describing how he sought to rally the troops prior to the battle, apparently numbering 'more than seven times the English'; he 'heard the confessions of these men before battle and granted them absolution while constantly declaiming and not ceasing his urgent preaching until they came to form up in battle array at the ready'.[21] Indeed it would appear that, if Bower is correct, John ap Hywel also took part in the fighting, describing him as having 'fiercely cut down the Saxons at Bryn Buga on the river Usk…a man skilled in learning as well as arms'.

Three other contemporary chronicles contain brief references to the battle, namely the *Annales Henrici Quarti* of Thomas Walsingham, the *Chronica Regum Anglie* of Thomas Otterbourne and, significantly, the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, a brief Welsh chronicle surviving in a mid 16th century manuscript compiled by the poet Gruffydd Hiraethog covering the years of Owain Glyndwr's revolt from 1400 to 1415. Walsingham's account dates the battle to May 5th, 1405, following a previous 'great slaughter of the Welsh', presumably identifiable with the battle of Grosmont, which he dates to Ash Wednesday (March 4th). [22]

The account in the *Annales* describes how 'in another battle at Usk between the Welsh and the English, the household knights of the Lord Prince (*familiares Domini Principis*), the son of Owain Glyndwr was taken prisoner with many others captured with him or killed, up to 1500 on the part of the rebels'. This account of the battle at Usk is repeated almost verbatim in the *Chronica Regum Anglie* compiled by one Thomas Otterbourne,

[19] D.E.R. Watt (ed.), *Scotichronicon Vol. VIII: Books XV and XVI* (Aberdeen 1987), 96-7.
[20] See D.E.R. Watt (ed.), *Scotichronicon Vol. VIII: Books XV and XVI* (Aberdeen 1987), 194. He is unlikely to be the bard of that name (from Gower) whom Glyndwr apparently consulted in 1403 (see J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 68-9)
[21] D.E.R. Watt (ed.), *Scotichronicon Vol. VIII: Books XV and XVI* (Aberdeen 1987), 106-9. For a discussion of the role of John ap Hywel in the battle, see J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 97
[22] H.T. Riley (ed.) *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani*, (London 1866), 399

rector of Chingford (Essex) in about 1420, except that the date of the battle is given as March 15th. [23]

The *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, a native Welsh chronicle of the revolt that appears originally to have been compiled in the first half of the 15th century, contains a terse but nevertheless important entry relating to the battle, describing 'a great slaughter on Pwll Melyn mountain, near Usk (*ar vynydd y pwll melyn wrth frynn buga*) where Gruffydd ap Owain was taken prisoner'.[24] The reference to 'Pwll Melyn mountain' near Usk is of considerable importance as it locates the site of the battlefield on the higher ground to the NE of the Castle. The name itself is derived from a pond feature to the NE of the Castle which was subsequently scoured in the early 1850s for use as a reservoir associated with the adjacent line of the Coleford, Monmouth, Usk and Pontypool Railway (opened in 1856).[25]

Apart from the contemporary chronicle accounts, it is also worth considering the narrative of the battle contained in the *Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr*, probably compiled by the antiquary Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt in the middle of the 17th century. Vaughan's account appears partly to have relied on the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* referring to 'mynydd Pwll Melyn' as the site of the battle, however some details of his account appear to be confused, for instance his description of how 'Glyndwr sent his eldest son Gruffydd with an army into Brecknockshire (*sic*)'.[26]

Vaughan's account describes how 'after a hot fight Gruffydd was overcome and taken prisoner by the King's men and about 1500 of his men were killed or taken'; the latter total is identical to that given by Walsingham and Otterbourne and may have been derived from either of those chronicle sources. However, Vaughan then gives a vivid account of the death of Owain's brother, Tudur ap Gruffydd Fychan, which does not appear in any of the chronicle sources, but may well represent an authentic tradition relating to the battle.[27] He describes how 'among the dead bodies besides was one found very much like unto Owain, whom they supposed and gave out to be Owain, and that he was there slain, but upon further enquiry it was not him but his brother Tudur who very much resembled him and was often taken for him, being hardly distinguished asunder only Owain had a little wart above his eyebrows, which Tudur had not'.

While these various accounts differ sometimes markedly in terms of detail and emphasis, it is nevertheless possible to discern, albeit in broad terms, the course of the battle and its aftermath: 1/A large Welsh force, led by Gruffydd ap Owain, attacked Usk Castle, which was occupied by a substantial English army commanded by Lord Grey of Codnor, Sir John Greyndour and other members of Prince Henry's household.

[23] T. Hearne (ed.), *Duo Rerum Anglicanum Scriptores Veteres viz Thomas Otterbourne et Johannis Whethamstede ab origine gentis Britannicae usque ad Edwardum IV* (London 1732), 252
[24] NLW Peniarth MS 135, p. 62; Printed in Appendix I to J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 152
[25] J.E. Lloyd, 'The Battle of Pwll Melyn (1405)', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* Vol. 88 (1933), 347-8
[26] NLW Panton MS,f.57; largely reproduced in T. Pennant, *Tours in Wales*, 3 vols (London 1883 ed.), III, 333-4.
[27] Discussed by J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 96-7n

2/It appears that the Welsh attacked the castle from the north; Bower's *Scotichronicon* states that the Welsh army were arrayed in battle on open ground, presumably referring to a site outside the town of Usk. This is corroborated by the testimony of the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, which states that the battle took place on 'Pwll Melyn mountain', which almost certainly refers to the higher ground lying to the N and NE of the Castle.

3/In response to the Welsh assault, the English made a sortie in force from the castle and, after what appears to have been a short but fierce engagement, put the Welsh to flight, pursuing them westwards across the River Usk towards Monkswood. The chronicle sources all agree that the English inflicted heavy casualties on the escaping Welsh forces (including John ap Hywel, abbot of Llantarnam, among the slain) as well as capturing their commander Gruffydd ap Owain.

Troops and Casualties

The precise size of the respective English and Welsh armies at Pwll Melyn is difficult to ascertain. The Welsh force is described as a great host (*multitudine magna*) by both Adam of Usk and Walter Bower, the latter adding that the Welsh numbered 'more than seven times the English'.[28] This is probably an exaggeration (as one might commonly expect of medieval chronicle sources) although it would certainly seem that the Welsh had assembled a large body of troops, quite possibly outnumbering the English army at Usk. All the chronicle sources agree that the Welsh were commanded by Owain Glyndwr's eldest son, Gruffydd ap Owain, however John ap Hywel, abbot of Llantarnam, also appears to have played a prominent role in the battle (his death is recorded by Adam of Usk and Walter Bower) while another relative of Owain's, his brother Tudur ap Gruffydd Vychan, is reputed by later tradition to have been slain during the battle.

The chronicle evidence also appears to indicate the presence of a sizeable English army at Usk. Adam of Usk mentions that the force consisted of 'Lord Grey of Codnor, Sir John Greyndour and many more of the King's soldiers' and this appears to be confirmed by Bower's *Scotichronicon*, which refers to the dispatch of a large English army into Wales. Both sources refer to Lord Grey of Codnor as the principal commander of the English army although Bower does not mention Greyndour, instead alluding to the presence of Lord Cobham (presumably referring to Sir John Oldcastle, a knight of Herefordshire and leading member of Prince Henry's household who had served prominently during the campaign against Glyndwr, although he did not obtain the title of Lord Cobham until 1408) and Dafydd Gam of Brecon, a prominent supporter of the Lancastrian cause who was later killed at the battle of Agincourt.[29] It is entirely possible that both Oldcastle and Dafydd Gam were present at the battle as both were members of the Prince's entourage and had featured prominently in the military campaigns against the Welsh.[30]

[28] G. Given-Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 212-3; D.E.R. Watt (ed.), *Scotichronicon Vol. VIII: Books XV and XVI* (Aberdeen 1987), 108-9 ('congregati sunt Britones septuplo plures Anglico').
[29] D.E.R. Watt (ed.), *Scotichronicon Vol. VIII: Books XV and XVI* (Aberdeen 1987), 96-7
[30] For Oldcastle's career and his role during the Glyndwr revolt, see W.T. Waugh, 'Sir John Oldcastle', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 20 (1905), 437-8; for Dafydd Gam's role in the campaigns against Glyndwr see R.R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford 1995), 225-7.

While it is impossible to give a precise figure for the size of the English army at Usk, it is possible to reach an approximate estimate, based on the evidence of surviving accounts of military expenditure and records of garrisons at various castles in South Wales. Of particular importance is the survival of an account of John Wynter, the receiver-general of the Prince's household of money received from the treasurers of war for the wages of troops serving under the Prince in North and South Wales between November 1404 and April 1405.[31] Wynter's account records that the sum of £252 was paid for the maintenance of 80 men at arms and 200 archers at Monmouth, Hay and Radnor during this period, while from March 1st to April 27th, 1405, a further 200 men at arms and 500 archers were on service in South Wales at a cost of £1260.

The numbers of troops that the English could afford to muster for the purpose of garrisoning towns and castles and for a standing army in the field evidently varied depending on the financial resources available. This is particularly well illustrated by a letter from Lord Grey to the Privy Council, probably datable to Oct-Dec 1405 asserting that, in the case of Brecknock and Radnor, he had not received any further money from the receivers for those lordships and he could not find the money to get himself or his harness from Carmarthen to Brecon, consequently if he was not paid immediately he would have to beg the King to be excused from further service.[32]

From the testimony of the surviving accounts and Privy Council records, it is evident that a large 'standing army' on the Welsh March could not have been maintained for lengthy periods without immense expenditure and that regional commanders such as Lord Grey often had insufficient financial resources to pay their own troops' wages, either relying on occasional payments from the Exchequer, the revenues of the lordships which they were assigned to protect (which had, in many cases, been severely depleted by the ravages of the revolt) or their own personal resources. Consequently, it appears unlikely that the largest force which the English could have fielded at this particular time could have amounted to more than 1000 men and probably not more than the 200 men at arms and 500 archers serving in South Wales whose wages were accounted for between March 1st and April 27th.

The chronicle sources are noticeably silent regarding the extent of the English casualties during the battle of Pwll Melyn; however they all appear to concur that the Welsh casualties were severe. According to Adam of Usk, it appears that most of the Welsh were killed during the rout rather than the battle itself, with many of them being killed as they attempted to cross the Usk, 'either at the point of a sword or by drowning in the river'. Adam also refers to 300 captured Welsh prisoners being beheaded at Ponfald (the Pinfold) in front of the castle; this mass execution is not mentioned by any other contemporary or near-contemporary source but it may well represent reliable tradition.[33]

Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon* also refers to many Welsh being killed or captured both during the battle and the subsequent pursuit, giving a figure of 700 dead, which appears

[31] NA E101/44/1
[32] N.H. Nicolas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England,* 7 vols. (London 1834-7), I, 277-8
[33] G. Given-Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 212-3

to be a surprisingly conservative estimate.[34] In contrast, the total of 1500 Welsh dead given by Walsingham and Otterbourne appears to be a somewhat exaggerated figure, more characteristic of a medieval chronicle account. In summary, there appears to be no reason to doubt that there was indeed a 'great slaughter' of the Welsh on Pwll Melyn mountain, as described by the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*.

5.10.4 Assessment

Battle Location

The site of the battle can be fairly securely located on the basis of documentary and archaeological evidence as lying on the higher ground to the N and NE of Usk Castle, which appears to have been called Mynydd Pwll Melyn (hill of the yellow pool). Investigations by the eminent historian J.E. Lloyd established that the name 'Pwll Melyn' related to a roughly circular pond feature located within what was formerly a large pasture field approximately 270m NE of the castle.[35]

Lloyd, who derived his information from two distinguished local antiquaries, Sir Joseph Bradney and Isca Bowen, quotes a letter from Bowen dated April 1st, 1932 which states that 'he is informed by Mr Tom Rees, of Fernleigh, that it is the pond lying to the NE of Usk Castle' and that 'according to Mr Rees's father, who was alive upwards of a hundred years ago, numerous skeletons were found in this pond when it was cleaned out. The pond is so called because the water is always slimy and of a dirty colour'. Bradney adds further details concerning the pond, stating that 'the 'pwll' itself is reduced in size, the marshy land drained, and the 'pwll' is now enclosed by an iron railing and supplies water to the railway (ie. the Coleford, Monmouth, Usk and Pontypool Railway, opened in 1856). From the 'pwll' the ground rises westward and here Owen's army attacked the castle on the north. It is a well-known spot and the name has never been lost'.

The cartographic evidence for the existence of the pond is somewhat confusing; the feature is depicted on John Aram's survey of the Beaufort estate to the N of Usk Castle dated 1779 as lying towards the S end of a large meadow which was bordered on its western side by a lane running N of the castle towards Castle Farm and to the SE by the old turnpike road to Monmouth. At the time of Aram's survey, this meadow lay within the bounds of Usk Park, an extensive hunting preserve lying to the N of the castle and town which appears originally to have been established by the Clare lords of Usk in the late 13th century and was subsequently enlarged by exchange of lands with Usk Priory in about 1438.[36]

Curiously, the pond of 'Pwll Melyn' is not depicted either on the OS surveyors drawing (1813) or the Usk parish tithe map (Glascoed hamlet) of 1840.[37] However the pond is clearly marked as a reservoir on the OS 1st edition 25 inch map of 1882, immediately N of the line of the railway, and appears as such on subsequent historic OS mapping. The

[34] D.E.R. Watt (ed.), *Scotichronicon Vol. VIII: Books XV and XVI* (Aberdeen 1987), 108-9
[35] J.E. Lloyd, 'The Battle of Pwll Melyn (1405)', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* Vol. 88 (1933), 347-8
[36] P. Courtney, *Medieval and Later Usk* (Cardiff 1994), 102-3
[37] NLW Usk tithe map and apportionment - 1840

'Pwll Melyn' still survives today (now known as Castle Oak pond) although it has been completely engulfed by a modern housing estate

Another site associated with the battle that can be identified from documentary and cartographic sources is the 'Ponfald' (ie. a pinfold or pound for livestock, usually sheep) referred to by Adam of Usk, who describes how 300 prisoners captured after the battle were beheaded 'near to the Ponfald in front of the said castle' (*ante dictum castrum prope Ponfaldum*). The close proximity of the Pinfold to the castle is further confirmed by an account of the manor of Usk dated 1322-23, which mention repairs to the wall over the gate of the 'Punfald iuxta castrum'.[38] It is possible that the Pinfold mentioned in these medieval accounts may refer to the 'parish pound' shown on Aram's survey of Usk dated 1779, located within what is now Twyn Square to the SE of the castle.[39]

However another possibility, suggested by A.G. Mein, is that the medieval 'Ponfald' referred to by Adam of Usk was actually located in the area immediately to the S of the castle walls, at the corner of Porthycarne Street and Castle Parade and bordered to the NW by the line of the Town Ditch. This area was subsequently referred to as 'Bunford', apparently representing a corruption of the word 'Pinfold'.[40] Mein's hypothesis is supported by two pieces of evidence, firstly a deed of January 1569 leasing two plots of land in this area to one Andrew Flemmyng, one of which is described as waste ground next to the 'Pounfald', and the fact that Aram's survey of 1779 refers to the portion of Castle Parade between Porthycarne Street and the road up to the castle as Bunford Street.[41] Mein specifically identifies the garden plot to the rear of present day Little Bank House as the 'site of the executions', although this must remain a speculative conclusion in the absence of positive archaeological evidence.[42]

Discussion of Primary Sources

The battle of Usk is covered in several contemporary English, Welsh and Scottish chronicles. Probably the most informative account is contained in the chronicle of Adam of Usk (fl. c. 1352-1430),[43] a noted Welsh cleric and jurist whose career was fostered initially under the patronage of the earls of March and later by successive Archbishops of Canterbury, under whom Adam was employed as an advocate in the Court of Arches, most notably Thomas Arundel (d.1414). Adam of Usk supported the accession of Henry Boilingbroke and subsequently rose to a prominent position as an adviser to the Crown during the early years of Henry IV's reign. However following his departure to Rome (apparently to seek preferment in the Papal Curia) in February 1402 his career declined spectacularly and his subsequent support of Glyndwr resulted in the forfeiture of his benefices and estates to the Crown in 1407. Adam subsequent returned to Wales in 1408;

38 NA SC6/927/32 'In ii gumph(is) et ii vertivell(is) empt(is) pro ost(io) Punfald iuxta castrum ii.den'.

39 NLW Maps 10119: A map of the Castle and lands thereunto belonging in the parish of Usk surveyed by John Aram - 1779

40 A.G. Mein, *Norman Usk* (Usk 1986), 50, 109.

41 A.G. Mein, *Norman Usk* (Usk 1986), 50, 75, 109; NLW MS 17008D (The Brown Book of Usk), p.175

42 A.G. Mein, *Norman Usk* (Usk 1986), 56.

43 BL Additional MS 10104

however while receiving a royal pardon in 1411, he spent the rest of his career in relative obscurity.[44]

It was previously assumed that Adam compiled his chronicle at some time between 1414 and 1421; however it has been recently argued by C. Given-Wilson that the section of the chronicle covering the period 1377- Feb 1402 was written contemporaneously with the events it describes, following which there was a gap of some 12 years, following which Adam compiled the section of the chronicle covering the period February 1402-February 1414 (including his account of the battle of Pwll Melyn), probably 'written all at one go, in one hand, in the spring of 1414'.[45]

Adam's account, although relatively terse, contains valuable information concerning the leaders of the English and Welsh forces and sketches the broad details of the engagement; he is the sole chronicler to state specifically that the English sallied out from the castle to attack the Welsh and he provides important information concerning the subsequent pursuit of the defeated Welsh, the capture of Gruffydd ap Owain and the execution of the 300 prisoners outside the castle.

The only other chronicle account to cover the battle in some detail is the *Scotichronicon*, a general account of Scottish history (representing a continuation of the fourteenth century chronicle of John of Fordun) compiled by Walter Bower, Abbot of Inchcolm Abbey (d. 1449) for his patron, David Stewart of Rosyth, between 1440 and 1447.[46] Bower's account is clearly written from a strongly Welsh perspective and focuses particularly on the role of John ap Hywel, Abbot of Llantarnam (1400-1405), who was killed during the battle. The hagiographic description of the abbot's role in the battle strongly suggests that Bower may well have obtained some of his information from a source at Llantarnam Abbey. Although Bower's chronology is confused, his account provides useful information concerning the disposition of the Welsh forces and the respective commanders of the English and Welsh armies, which both corroborates and augments the account given by Adam of Usk.

In comparison to the Chronicle of Adam of Usk and the *Scotichronicon*, the other contemporary chronicle accounts of the battle are extremely terse. A brief entry relating to the battle is contained in the *Annales Henrici Quarti* by Thomas Walsingham, precentor of St Albans (fl. c. 1360-1420) one of the leading (and most prolific) monastic annalists of the period, who appears to be well informed about affairs in the Welsh March although his work is clearly written from a pro-Lancastrian viewpoint.[47]

Walsingham provides valuable information concerning the dating of the engagement, which he assigns to May 5th, placing it after another battle that occurred on March 4th (presumably identifiable with Grosmont, which actually took place a week later) and before another unnamed battle, which apparently occurred around the feast of St Dunstan

[44] For a lucid account of Adam of Usk's life and career, see the introduction to G. Given-Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), xiii-xxxiii
[45] G. Given-Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), xlvii. Also see C. Given Wilson 'The dating and structure of the Chronicle of Adam Usk', *Welsh History Review* (1995), 520-33.
[46] D.E.R. Watt (ed.), *Scotichronicon Vol. VIII: Books XV and XVI* (Aberdeen 1987), 94-107
[47] H.T. Riley (ed.) *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani*, (London 1866), 399

(May 19th), when Glyndwr's secretary, Owain ap Gruffydd ap Rhisiart was captured. Walsingham's account of the battle was reproduced almost *verbatim* by another contemporary chronicler, Thomas Otterbourne, possibly identifiable with an eponymous rector of Chingford (fl. c. 1393-1400), whose general chronicle (which ends in 1420) appears to be heavily indebted to Walsingham's *Annales*.[48]

A terse entry relating to the battle is contained in the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, a chronicle covering the years of the Glyndwr revolt between 1400 and 1415 which is presumed to have been compiled at some point in the first half of the 15th century although the earliest surviving text (Peniarth MS 135) consists of a manuscript copy made by the poet Gruffydd Hiraethog at some time between 1556 and 1564.[49] Although the description of the battle is very brief, it is particularly important as the only source to locate the site of the battle 'at Pwll Melyn mountain, near Usk' (*ar vynydd y pwll melyn wrth frynn buga*).

Contemporary records of royal government (such as the records of Privy Council proceedings, accounts of royal military expenditure and Patent Rolls) provide little specific information concerning the size and composition of the English force present at the battle, although they do provide some important contextual information concerning the strength of English royal garrisons at Usk and other castles in South Wales, and the relative strength and disposition of the English forces along the Welsh Marches around the time of the battle of Pwll Melyn.

The surviving account of the receiver-general of Prince Henry's household for expenses of war between November 1404-March 1405, along with other particulars of account, contain valuable information concerning the relative strength and disposition of the English forces along the Welsh Marches around the time of the battle of Grosmont in March 1405.[50] The ministers' accounts for the manor of Usk, covering the years 1408-14, contain several references to damage caused by the Welsh rebels to the town, the park and the surrounding area. [51] The account for 1408-9 contains entries describing the loss of burgage rents due to the sacking and fire caused by the rebels, the destruction of a fulling mill as well as the felling of trees in the park of Usk (to the N of the castle).[52] However, it is unclear whether these entries relate to Glyndwr's sacking of the town in 1402 or Gruffydd ap Owain's attack in 1405.

Discussion of Secondary Sources

The battle of Usk has been covered in various antiquarian works and modern historical accounts. The earliest antiquarian account of the battle is contained in the *Memoirs of*

[48] T. Hearne (ed.), *Duo Rerum Anglicanum Scriptores Veteres viz Thomas Otterbourne et Johannis Whethamstede ab origine gentis Britannicae usque ad Edwardum IV* (London 1732), 252; for discussion of the relationship between Walsingham's and Otterbourne's chronicles see C.L. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford 1913), 22

[49] NLW Peniarth MS 135; The Welsh text with English translation is printed in J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 149-53

[50] The account of Prince Henry's receiver's general for money received from the treasurers for war is contained in NA E101/44/1; For particulars of account see NA E101/44/6-7

[51] NA SC6/928/19-23

[52] NA SC6/928/19 (1408-9). Also see P. Courtney, *Medieval and Later Usk* (Cardiff 1994), 101, 103

Owain Glyndwr compiled by the 17th century scholar Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt (d. 1667), which relied upon the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* but also incorporated evidence from other sources that no longer appear to be extant.[53] Vaughan's *Memoirs* were largely reproduced as an Appendix to the Rev. J. Thomas's *History of the Island of Anglesey* (1775) and formed the basis of subsequent accounts of the battle in Pennant's *Tours in Wales* (1776) and the Rev. Thomas Thomas's *Memoirs* (1822).[54] Of particular interest is Vaughan's erroneous location of Mynydd Pwll Melyn in Brecknockshire (somewhat difficult to explain as the *Annals* explicitly refer to the battlefield as being situated 'near Usk'), a mistake followed by most subsequent authors until the late 19th century.

Bradney's *History of Monmouthshire* (1904) contains a relatively short account of the battle of Pwll Melyn, usefully reproducing the accounts given by Adam of Usk and in Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon*. Somewhat curiously, in view of Bradney's extensive knowledge of the locality, he misinterprets the meaning of 'Ponfald' referred to by Adam of Usk and also omits to mention the location of the 'Pwll Melyn' to the NE of Usk Castle, which is particularly surprising in view of Bradney's contribution to subsequent investigations of the battlefield site.[55]

J.E. Lloyd's account of the battle in his classic study of Owain Glyndwr represents the first modern scholarly treatment of the battle with a valuable discussion of the sources.[56] In a brief but important paper on 'The Battle of Pwll Melyn', Lloyd subsequently established the location of the 'Pwll Melyn' referred to by the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, situated to the NE of the Castle, with contributions from the distinguished Monmouthshire antiquaries Isca Bowen and Sir Joseph Bradney.[57] Lloyd's account of the battle and his identification of the battle site have been largely followed by subsequent writers. Davies's *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* contains brief but useful biographies of the principal English and Welsh commanders, in particular Lord Grey of Codnor and John ap Hywel of Llantarnam.[58]

Archaeology and Historic Terrain

Based on the archaeological and documentary evidence discussed above, it is possible to state with reasonable certainty that the principal site of the battle was located on the higher ground lying to the N and NE of the castle, known as 'Mynydd Pwll Melyn', deriving its name from a pond feature (now known as Castle Oak pond) which still survives, albeit in a much truncated form, surrounded by a modern housing estate, approximately 270m NE of Usk Castle. The 'Pwll Melyn', which originally appears to have been somewhat larger in size, was cleaned out and the surrounding marshland drained in the mid 1850s, when it was converted into a reservoir to serve the Coleford, Monmouth, Usk and Pontypool Railway.

[53] NLW Panton MS 53
[54] T. Pennant, *Tours in Wales* (1883 ed.) 333-4; T. Thomas, *The Memoirs of Owen Glendower* (Haverfordwest 1822), 131-2
[55] J.A. Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire Vol. 3 pts 1 & 2: The Hundred of Usk* (London 1921), I, 6-8
[56] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 86-8
[57] J.E. Lloyd, 'The Battle of Pwll Melyn (1405)', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* Vol. 88 (1933), 347-8
[58] R.R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford 1995), 212 (John ap Hywel), 109, 244 (Lord Grey)

According to Lloyd, 'numerous skeletons' were apparently found during the scouring of the pond in the 1850s which presumably represent those slain in the battle; consequently the possibility that further human remains might be discovered either within the pond or the surrounding area should nevertheless be considered. While much of the area to the NE of the castle has now been occupied by modern housing development, the land extending directly N of the castle, towards Castle Farm, remains as open pasture and could potentially contain evidence for buried artefacts or human skeletal remains associated with the battle.

There is also potential for the survival of archaeological remains associated with the battle in the immediate vicinity of the castle. Of particular interest is the site of the 'Ponfald' (pinfold or pound) mentioned by Adam of Usk as the place near where 300 captured Welsh prisoners were summarily executed. Adam locates the execution site 'near Ponfald in front of the castle'; the 'Ponfald' could be identified either with the site of the 'town pound' marked on Aram's survey of 1779 at Twyn Square or it may have been located immediately S of the castle, roughly in the area between Porthycarne Street and Castle Parade. In his study of 'Norman Usk', Mein specifically described the garden plot to the rear of Little Bank House as the 'execution site' although this identification must remain speculative.[59]

Two specific soil types have been identified within the vicinity of the battlefield site at 'Pwll Melyn' and within the town of Usk itself:

1/The soil type covering the area to the N and NE of Usk Castle consists of the typical brown earths of the EARDISTON 2 (541d) series, comprising well-drained often reddish coarse loamy soils, overlying Devonian and Permo-Triassic sandstone. In terms of acidity/alkalinity such soils are neutral to basic (pH 5.5-7) and being well-drained, the preservation of bone and charcoal and charred plant macrofossils may thus be anticipated, while inorganic material (including metal objects) may also have survived.

2/The soil type covering the town of Usk and the floodplain of the Usk Valley consists of the typical brown alluvial soils of the LUGWARDINE (561d) series, comprising deep stoneless permeable reddish fine silty soils variable affected by groundwater, overlying river alluvium. In terms of acidity/alkalinity, such soils may be neutral to acid (pH 5.5-7) or acid to basic in anoxic conditions, including wetlands and river floodplains. A range of material is likely to be present within such deposits, including bone, charcoal and other charred plant remains, pollen/spores and molluscs (wood, plant remains etc if waterlogged).

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

Contemporary chronicle accounts appear to have viewed the battle of Pwll Melyn as a resounding defeat for the Welsh and, in a broader sense, as a turning point in the revolt in South Wales. Adam of Usk's verdict was that 'from this time onwards, Owain's fortunes began to wane in that region', which was echoed by the comment of the author of the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr*, who stated that 'it was now that the tide began to turn against

[59] A.G. Mein, *Norman Usk* (Usk 1986), 50, 56.

Owain and his men. At this time Glamorgan made submission to the English, except a few who went to Gwynedd to their master'.[60] The seriousness of the defeat was worsened by the capture of Owain's eldest son and heir, Gruffydd ap Owain, who remained a prisoner in various royal castles (including the Tower of London and Nottingham Castle) until his eventual death of the plague in 1411, and the death of Owain's brother Tudur ap Gruffydd Fychan.[61]

J.E. Lloyd, in his classic study of Owain Glyndwr, described the battle as a 'resounding success' for the English and this view appears to have widespread acceptance among modern scholars. Overall, the battle of Pwll Melyn, taken together with the earlier English victory at Grosmont, appears to have resulted in a significant collapse of support for the Glyndwr revolt in south-east Wales; by August commissioners were dispatched to discuss with the men of Usk and Caerleon the terms on which they should surrender, while the *Annals of Owain Glyndwr* makes particular reference to the submission of Glamorgan to the English shortly after the battle of Pwll Melyn.[62]

However, while the defeats of Grosmont and Usk certainly resulted in a severe check to the Welsh revolt in SE Wales and the Marches, much of North and West Wales still remained under Glyndwr's control. Moreover, the fact that Glyndwr, aided by a large expeditionary force sent by his French allies, was able to launch a substantial campaign later in the year, penetrating as far eastwards as Worcestershire, demonstrated that the Welsh rebels were still capable of mounting large-scale military expeditions into South Wales and the Marches.

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[60] J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 152.
[61] Gruffydd ap Owain's capture and imprisonment are mentioned in all the extant chronicle accounts of the battle, the most detailed account of his fate is given by Adam of Usk, see G. Given-Wilson (ed.) *Chronicle of Adam of Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford 1997), 212-3n. For further references to Gruffydd's imprisonment see J.E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower* (Oxford 1931), 98n.
[62] R.R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford 1995), 119.

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5.11 Twthill (October 16th, 1461)

5.11.1 Site of Battle

The site of the battlefield of Twthill appears to be identifiable with the steep, partially wooded outcrop located at NGR SH 48220 63030, on the NE side of the modern town of Caernarfon, overlooking the medieval walled borough to the SW.

5.11.2 Summary

Historical Context of Battle

The battle of Twthill should be viewed in the context of the campaign waged by Edward IV and his Yorkist supporters following substantial victories over the Lancastrian armies at Mortimer's Cross on February 3rd 1461 and at Towton on March 29th of the same year. Towton, in particular, had resulted in a catastrophic defeat for the Lancastrian cause, many prominent Lancastrian nobles had been slain and King Henry VI, his wife Margaret of Anjou and their remaining supporters had been forced to flee to Scotland.[1]

However, while Towton certainly represented a significant setback to the Lancastrian party, with the loss of many leading noble supporters, the struggle for the English Crown nevertheless continued. Entrenched pockets of Lancastrian resistance remained along the northern borders while Queen Margaret's forces were able to launch substantial raids from Scotland into English territory by June. Moreover, Jasper Tudor earl of Pembroke, who retreated to his estates in Pembrokeshire after his defeat at Mortimer's Cross, still held the important coastal strongholds of Pembroke and Tenby and appears to have mustered some support, probably from the tenantry of his own estates and from the Lancastrian lordships of Kidwelly, Iscennen and Carnwyllion in SW Wales, while in North Wales, the important castles of Denbigh and Harlech also remained in Lancastrian hands.[2]

In early September 1461, the newly-crowned Edward IV dispatched his trusted supporters Sir William Herbert, lord of Raglan and Sir Walter Devereux (Lord Ferrers) to suppress the Lancastrian resistance in Wales.[3] Herbert was an influential figure in the politics of South Wales and the March, having inherited the lordship of Raglan from his father, William ap Thomas, and appears to have taken the lead in suppressing the revolt, capturing Tenby by mid-September, while Pembroke Castle, despite being 'victualled, manned and apparrelled' for a lengthy siege, was yielded 'without any war or resistance' to Herbert by its constable, Sir John Skydmore, at the end of the month.[4]

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[1] English Heritage Battlefield Report; Towton 1461; C. Gravett & G. Turner, *Towton 1461: England's bloodiest battle* (Oxford 2003), 81.
[2] T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915), 139-140
[3] T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915), 140; Also see a poem by the Welsh bard Guto'r Glyn, then a member of Herbert's entourage, apparently composed in September/October 1461 calling for Edward IV to suppress the Lancastrian revolt in Wales and 'establish government' (E.A. Rees, *A Life of Guto'r Glyn* (Talybont 2008), 114-5.
[4] T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915), 140-3

Before the fall of Pembroke, it appears that Jasper Tudor and his remaining supporters had already departed to NW Wales, apparently taking refuge in the remote, inaccessible mountains of Snowdonia. By this time, he appears to have been joined by another prominent Lancastrian, Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, who had previously fought at Towton and appears to have accompanied King Henry and his household into exile in Scotland, subsequently taking part in the siege of Carlisle in May 1461. It was suggested by Evans that Exeter could have brought reinforcements from Scotland by sea, possibly landing at or near Harlech, the only stronghold on the coast of NW Wales that still remained in Lancastrian hands.[5]

A letter dated October 4th, 1461 from Henry Windsor (a servant of Sir John Fastolf) to John Paston (d.1466) a wealthy Norfolk landowner and London notary, concisely describes the victorious progress of the Yorkist campaign in Wales, stating that 'all the castelles and holdez both in South Walez and in North Walez are gyfen and yelden up into the Kingez hand. And the Duc of Excestre (Exeter) and th'Erle of Pembrok ar floon and taken the mounteyns, and divers lords with grete puissance are after them and the most part of gentilmen and men of worship are comen yn to the Kyng and have grace, of all Wales'.[6]

Assuming this letter to be correct (certainly the author appears to be remarkably well-informed, suggesting a close connection with the Yorkist court), then it would appear that the Lancastrian cause in Wales was close to collapse. However this testimony should not be accepted uncritically; the presence of the Lancastrian forces in close proximity to Caernarfon suggests that they almost certainly intended to attack and (if possible) capture the castle and town, of immense strategic importance. It seems reasonable to assume that the Yorkist forces under Herbert's command, which appear to have been in pursuit of the Lancastrian army, intercepted them before they could attack Caernarfon. The garrison of the town and castle then numbered 18 men (including men at arms and archers) who had been placed there on May 28th, 1460 for 'the safe custody of the castle and town' and had been increased to 24 men by 1464-5.[7]

5.11.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

The battle of Twthill itself is very poorly documented; no reference to it has been found in contemporary or near-contemporary chronicles of the period and consequently very little appears to be known concerning the course of the battle, the events immediately preceding it and its aftermath.

T. H. Evans, in his discussion of the battle of Twthill in *Wales and the War of the Roses*, interprets the battle as 'a last stand' made by the Lancastrians against the pursuing

[5] T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915), 143
[6] N. Davis, R. Beadle & C. Richmond (eds.) *Paston Letters and Papers of the fifteenth century: Volume II* (Oxford 2004, rev. ed.), 250-2
[7] NA SC6/1217/3; SC6/1217/4; See E.A. Lewis, *Medieval Boroughs of Snowdonia* (London 1912), 109 for analysis of the garrison at Caernarfon during the 1450s-60s.

Yorkist forces.[8] However it seems more likely that the Lancastrians were encamped at Twthill prior to launching an attack on the castle and town of Caernarfon. Twthill itself would have made an excellent defensive position, overlooking the town; on the summit of the hill there remain traces of earthworks possibly representing an Iron Age hillfort subsequently utilised as a fortification during the medieval period.[9]

The Battle and its Aftermath

The only specific reference to the battle occurs in a list of persons attainted for treason at the Parliament held on November 4th, 1461, which recites that 'Henry duke of Exeter, Jasper Earl of Pembroke and Thomas Fitzhenry late of Hereford, esquire, at a place called Twthill (Tutehill) beside the town of Caernarfon in Wales, on the Friday after the feast of the translation of St Edward last (October 16th, 1461) raised war against our same sovereign, intending then and there to proceed to his destruction by treacherous and cruel violence, against their faith and allegiance'.[10]

No documentary evidence is available to indicate the deployment of the Lancastrian and Yorkist forces at the time of the battle or the subsequent course of the engagement. It is possible that the Lancastrians were encamped at Twthill before proceeding to attack the town although this cannot be verified from the available evidence. The surviving accounts of the chamberlain of North Wales and ministers' accounts for the castle and borough of Caernarfon covering this period provide little indication of damage caused by the rebels at this time.[11]

The outcome of the battle is not specifically mentioned in the attainder, however it undoubtedly resulted in a crushing defeat for the Lancastrian forces. The movements of the Earl of Pembroke and the Duke of Exeter after the battle are unfortunately not documented; however it is appears likely that they, along with their remaining followers, escaped to Harlech, the last remaining Lancastrian stronghold in north-west Wales, and from there travelled to Ireland.

Jasper Tudor is known to have been present in Ireland by the winter of 1461 and appears to have made plans for another landing in Wales in early 1462, this time in Anglesey, where he apparently intended to capture Beaumaris Castle with the aid of a fleet provided by the Duke of Burgundy.[12] The Lancastrian garrison at Denbigh also appears to have yielded to the Yorkists shortly after the defeat at Twthill, certainly no later than February 1462, when Edward IV granted a sum of money to the townspeople to rebuilt those houses 'brent by certain rebells and traytors'.[13]

[8] T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915), 143
[9] RCAHMW, *An Inventory of Ancient Monuments in Caernarvonshire Volume 2: Central* (1960), 158b (1125)
[10] NA C65/106 m. 11; R.Horrox (ed.), 'Edward IV, Parliament of 1461, Text and Translation' in *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, ed. C. Given Wilson et al. (CD Rom Scholarly Digital Editions, Leicester 2005), V. 478a
[11] The surviving chamberlains' accounts for the period 1460-69 are NA SC6/1217/3 (1459-60), SC6/1217/4 (1464-5) and SC6/1217/5 (1467-8); For a continuous series of ministers' accounts for the town of Caenarfon covering the same period, see NA SC6 1180/2-SC6/1181/1
[12] T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915), 145-6
[13] T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915), 143.

Grants of land subsequently made by King Edward IV to Herbert and Devereux, which are dated February 3rd 1462, specifically refer to their 'meritorious service at their great cost and expense, experiencing great peril in our service in various battles and armies both against our great adversary the late King of England Henry VI and the rest of his evil accomplices and supporters, namely Henry, Duke of Exeter, Jasper Earl of Pembroke, James Earl of Wiltshire and other rebels who raised war against us'.[14] It may be reasonably assumed that Herbert and Devereux were in command of the Yorkist army at Twthill.

Troops and Casualties

Little documentary information is available concerning the size and composition of the Lancastrian and Yorkist forces at the battle of Twthill. From the evidence of Henry Windsor's letter to John Paston dated October 4th, 1461, it would appear that the Yorkist commanders, Herbert and Devereux had assembled a substantial force ('a great puissance') and almost certainly outnumbered the Lancastrian army.[15]

It is worth noting that the attainder of November 1461 that refers to the battle, in addition to Henry Holland Duke of Exeter and Jasper Earl of Pembroke, also mentions one Thomas Fitzhenry (ap Harry) esquire as one of the Lancastrian commanders. Fitzhenry was a Herefordshire knight and a staunch Lancastrian; he had previously served as steward of the estates of the Duchy of Lancaster S of the Humber (including Wales) between 1452 and 1460 and subsequently appears among the Lancastrians who fought under Jasper Tudor at Mortimer's Cross in February 1461. Along with Exeter and Pembroke, Fitzhenry escaped after the defeat at Twthill and later appears as one of the Lancastrian commanders who fell at the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471. [16]

No information has been found concerning the casualties suffered during the battle although it may be presumed that the Yorkists inflicted severe losses on the Lancastrians, since they were unable to muster a substantial force in the field in Wales until some three years later, which was routed in battle by Herbert's lieutenants, John Dwnn and Roger Vaughan, at Dryslwyn near Carmarthen in March 1464.[17] The three leaders of the Lancastrian forces mentioned in the attainder of November 4th, 1461 escaped the battle and subsequently appear to have fled to Ireland.

[14] *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1461-7*, p.114
[15] N. Davis, R. Beadle & C. Richmond (eds.) *Paston Letters and Papers of the fifteenth century: Volume II* (Oxford 2004, rev. ed.), 250-2
[16] R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster Volume I: 1265-1603* (London 1953), 454; T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915), 142
[17] T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915), 151-2

5.11.4 Assessment

Battle Location

The sole source for the location of the battle is the record of the attainder in the Parliament of November 4th, 1461, which refers to it as 'a place called Twthill (Tutehill) beside the town of Caernarfon in Wales'.[18]

Twthill itself is a steep, partially wooded hill located on the NE side of the modern town of Carmarthen, overlooking the medieval walled settlement just to the SW. On the summit of the hill are traces of a rock-cut ditch, described by the RCAHMW Inventory (1960) as probably being pre-Roman in date, although the possibility that it could represent a medieval motte and bailey earthwork cannot be discounted.[19]

Twthill is depicted on the OS surveyors drawing of 1816 which shows that the hill was largely open pasture, with some building activity along its western side, represented by the Royal Hotel (built in 1794) and a small number of cottages along its SE flank. John Wood's map of Caernarfon dated 1834, again shows Twthill as open pasture, with evidence of further encroachment by building activity shown along the western, southern and eastern flanks of Twthill, along with extensive quarrying to the N. The Llanbeblig tithe map of 1841 provides more detail on Twthill, showing it as having been divided into several meadow and pasture enclosures, with the earthwork at the summit represented by the field name 'caer allt'.[20]

Unfortunately there appear to be no field names recorded in the Llanbeblig tithe apportionment that relate directly to the battle. The only field name with possible military associations is 'caer gadlas', referring to a meadow enclosure located to the NW of the Royal Hotel (No. 1930). 'Caer gadlas', however, can best be translated as the 'wall of the green (or farmyard)'; the place name element *gadlas* probably denoting a 'green' or 'farmyard' rather than *gadlan* (battlefield).

The site of the battlefield at Twthill is not marked on the OS 1st edition 25 inch map or subsequent Ordnance Survey mapping of the area. It is also worth noting that antiquarian works which describe Caernarfon and its locality, such Thomas Pennant's *Tours in Wales* (1776) or W.H. Jones's *Old Karnarvon* (1889) make no reference to any historic traditions associated with the battle.[21]

[18] NA C65/106 m. 11; R.Horrox (ed.), 'Edward IV, Parliament of 1461, Text and Translation' in *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, ed. C. Given Wilson et al. (CD Rom Scholarly Digital Editions, Leicester 2005), V. 478a

[19] RCAHMW, *An Inventory of Ancient Monuments in Caernarvonshire Volume 2: Central* (1960), 158b (1125)

[20] NLW Llanbeblig Tithe Map and Apportionment - 1841

[21] T. Pennant, *Tours in Wales*, 3 vols (1883 ed.); W.H. Jones's *Old Karnarvon: a historical account of the town of Carnarvon* (Caernarfon 1889)

Discussion of Primary Sources

There is an almost complete dearth of primary source material relating to the battle. No record of the battle appears in the contemporary or near contemporary chronicle accounts of the period and the only documented reference to it occurs in a list of persons attainted for treason at the Parliament held on November 4th, 1461.[22] Some important contextual information on the activities of the Lancastrian and Yorkist forces just prior to the battle is contained in a letter dated October 4th, 1461 from Henry Windsor to John Paston, a prominent Norfolk landowner and London notary who appears to have had close connections with the Yorkist court.[23] The accounts for the chamberlain of North Wales for the late 1450s-early 1460s provide information on the garrison stationed at Caernarfon just prior to the battle and shortly afterwards although they shed little light on the actual engagement itself.[24]

Discussion of Secondary Sources

Not surprisingly, in view of the paucity of primary documentation concerning the battle of Twthill, there is a similar lack of secondary literature relating to the engagement. Local histories such as J.H. Bransby's *Description of Carnarvon* (1845) and W.H. Jones's *Old Karnarvon* (1889) make reference to Twthill but mention no associations with the battle.[25] The only antiquarian work to mention the battle in any detail is R. Brooke's *Visits to Fields of Battle of the Fifteenth Century*, published in 1857, which reproduces the entry from the Parliament Rolls for November 1461 relating to the battle.[26]

The fullest modern historical account of the battle is that contained in T.H. Evans's *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (1915), a scholarly work containing extensive references to the available primary documentation.[27] Evans discusses the battle within the context of the Yorkist campaign waged against the Lancastrian forces in Wales after the battle of Towton and draws particular attention to the lack of contemporary chronicle accounts relating to the engagement. The battle of Twthill has received relatively little attention in more recent historical accounts; K. Williams-Jones's chapter on Caernarfon in the *Boroughs of Medieval Wales* (1978) refers to Twthill as a 'skirmish' while a brief reference to the battle is made in P. Haigh's *Military Campaigns of the Wars of the Roses* (1995).[28]

[22] NA C65/106 m. 11; R.Horrox (ed.), 'Edward IV, Parliament of 1461, Text and Translation' in *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, ed. C. Given Wilson et al. (CD Rom Scholarly Digital Editions, Leicester 2005), V. 478a

[23] N. Davis, R. Beadle & C. Richmond (eds.) *Paston Letters and Papers of the fifteenth century: Volume II* (Oxford 2004, rev. ed.), 250-2

[24] NA SC6/1217/3 (1459-60), SC6/1217/4 (1464-5); SC6/1217/5 (1467-8)

[25] J.H. Bransby, *Description of Carnarvon and the neighbouring district* (Carnarvon 1845); W.H. Jones, *Old Karnarvon: a historical account of the town of Carnarvon* (Caernarfon 1889)

[26] R. Brooke's *Visits to Fields of Battle of the Fifteenth Century* (Liverpool 1857), 70.

[27] T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915)

[28] K. Williams-Jones, 'Caernarvon' in R.A. Griffiths (ed.) *The Boroughs of Medieval Wales* (Cardiff 1978), 89; P.A. Haigh, *The Military Campaigns of the Wars of the Roses* (Stroud 1995), 71.

Archaeology and Historic Terrain

Due to the lack of available primary and secondary sources, it is difficult to be precise about the precise location and extent of the battlefield, which is presumed to have been located somewhere on the steep outcrop of Twthill on the NE side of the modern town of Caernarfon. On the summit of Twthill are traces of a rock cut ditch which may possible represent the remains of a late prehistoric defended enclosure, although it has been suggested that it could possibly have been utilised as a motte and bailey castle in the medieval period. It is possible that the Lancastrians could have encamped on the summit of Twthill prior to the battle, though this cannot be verified from the available evidence. Little archaeological work has been carried out on Twthill and there appears to be no record of finds made in this area specifically associated with the battle.

The predominant soil type in this area consists of the typical brown earths of the WICK 1 (541r) series, consisting of deep well drained coarse loamy and sandy soils, locally over gravel, overlying glaciofluvial or river terrace drift. In terms of acidity/alkalinity such soils are neutral to basic (pH 5.5-7). If well-drained, as above, then preservation of bone and charcoal could be anticipated; wood will only survive in waterlogged conditions (together with a range of environmental indicators, such as fruits/seeds, molluscs and pollen/spores), while charcoal and other charred plant macrofossils may be present in intermittently wet conditions. Inorganic material (ie. metal objects) is likely to survive.

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

Although it appears likely that, in military terms, the battle of Twthill was little more than a skirmish, the result was nevertheless significant. The Yorkists had succeeded in destroying the last major Lancastrian field force in Wales and had forced their principal leaders, Exeter and Pembroke, to flee the country. The major Lancastrian stronghold at Denbigh also appears to have fallen shortly after the defeat at Twthill, certainly before February 1462.

There also appears to have been a significant redistribution of landed wealth in Wales shortly after the battle of Twthill, with the estates of the defeated Lancastrians being granted by Edward IV to his Yorkist supporters. In Feburary 1462, the extensive lands in Wales and the March belonging to the Lancastrian earls of Pembroke and Wiltshire, which had been forfeited to the Crown, were granted to William Herbert and his adherents. Herbert secured the majority of the estates of Jasper Tudor earl of Pembroke, including Pembroke, Tenby, Cilgerran, Llanstephan and Walwyn's Castle, while his brother Richard Herbert obtained the estates of Thomas Fitzhenry in Herefordshire including the lordship of Moccas. [29] Other associates of William Herbert, notably Roger Vaughan of Tretower and John Dwnn, also received substantial grants of forfeited estates and featured prominently in the administration of the principality during the 1460s.[30]

However, while the Yorkist victory at Twthill had significant consequences in military and political terms, it did not represent, by any means, the end of Lancastrian resistance

[29] *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1461-7*, p.114
[30] *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1461-7*, p. 77; 192

in Wales. The isolated fortress at Carreg Cennen continued to hold out until May 1462, when it was finally surrendered to a Yorkist force and slighted; however the Lancastrian garrison at Harlech Castle (which benefited from its virtually impregnable location and the fact that it could be supplied by sea) continued to hold out until as late as 1468, when it finally was taken after a lengthy siege.[31] The continued defiance of Harlech appears to have inspired several further attempts at landings in Wales by Jasper Tudor and his Lancastrian supporters in 1462, 1464 and, most significantly, in 1468.[32]

5.11.5 Bibliography & Cartography

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SC6/1217/5 Account of the Chamberlain of North Wales -1467-8

National Library of Wales

Tithe Apportionment of the Parish of Llanbeblig- 1841

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Calendar of Close Rolls

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R.Horrox (ed.), 'Edward IV, Parliament of 1461, Text and Translation' in *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, ed. C. Given Wilson et al. (CD Rom Scholarly Digital Editions, Leicester, 2005), V. 478a

[31] H.M. Colvin et al. (eds.) *History of the Kings Works Volume II: The Middle Ages* (London 1963), 602 (Carreg Cennen); T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915), 167-9
[32] T.H. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915), 145-69

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K. Williams-Jones, 'Caernarvon' in R.A. Griffiths (ed.) *The Boroughs of Medieval Wales* (Cardiff 1978), 89

Cartography

(All maps were obtained from the National Library of Wales unless otherwise stated)

John Speed's Map of Caernarfon - 1610

OS Surveyors Drawing of Caernarfon (Scale: 2 in. to the mile) - 1813

John Wood's Map of Caernarfon - 1834

Tithe Map of the Parish of Llanbeblig - 1841

OS 1st edition 25 inch map- 1880

OS 1st edition 6 inch map - 1891

OS 2nd edition 25 inch map 1906

OS 2nd edition 6 inch map - 1907

OS 3rd edition 25 inch map 1915

OS 3rd edition 6 inch map - 1922

OS provisional edition 6 inch map - 1953

5.12 St Fagan's (May 8th, 1648)

5.12.1 Site of Battle

The exact location of the Battle of St Fagan's is uncertain, but appears to have taken place with each side drawn up on either side of the Nant Dowlais, a tributary of the River Ely, with the Parliamentary force with their back to the village of St Fagan's. Some of the fiercest fighting appears to have been fought near or on a bridge which spanned this stream.

5.12.2 Summary

Historical Context

The Battle of St Fagan's can be viewed against the backdrop of the Welsh Rising during the Second Civil War of 1642-48, it being the last set-piece defeat for the Royalist forces.[1] The Royalist army intended to march to and then seize Cardiff in the name of the King, and a small Parliamentary force consisting of approximately 3000 men under Colonel Thomas Horton, which had been engaged in an arduous campaign in and around Brecon, marched south in order to stop them.[2]

In the spring of 1648, several key Parliamentary figures defected and joined the Royalist cause; these included General Laugharne, the victor of Colby Moor, and Colonels Powell and Poyer.[3] Poyer in particular had been of great service to Parliament and had, until his defection, held Pembroke Castle in their name.[4] The reasons for their decision to join the Royalist cause at this late juncture (King Charles was already imprisoned upon the Isle of Wight) could be moral, as it has been suggested that they may have been motivated by discontent at Parliament's actions and intentions towards the King,[5] although the chief incentive appears to have been provided by Parliament's proposed disbandment of sections of Laugharne's, Powell's and Poyer's troops without pay.[6] Additionally, Laugharne appears to have been regarded with some suspicion by Parliament, something which may have been either a premonition, or a factor that drove him into the Royalists' arms.[7]

The exact course of events in the immediate build-up to the battle remains relatively unclear. It would appear that the Royalists' uprising was spearheaded by certain prominent members of the Glamorgan gentry (including the Stradling family of St Donat's Castle),[8] and so it may be reasonable to suppose that the majority of the force under their command was drawn from their estates, as well as forming the base from

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[1] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.9
[2] P. Gaunt, *A Nation Under Siege: the Civil War in Wales, 1642-48*, p.68
[3] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10
[4] W. David, 'The Battle of St Fagan's' in *Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society*, vol. 9, p.29
[5] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10
[6] W. David, 'The Battle of St Fagan's' in *Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society*, vol. 9, p.29
[7] D. Webb, *Battle at St Fagan's*, p.14
[8] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10

which the march on Cardiff was launched.[9] In addition, the force was to be joined by experienced Royalist troops under the command of Colonels Powell and Poyer, the latter marching from Pembroke Castle.[10]

There also appears to have been a familial connection of uncertain importance that cannot be ignored. Both Colonel Poyer and Major-General Laugharne were sons-in-law to Miles Button of Cottrell,[11] a local landowner who was also the patron of the neighbouring (to St Fagan's) Parish of St Nicholas, of which Hugh Lloyd was the rector,[12] and who is recorded on the list of captured Royalist officers.[13]

Word of this reached the ears of Colonel Horton who was dealing with another Welsh uprising around Brecon, suffering at the hands of guerrilla tactics designed to deprive him and his large cavalry force of fodder and the tools necessary to maintain his horses, as well as food for his men.[14] Despite the low morale of the troops and sickness to the commander himself, Horton was able to instigate a forced march across the Brecon Beacons and down the Taff Valley, reaching St Fagan's on the May 4th, with Horton setting up his temporary headquarters in a farmhouse called Pentrebane (NGR ST 1202 7852).[15]

The aim of the Parliamentary forces appears to have been to prevent the Royalist forces from reaching their ultimate objective – Cardiff. Scouts sent out that same day alerted the Parliamentarians that they had arrived fortuitously asthe Royalists were a mere two miles away.[16] The Royalists were alarmed, particularly as they themselves had just arrived that same day, and appeared to have had the same intention of quartering at St Fagan's, but instead encamped on the Downs at St Nicholas, so close to the Parliamentary camp that Horton and his men could hear the muskets fired in salute as Laugharne reviewed his troops.[17]

5.12.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to Battle

With the enemy within striking distance, Horton appears to have acted promptly; detachments were sent off to secure crossings over the River Ely and the River Llandaff in order to secure his flanks,[18] and an urgent request for reinforcements was sent to

[9] Ibid, p.10
[10] W. David, 'The Battle of St Fagan's' in *Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society*, vol. 9, p.29
[11] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10
[12] Ibid, p.9
[13] Colonel Thomas Horton to the Earl of Manchester: 8th May, 1648
[14] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10
[15] Ibid, p.10
[16] Ibid, p.10
[17] Ibid, p.10
[18] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.11

Cromwell who was hurrying from Gloucester with detachments of the New Model Army.[19]

By contrast, the Royalist commander Laugharne, who had earned a reputation as a daring risk-taker, appears to have been gripped by indecision, apparently retreating westward back into the Vale of Glamorgan, via Llancarvan, Penmark and Fonmon Castle on May 5th. [20] In the meantime, Horton appears to have been content to hold his position; the Parliamentarians knew that Laugharne's army had to pass through St Fagan's in order to meet their objective of taking Cardiff, and that every day that the Royalists either delayed or even retreated strengthened their own situation, bringing Cromwell and his reinforcements ever more closer.

The reasons for Laugharne's retreat are unclear. It is possible that Laugharne aimed to identify an alternative crossing point and, therefore, a potential way to bypass Horton's men altogether; additionally, it may be that, realising the majority of his men were both woefully underequipped and untrained, the Royalist commander sought to utilise the small amount of time available to him to attempt to instil some sort of semblance of military order and discipline to them.[21] For that matter, Laugharne may have attempted some sort of subterfuge; it would appear that, as his official Parliamentary rank of Sergeant-Major General of South Wales had not been rescinded, he may have attempted to order Horton to stand down.[22]

Whatever the reasons behind this about-turn, Laugharne eventually seems to have realised the true peril of his predicament (Cromwell was only a two day march away) and, during the night of the May 7th, he marched back to St Nicholas.[23] The Royalist forces are also recorded as having advanced to Peterston;[24] if this is correct (there are some inconsistencies in the contemporary accounts), then this may indicate one of the bridging points that Laugharne intended to use in order to cross the Ely.[25] Once Horton became aware of this, he appears to have ordered his Cavalry mounts gathered together close at hand, ready for the next day's fighting.[26] Local legend suggests that this was in a field to the rear of St Fagan's village leading up to the Pentrebane ridge; the field is called *Cae Meirch* (lit. 'The Horses' Field').[27] However, this may be problematic as it is unlikely that 1500 horses could have been gathered in only one field,[28] although it may contain a grain of truth, indicating where the greatest concentration may have been situated. Certainly, the location itself is plausible.

[19] W. David, 'The Battle of St Fagan's' in *Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society*, vol. 9, p.31
[20] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[21] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10
[22] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.15
[23] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[24] Colonel Thomas Horton to Lord Fairfax: 8th May, 1648
[25] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.15
[26] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[27] W. David, 'The Battle of St Fagan's' in *Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society*, vol. 9, p.31
[28] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.15

Horton seems to have been aware of the exact nature of the situation and so fully expected the Royalists to attack the next day.[29] This could be the result of a victorious leader wishing to be viewed as confident, but it has been suggested that this was because Horton helped engineer the confrontation by leaking information of Cromwell's imminent arrival.[30]Whether this is true or not would hinge on Horton's faith in the quality of his troops to overcome the disparity in numbers; his overwhelming strength in Cavalry may have buoyed him, as the 3000-4000 'clubmen' would have had little protection against a charge. Additionally, Colonel Okey states that '*in divers ways, we sought an opportunity to fight them, which, until this instant* [May 8th], *we could never doe*'.[31]

It would appear that Horton was content to remain at St Fagan's and await Cromwell's reinforcements before engaging in battle, which allowed Laugharne to take the initiative and mount an attack, perhaps hoping to trap Horton's forces in the village St Fagan's where the superior numbers of the Royalists could have offset the advantage of the Parliamentary forces in terms of training and equipment (in particular, their well-trained cavalry units would have been rendered less effective in the close confines of the village).[32] It could therefore be suggested that only the turn of events of the battle (which could be construed as being an effective counter-attack rather than an out and out defensive action) allowed the Parliamentary cavalry to be deployed to such decisive effect.

Narrative of Battle

It is difficult to establish with absolute certainty the exact strategies adopted by both sides on the eve of the battle, just as it is equally difficult to discern the exact narrative of events of the engagement itself. While historians are blessed with the survival of several correspondence accounts from Colonel Horton and one from Colonel Okey, no such documentation exists to offer the Royalist version of events and so counter the natural bias of the former. However, by utilising these accounts, it is possible to tentatively chart the course of the battle.

The Royalist advance began at some time before 7 o'clock in the morning (Okey suggests it was 8 o'clock)[33] on Monday May 8th, at which time Parliamentarian scouts spotted their enemy a mile and half away marching towards St Fagan's.[34] Horton then ordered his men to draw up a line of battle, with him personally commanding the infantry in the centre while '*Major Bethel commanded the horse on the right wing, Major Barton on the left, and Colonel Okey and his major with the dragoons on both wings with the horse*';[35] to their front was deployed a 'Forlorn Hope' ['*a band of soldiers picked to begin an*

[29] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[30] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.11
[31] Colonel Okey's Account: 8th May, 1648
[32] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.15
[33] Colonel Okey's Account: 8th May, 1648
[34] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[35] Ibid

attack, many of whom would not survive']³⁶ of 30 Heavy Cavalry and 20 Dragoons under the command of Lieutenant Godfrey.³⁷

However, there has been some doubt cast upon the ability of the Parliamentary army to draw up so many men so quickly, with such little notice;³⁸ this is backed up by the apparent speed of the Royalist advance, which (according to Colonel Okey) appears to have caught the Parliamentarians by surprise.³⁹ However, Okey might seek to heighten the drama of the situation and, if the attack was indeed expected, there is little reason to suppose that the Parliamentary forces were not in some state of readiness. Furthermore, dawn and early morning attacks were relatively commonplace in 17th century warfare of and it would seem that Horton was aware that the Royalists had returned on May 7th, so it is possible that the surprise of the Royalist attack might be overstated.

Due to the lack of contemporary Royalist sources, the deployment of their army is impossible to state as fact; rather, it is possible to document how and where (and, to a lesser degree, when) the Parliamentary forces engaged the elements of the Royalist army. It would appear that the Royalist cavalry was positioned to the rear of their infantry, who were presumably drawn up in a line, in order to, at best, support them in their attack or, at worst, to prevent their rout.⁴⁰ To the front of their position, the Royalists also had their own 'Forlorn Hope', consisting of '*a strong forlorn of foot and about six pickering horse* [cavalrymen fighting as individuals sent out in order to provoke combat]'.⁴¹ Okey suggests that the total number was about 500.⁴²

While Horton's account (as might be expected) gives the impression of a clear and decisive strategy on his part, Okey's version suggests a somewhat different picture; upon the first encounter with the Royalists, Okey writes that '*wee, seeing his* [the enemy's] *numbers, and hee being upon us before we were well aware of him, quitted our present station which was at St Fagans. The enemie drew into a place of our guard, but wee, being loth to retreat upon a little hill near St Fagans, made good our ground, drew up our armie, and faced the enemie*'.⁴³ From this, it would appear that not only was Horton's strategy dictated to him by the Royalists' advance, but that he appears to have hesitated and even contemplated a temporary retreat before deciding to stand and fight.

The engagement appears to have begun when the Royalists sent forward their 'Forlorn Hope', which was met by their Parliamentary counterpart, who drove their opponents back, if not actually routing them;⁴⁴ this seems to have precipitated a general advance of the Parliamentary army.⁴⁵ It would seem that the advance of the Royalist 'Forlorn Hope' was intended as a screening manoeuvre intended to buy time for the rest of the army to cross the bridge over the Nant Dowlais. Elements of the main body of infantry must have

[36] J. Pearsall, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, p.556
[37] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[38] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.18
[39] Colonel Okey's Account: 8th May, 1648
[40] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[41] Ibid
[42] Colonel Okey's Account: 8th May, 1648
[43] Ibid
[44] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[45] Ibid

achieved this, and became engaged with the Parliamentary cavalry (as shall be seen), although it would seem that the majority of the Royalist infantry are presumed not to have crossed the bridge.

Capitalising on the victory of the Parliamentary 'Forlorn Hope', Colonel Okey, who seems to have been positioned on the right,[46] although his men were positioned on both flanks, proceeded with his dragoons and the '*200 firelocks*' under Captain Garland from the right flank to support Lieutenant Godfrey, who had seen off the Royalist 'Forlorn Hope' and had entered into fighting with of the forward elements of the Royalist army.[47] It would seem that the battle raged from hedgerow to hedgerow and was primarily a cavalry action.[48] However, this in itself presented problems; Horton records that on two occasions the mixed Heavy Cavalry and Dragoon force, although supported by the '*200 firelocks*' and having routed their immediate opponents, had to halt and '*were constrained to stand the enemy's shot for some time before the foot (though they made great haste) could come up to them*'.[49] This undoubtedly resulted in many of the recorded casualties to the mounts.[50] The second occasion when the cavalry force halted was the more key moment, as the Royalists had been driven back over the bridge spanning the Nant Dowlais.[51]

From the Parliamentary version of events, it would now appear that the Royalists had lost the initiative. It would seem that, up until that point, the Royalists had been pouring as many of their infantry forward in support of their attack as possible, and that once defeated they were forced onto the defensive. However, later tradition mentions a possible Royalist flank attack by cavalry under Colonel Butler, who appear to have occupied the village of St Fagan's unopposed, but played no part in the actual battle itself;[52] this is, however, not recorded in any of the contemporary (Parliamentary) sources, which may have chosen to ignore this damning fact in favour of presenting an unblemished military victory by competent commanders, rather than one that saw their rear threatened and their quarters taken.[53] On balance, it is unlikely that such an attack did take place, as it is unlikely that an experienced commander like Horton would have allowed such a potentially devastating flank attack to succeed unopposed, or that a cavalry force that arrived to the rear of the already engaged Parliamentary forces would not have charged them.

Okey and his men appear to have waited at the Bridge over the Nant Dowlais until the infantry of the 1st Division under Lieutenant Colonel Read arrived in their support, and then appeared to have held the enemy's attention,[54] the infantry presumably engaging them in a fire-fight.[55] The Royalists appear to have fallen back and begun to hold the bridge in expectation of a main Parliamentarian offensive which is unlikely to have never

[46] Colonel Okey's Account: 8th May, 1648
[47] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[48] Ibid
[49] Ibid
[50] Colonel Thomas Horton to the Earl of Manchester: 8th May, 1648
[51] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[52] P. Gaunt, *A Nation Under Siege: the Civil War in Wales, 1642-48*, p.68
[53] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.13
[54] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[55] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.20

come; if the Parliamentarians had attempted to cross the bridge, their casualties would have much far higher than those that were actually incurred. With the Royalists focussed on the bridge, the full Parliamentarian counterattack began in earnest.

The Parliamentarians proceeded to launch two flanking attacks, the first on the Royalists right by infantry of the 2nd Division under Major Wade and supported by the cavalry of the Parliamentary left wing under Major Barton, while the second was undertaken by the remaining cavalry and dragoons of the Parliamentary right flank on the Royalists' left and on their rear, both of which presumably had to cross the Nant Dowlais.[56] Interestingly, their crossing does not seem to have been opposed, which suggests that, by this stage, Laugharne may have had only a tentative hold on his army and so chose to keep them close to his central headquarters; however, Major Wade's infantry were charged by a small group of Royalist cavalry, but were repulsed.[57] It has been suggested that this group of cavalry, which are recorded as being no greater than 60 men,[58] may have been led by Laugharne himself, which, if true, may be an indicator of the dire straits that he found himself in.[59]

The advance of the Parliamentary right flank would have effectively sealed off all avenue of escape for the Royalist army, and so, once it became clear that they were about to be completely encircled, the Royalists broke and ran.[60] The Parliamentary cavalry moved to run down and capture as many of the fugitives as they could. The whole battle lasted no more than two hours.[61]

Aftermath

The Royalist army in full flight, the Parliamentary cavalry had an easy and unopposed job in rounding up the prisoners. Of the 8000 men estimated to have begun the battle, about 3000 ordinary soldiers and upwards of 400 officers were taken prisoner.[62] In addition to this, over 2000 firearms as well as other weapons were taken.[63] As if this wasn't enough of an indication of the total and utter rout that the Royalists were put to, almost all (if not all) their colours were taken.[64]

Among the officers taken were Laugharne, Powell and Poyer; they were taken to the Tower of London and tried for Treason, and all three were condemned to death, although only Poyer was executed with the other two sentenced to exile.[65] He was executed by firing squad in the Piazza of Covent Garden on the 21st April, 1649.[66] It has been suggested that the prisoners (at least the officers) were held at Llandaff Cathedral after the battle, from where ten of the most senior, including Major General Stradling, were

[56] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[57] Ibid
[58] Ibid
[59] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.21
[60] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[61] Colonel Thomas Horton to the Earl of Manchester: 8th May, 1648
[62] Colonel Thomas Horton to Lord Fairfax: 8th May, 1648
[63] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[64] Ibid
[65] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.25
[66] Ibid, p.25

taken aboard Admiral Crowther's flagship, the *Bonaventure*, standing at anchor at Cardiff and tried by court-martial;[67] they were all sentenced to death by firing squad, although only three suffered this fate, with one having his sentence commuted to hanging, Stradling imprisoned at Windsor Castle (where he died) and the others being exiled.[68]

For many of the ordinary combatants, their fate was rather merciful. The majority of the 4000 'clubmen' appear to have been released as soon as they were caught, presumably on oath not to fight against Parliament again, while the ordinary soldiers, some of whom may even have previously fought on Parliament's side under Colonels Powell and Poyer, were released not long after, having taken a similar oath.[69] However, it would appear that perhaps as many as 1000 of these soldiers were sent abroad in order to fight for King Charles' nephew, Prince Philip, in the service of Venice,[70] while 240 men were sent to Barbados.[71]

Troops and Combatants

The Parliamentary forces under Colonel Horton appear to have been a cohesive force of experienced soldiers under a leader with whom they were familiar; by contrast, the Royalist forces seem to have consisted of disparate elements under Major-General Rowland Laugharne, a new (but experienced) commander who had recently switched sides in their favour.[72] It is unclear as to how this defector was received or treated by the officers (and men) under his command.[73]

However, Laugharne was not the only high-profile Parliamentarian (formerly, Laugharne had been Sergeant-Major General for all Parliamentary forces in South Wales)[74] to defect to the Royalist cause and to fight in this battle; Colonels Powell and Poyer, while stationed in Pembrokeshire, mutinied with their troops after Parliament attempted to disband them without paying their outstanding arrears, which drove them to join the Royalists.[75]

The Royalist force appears to have numbered 8000 men according to the officers taken by the Parliamentarians after the battle;[76] however, it should be taken into account that this figure, while apparently suggested by captured Royalist officers, appears in Parliamentary official correspondence (there are no contemporary Royalist sources) in the aftermath of a great victory, when it may be in the interests of the victors to exaggerate.[77] Additionally, of this force, the majority (approximately 3000-4000 men)

[67] W. David, 'The Battle of St Fagan's' in *Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society*, vol. 9, p.35
[68] Ibid, p.35
[69] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.24
[70] C. F. Shepherd, *Annals of St Fagan's*, p.22
[71] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.24
[72] C. F. Shepherd, *Annals of St Fagan's*, p.17
[73] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.15
[74] Ibid, p.14
[75] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10
[76] Colonel Thomas Horton to Lord Fairfax: 8th May, 1648
[77] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, 12

appear to have been locally drawn 'clubmen',[78] men armed with irregular weaponry, such as Welsh bills (a farming implement similar to a scythe) and clubs.[79] Thomas Horton suggests that the Royalist army included 2500 musketeers and about 500 cavalry (although it would appear that no more than 60 were ever used as a unit);[80] from the original 8000 men, if this figure is to be believed, this would leave 1000-2000 conventional foot, which could be suggested to have been pikemen.[81] It is possible that the 2500 musketeers represent at least some of the forces that defected along with Powell and Poyer,[82] although Powell (and therefore his men) may not have been present.[83]

The Parliamentarian army appears to have been more battle-hardened and experienced than its Royalist counterpart, as the soldiers had recently returned from a campaign around Brecon and some of them may have previously fought in Cromwell's New Model Army.[84] At the outset, this force appears to have numbered approximately 3250 men;[85] however, when the inevitable loss of men to the rigours of an arduous campaign are taken into account along with those detachments needed to hold the Ely and Llandaff bridges, it may be that Horton could only muster c.2500 men.[86]

Of the original c. 3250 men, it would appear that Horton's men numbered (approximately) 600 Dragoons (at this period, it seems that a Dragoon was primarily a mounted infantryman, who could also act as both a scout and light cavalry), 900 Heavy Cavalry and 1200 foot, of whom 200 seemed to have formed a separate detachment of musketmen, or could have been dismounted dragoons (they also appear to have fought under the direct command of Okey, the Commander of the Parliamentary Dragoons);[87] the implication of this is unclear, as the other 800 may also have been equipped with muskets, or could have been pikemen. Additionally, it is probable that this number would have included both. To this figure can be added a number of Welsh Parliamentary troops that joined with their predominantly English allies; these appear to have included four troops of Heavy Cavalry (250 men), a company of 100 Dragoons, two companies of foot (200 men) and a similar number of soldiers of the Cardiff garrison, who may or may not have actually been called upon.[88]

At first glance, the armies appear vastly disproportionate, with maybe 2500 Parliamentarians opposed by approximately 8000 Royalists. However, when comparing the actual figures of the troops, a different picture emerges. In terms of conventional foot, the Parliamentarians numbered at most 1200 men, which may have been matched by as

[78] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10
[79] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.12
[80] Colonel Thomas Horton to Lord Fairfax: 8th May, 1648
[81] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.12
[82] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10
[83] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.12
[84] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10
[85] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.11
[86] Ibid, p.11
[87] Ibid, p.10
[88] Ibid, p.11

many as 3500-4500 Royalists. However, in terms of cavalry, the Parliamentary army vastly outweighed the Royalists, with 900 Heavy Cavalry and 600 Dragoons versus 500 Royalist Horse (the exact classes present are not recorded).[89] The remainder of the Royalist force appear to have been the 'clubmen', whose morale and training appear to have been inadequate if not non-existent; this is suggested by the deployment of the Royalist cavalry to the rear of the main infantry body in order to '*keep up their foot*'.[90] Indeed, the Parliamentary Cavalry advantage was only increased by the Royalists never deploying more than 60 men as a unit throughout the whole course of the battle.[91] There do not appear to have been any artillery deployed on either side.[92]

Armaments and Uniform

The conventional foot on both sides would have been armed and equipped in a similar fashion. The musketeers would have been equipped with matchlock, smoothbore muskets, while the rest of the (regular) foot would have been armed with pikes of indeterminate length; it is possible that they could have been anywhere from three to six metres in length. The 'clubmen' were armed with an assortment of weapons, such as Welsh Bills and clubs.[93] Infantry of this period, outside of the New Model Army, did not wear a uniform, and so a Parliamentary watchword of '*God is our strength*' was appointed in order to help distinguish friend from foe.[94] Additionally, the officers wore orange scarves.[95] By contrast, the Royalist soldiery had no distinguishing identifiable features, but the officers appear to have worn a blue badge of the crown and rose (playing on the initials of *Carolus Rex*) with the motto '*I long to see His Majestie*'.[96]

The Dragoons were probably equipped with snaphances, a shorter and lighter firearm than the infantry matchlock (which required a stand to lean the weapon on when firing), and are unlikely to have been issued with uniforms. However, there is a possibility that Colonel Okey may have been an officer of the New Model Army, in which case his Dragoons would have worn red musketeers' uniforms. The Parliamentary Heavy Cavalry may have been equipped in a similar fashion to the 'Ironsides' of Cromwell and so may have worn uniform leather buff jackets and standardised armour of a cuirass and back-plate and helmet.[97] Specifically, Horton and his Regiment were members of the New Model Army.[98] Royalist Cavalry were typically comprised of the local gentry and would have been armed with whatever the rider could afford or owned; as such, there would have been no standardisation.

[89] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[90] Ibid
[91] Ibid
[92] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.13
[93] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10
[94] Ibid, p.10
[95] Ibid, p.10
[96] W. David, 'The Battle of St Fagan's' in *Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society*, vol. 9, p.30
[97] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.10
[98] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.9

The presence (or lack of) artillery at this battle is problematic; on the one hand, a number of small cannonballs have been discovered by local farmers in the course of ploughing,[99] which undoubtedly suggests their presence, while, on the other hand, the documentary evidence makes no mention of any artillery of any kind. Webb offers a possible solution; he suggests that small artillery-pieces may have been attached to every regiment as a matter of course and were considered so commonplace as not to merit mention.[100] However, while attractive, this remains conjecture.

Casualties

Despite this being a set-piece battle (in some senses), the number of casualties on both sides appears to have been relatively minor. On the Parliamentary side, no officers were killed and a small number of soldiers killed;[101] however, the horses of the cavalry were not so lucky and suffered a much higher casualty rate.[102] Okey mentions that, while no Parliamentary officers were wounded, '*Capt. Nicholets and Col. Okey were both shot through theirs hats, but free from any other harm*'.[103] The exact number of Parliamentary dead is not recorded.

The primary sources do not specifically mention the exact number of Royalist dead, although a fair estimate appears to be approximately 200, not counting the wounded.[104] Okey records that a number of officers and Royalists of rank were killed, but gives no specific number, perhaps unsurprising when it is considered that he writes from the field of battle when such information may not have been collected.[105] It would seem that, when the list of those captured is consulted, a very high proportion of Royalist officers were captured or killed, which may tally with the narrative of the battle; in an attempt to halt the routing troops, the officers may have exposed themselves to more danger than they might otherwise.[106]

While the numbers of dead are relatively slim, the quantity of prisoners and equipment taken eclipses this. Horton states that '*we took up the day we fought about 2000 firearms, with pikes, welsh bills, and other weapons great store, ten barrels of powder, and all the rest of their ammunition in the field, and most if not all their colours. The number of prisoners that are taken are about 3000*'.[107] The officers that were captured numbered well in excess of 400.[108]

[99] W. David, 'The Battle of St Fagan's' in *Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society*, vol. 9, p.37
[100] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.13
[101] Colonel Thomas Horton to Lord Fairfax: 8th May, 1648
[102] Ibid
[103] Okey's Account: 8th May, 1648
[104] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.24
[105] Okey's Account: 8th May, 1648
[106] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.22
[107] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648
[108] Colonel Thomas Horton to Lord Fairfax: 8th May, 1648

5.12.4 Assessment

Battle Location

While the exact location of the battle is not certain, and is not mentioned explicitly by any of the primary sources, there are a number of landmarks which were key to the course and out-come of the battle which can be identified. However, the land has now been much altered by subsequent agriculture and associated landscaping activity; consequently many of these landmarks are no longer visible. For example, the Nant Dowlais is now culverted and flows underground, and the coherence of the landscape has been further disrupted by the construction of the GWR railway line in the mid 19th century and a modern dual carriageway (A4232).

It seems clear that both armies deployed on either side of a stream or river, which separated St Fagan's from St Brides and St Nicholas, as well as Peterston; it is with a degree of confidence that this stream is identified as the Nant Dowlais. It is possible that the existing bridge across the Nant Dowlais to the E of St Bride's occupies the same location as the bridge that was contested in the battle. Okey also mentions that the Parliamentarian forces initially deployed themselves on a small hill outside St Fagan's,[109] which Webb identifies as being a small rise locally known as Mount Pleasant.[110] Presumably, on the bank and slope on the opposite side of the river, nearer the bridge, the Royalist forces drew up.

There is another possible location for the battle further up the Nant Dowlais nearer Stockland Farm, which has been considered by some historians. However, it is unlikely that the numbers that comprised both the Royalist and Parliamentarian forces could have been deployed in this area, moreover the few topographical details mentioned in Horton's and Okey's accounts do not appear to correspond with this location.[111] An alternative site has been suggested further to the S along the banks of the Ely, but, while it is a better fit in terms of topography, it would seem that the River Ely was in flood during this period, making it impossible for any sizeable force to operate.[112]

The 1st edition of the 6 inch and the 25 inch Ordnance Survey maps give the site of the battle as being immediately to the SW of Tre-goch-gwaed (Tregoch), with the Nant Dowlais to the W, and the bridge that crosses it, leading to St Brides, lying to the WNW. This location is matched by the 2nd and 3rd edition 6 inch and 25 inch maps, the only detail changing being the altering of the name of Tre-goch-gwaed to Tregochas.

Horton's and Okey's accounts present no direct evidence for there being any heavy fighting around Tregoch, and the St Fagan's tithe apportionment does not contain any further place-name evidence associated with the battle in this location, but the proximity to the bridge to the NW suggests that it is not unreasonable to suppose that there could have been fighting in the immediate locality. Furthermore, the place name Tregoch-

[109] Colonel Okey's Account: 8th May, 1648
[110] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.1
[111] Ibid, p.1
[112] Ibid, p.1

gwaed, literally translated as 'blood red house' could well suggest a possible association with the events of the battle, although the source for this traditional attribution remains uncertain.[113]

Discussion of Primary Sources

It is unfortunate that there are no Royalist contemporary accounts of the battle. However, there are a total of four first-hand Parliamentary accounts of the battle, three by Colonel Horton, a New Model Army officer whose career appears to have begun at the very outset of the Civil War, when he fought as a Cornet in Sir Arthur Hesilrige's Regiment of fully-armoured Curiassers, nicknamed 'Lobsters', after which (at Naseby) he fought as a Major in Colonel Butler's Regiment of Horse before (in 1647) becoming Colonel of that Regiment,[114] and another by Colonel Okey, another senior Parliamentary officer, who appears also to have served as a Major under Sir Arthur Hensilrige before being appointed as a Colonel of a Dragoons Regiment (for which he should a specialisation in commanding) of the New Model Army.[115] Three of these sources (Okey's Account and two letters from Horton to Lord Fairfax and the Earl of Manchester) are ostensibly written on the same day as the victory.

The principal and most influential primary source, however, is a third account by Horton, written on May 13th (five days after the battle) to William Lenthall, the Speaker of the House of Commons. It gives a detailed chronological account of the battle although it omits certain key details.

Of similar importance is the Colonel Okey's Account, written to a friend in London on the day of the battle. Its main importance lies in providing a different but complimentary version of events to Horton's in his letter to Lenthall, but equally it also gives differing and at times contradictory information about the *minutiae* of the battle. The bias of the account should also be noted.

The two other accounts of Colonel Horton's, to the Earl of Manchester (the Speaker of the House of Lords) and to Lord Fairfax, provide briefer descriptions than that contained in the letter to Lenthall, or in Okey's account, but both have the benefit of being written on the same day as the victory, providing an immediate insight into the aftermath of the battle. These accounts, on account of their brevity, are not as crucial as the letter to Lenthall, but appear to corroborate the information provided in the later account.

The account of Edmund Ludlow, a senior Parliamentary officer (and regicide) with an extensive military record who eventually rose to the rank of Lieutenant-General of Horse and (overall) second-in-command of all forces in Ireland, and whose work was published posthumously (possibly in the early 18th century) and heavily based upon his autobiography entitled *A Voyce from the Watch Tower* written while in exile in the late 17th century, is interesting in that it offers an alternative, but still Parliamentary version of events, but it is lesser interest in that Ludlow, though a Parliamentary commander, was

[113] W. David, 'The Battle of St Fagan's' in *Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society*, vol. 9, p.36
[114] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.9
[115] P. Gaunt, *A Nation Under Siege: the Civil War in Wales, 1642-48*, p.69

not present at the battle and ultimately it is likely that he would have derived his information from Horton or Okey.

Discussion of Secondary Sources

The most informative and descriptive modern account of the battle is that of D. Webb, which offers an insightful commentary and extensive narrative interwoven with direct reference and quotation of the primary sources. Another recent account is contained in C. Davies's 1992 paper entitled 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's, which provides useful information on the battle, although its main focus is on the role played by Hugh Lloyd, the rector of the parish of St Nicholas and later the Bishop of Llandaff. Older antiquarian works, specifically the article by W. David in 1877 and by J. Mullin in 1899, provide some information not contained in the more modern scholarly works, in particular the suggestion that a tumulus located to the NE of St-y-Nyll (a short distance to the W of the presumed battlefield) might possibly be associated with the events of the battle.[116]

Archaeology and Historic Terrain Assessment

The discussion of the location of the battlefield, and a wider consultation of the primary and secondary sources, highlights some interesting possibilities for historical and archaeologically significant terrain. Tregoch in particular merits further attention in order to ascertain whether it is likely that this was the scene of some intense fighting, or whether the house-name is merely a compelling, but inaccurate, reflection of a local tradition relating to the battle.

From the primary sources, it would appear that some of the most heavy and prolonged fighting occurred in the Parliamentary cavalry counterattack starting from a position near Mount Pleasant (possibly where the majority of the Parliamentary army was drawn up) and culminating at the bridge over the Nant Dowlais, to the NW of Tregoch; this area could be investigated in order to ascertain the likelihood of any battlefield artefacts. However, it is unlikely that this will produce much as the fighting was mostly fluid and mobile, although there may have been fiercer combat (possibly between the infantry) at the bridge itself, and there has been little in the way of artefacts recovered so far.[117]

As the army appears to have dispersed in a state of utter rout, it would seem that the pursuit would have been spread over a very large area; indeed, Horton himself suggests that the cavalry ranged over 8 miles.[118] However, due to the extraordinarily large number of prisoners taken, it may be that many were caught by the enveloping cavalry close to the point at which they broke and fled. Therefore, the area around the Royalist-held part of the bridge should be examined in order to identify whether any equipment discarded by the soldiers in their flight awaits discovery. However, the battle site is located near to several villages (St Bride's, St Fagan's, St Nicholas, to name a few) so it is likely that

[116] Ibid, p.36-7
[117] D. Webb, *Battle of St Fagan's*, p.1
[118] Colonel Thomas Horton to William Lenthall: 13th May, 1648

many of the dead and much of the battlefield might have been looted by the local famers and villagers, if not by the Parliamentarians themselves.

In addition to a number of possible locations where the principal events of the engagement took place, there are a number of additional sites that have been traditionally associated with the battle. Colonel Horton records that he took the precaution of gathering in all his horses in preparation for the coming battle,[119] which was located, according to local tradition, in a field to the rear of the present rectory house in St Fagan's, marked on the 1839 tithe apportionment as *Cae Meirch*, or the 'Field of the Horse/War-horses'.[120]

Additionally, there is mention of a tumulus investigated by the local antiquarian W. David in 1872 to the NE of St-y-Nyll where evidence of human remains was identified, which was suggested as possibly representing the burial of certain individuals killed during the battle.[121] It is unclear whether the tumulus investigated by David is identifiable with the barrow mound investigated by Savory in 1958 (at NGR ST 1008 7829) where cremated human remains and evidence of several huts were identified, associated with an occupation layer containing animal bones, flints and pottery.[122]

In the general area of the potential battlefield site, the predominant soil type consists of typical brown earths of the WICK 1 series (541r) consisting of deep well-drained, coarse, loamy and sandy soils locally over gravel, with some similar soils affected by groundwater and the slight risk of water-erosion. The underlying solid geology comprises glaciofluvial or river terrace drift.[123] In terms of acidity/alkalinity such soils are neutral to basic (pH 5.5-7). If well-drained, as above, then preservation of bone and charcoal could be anticipated; wood will only survive in waterlogged conditions (together with a range of environmental indicators, such as fruits/seeds, molluscs and pollen/spores), while charcoal and other charred plant macrofossils may be present in intermittently wet conditions. Inorganic material is likely to survive.

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

The significance of this battle has somewhat been overlooked by many historians, as it effectively signalled the end of any realistic Royalist attempts to reinstate the full authority of Charles I. Had there been a Royalist victory, Laugharne's army would have had a clear march to Cardiff, where the small Parliamentary garrison would have had little choice to surrender, delivering a bitter blow to Parliamentary intentions in Wales. However, it should be noted that, by this stage, Charles I was already imprisoned on the Isle of Wight, but, at the very least,[124] it would have increased the King's bargaining power.

[119] Ibid
[120] W. David, 'The Battle of St Fagan's' in *Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society*, vol. 9, p.31
[121] Ibid, p.36-7
[122] RCAHMW, *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan, volume 1*, p.101
[123] Silsoe, *Soil Survey of England and Wales*
[124] C. Davies, 'They looked at Llandaff: Bishop Hugh Lloyd and the Battle of St Fagan's', *Llandaff Society Occasional Paper 7*, p.9

The defeat at St Fagan's effectively destroyed the last remaining field-army available to the Royalists in Wales, as well as depriving them of experienced commanders like Powell and Poyer, as well as Laugharne himself, who had previously won the (Parliamentary) victory of Colby Moor. The remaining leaders fled to Royalist strongholds like Chepstow and Pembroke, which the Parliamentary forces took with varying degrees of difficulty.[125] There was, however, no longer any field-army to stop them.

With Wales fully subdued, after the fall of the aforementioned strongholds, the main Parliamentary army under Cromwell (who took Pembroke himself) was able to march to meet and subsequently defeat a Royalist Scottish army at Preston, which spelt the definite end to Charles I's reign.

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OS 3rd edition 6 inch map (Glamorganshire 42.11) - 1922

5.13 Fishguard/Carregwastad Point (February 1797)

5.13.1 Site of Battle

There was no battle in or around Fishguard in February 1797 but rather a failed expedition that lasted a mere two days. Therefore, there is no specific battle site but a number of locations of importance can be confidently identified, such as the landing point at Carregwastad Point (NGR SM 9264 4060) and the temporary headquarters of the force at Trehowel (NGR SM 9170 3986).

It would appear that the French troops were positioned on raised ground to the S of these places, perhaps as far S as Carn Gelli, from where the French force looted much of the countryside in search of food and material wealth and where some of these plunderers were engaged by local people.

The exact locations of these are difficult to ascertain; however, a Frenchman, part of a band encountered by a group of sailors from Solva, is reputed to have been buried in a field called Parc-y-Ffranciw (NGR SM 929 380).

5.13.2 Summary

Historical Context

The battle of Fishguard represents the last military invasion of the British Isles by a foreign power, taking place four years after the outbreak of hostilities between Great Britain and Republican France in 1793. However, the battle should also be viewed in the broader context of French Republican (and subsequent Napoleonic) policy aimed at damaging Britain's economic interests and therefore her ability to continue the war by disrupting trade with the colonies and spreading dissent within the nation.

In December 1795, the British funded and equipped a French *émigré* invasion of Brittany, a part of France that was relatively sympathetic to the Royalist cause, which was defeated at Quiberon by the Republican General Lazare Hoche.[1] Although it was short-lived and ultimately unsuccessful, the invasion had a massive impact on the newly founded Republic, leading to massive reprisals not only against French Royalists but also initiatives against the British, whose backing was made apparent by the capture of British equipment, particularly uniforms.[2]

As a result of this expedition, the French, on the initiative of Hoche,[3] decided to invade Ireland in December 1796, both to attack the British possessions there and to incite and support an insurrection. The reasons for this were both military and political. On the one hand, the aim was to weaken a politically and culturally disaffected part of Britain, potentially separating it from British control and, in turn, creating an ally whose very existence would be based upon defying British rule, with, at the very least, the subsidiary aim of diverting the attention of the British forces from French territories. On the other

[1] R. Quinalt, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: A Bicentennial Assessment*, p.619-20
[2] Ibid, p.620
[3] Pamela Horn, *History of the French Invasion of Fishguard, 1797*, p.2

hand, the aim was very political and can be viewed as an attempt to seek revenge on the British for their part in the Royalist uprising.[4]

The invasion of Wales was intended as an important sideshow to the Irish invasion and expected uprising, in that its purpose was to distract the British forces from landing in Ireland before the rebellion could either be stopped or reversed. The expeditionary force, *La Legion Noire* (lit. 'the Black Legion'), so named on account of their dark uniforms, which were dyed British red jackets taken at Quiberon,[5] was assembled as part of the preparations for the invasion of Ireland during the summer of 1796.[6] However, the force was not ready when the expeditionary force sailed to Ireland and so was dispatched as an isolated expedition with new and separate aims, as are clearly set out in orders written by Hoche to the commander of the expedition, an ageing American colonel named William Tate.[7]

5.13.3 Narrative of Expedition

Prelude to the Expedition

The battle, as such, was not a set-piece battle but rather the curtailing of an intended campaign of pillage and destruction throughout Wales culminating in the blackmailing of Bristol and Liverpool into handing over large sums of money in return for their not being sacked, or, should they decline, to sack them; indeed, Colonel Tate, the American officer chosen to command the French forces, was ordered to avoid engagements with regular troops in order to preserve his own army and instead to ambush detachments and to attack and destroy any outposts.[8]

However, it could be contested that it was never the principal intention of the French to invade Wales; in General Lazare Hoche's instructions to Colonel Tate, it is expressed that, while the primary landing should be made in Cardigan Bay, should Tate find the mouth to the Severn inadequately defended and the conditions right, he was to assault Bristol.[9] Furthermore, the written orders do not indicate that this is of secondary importance; indeed, Tate was ordered to do all he could to ascertain whether such a *coup de main* was possible.[10] Once Bristol had been sacked, Tate was ordered to re-embark and to continue with the landing in Cardigan Bay, leaving Cardiff on his right. Indeed, nowhere in his orders was it stated that Wales itself was to be attacked initially, the primary targets being Liverpool and Chester.[11]

[4] R. Quinalt, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: A Bicentennial Assessment*, p.621
[5] Lazare Hoche to the Directory, 11th December, 1796, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.135
[6] D. Salmon, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, (Carmarthen 1929), p.134
[7] Lazare Hoche to Colonel Tate, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.136-9
[8] Lazare Hoche to Colonel Tate, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.139
[9] Ibid, p.136
[10] Ibid, p.136
[11] Ibid, p.136

While Wales does not appear to have been the intended target, it is clear that Wales and the Welsh were always going to be directly affected by the expedition, the orders themselves reflecting this. Upon debarkation, Tate was ordered to seize pack-horses for the ammunition and baggage,[12] to attempt to inspire an insurrection against the ruling classes[13] and, while destroying infrastructure, such as dykes, dams, canals and bridges in order to disrupt trade, to live off the land in the manner of French armies throughout this period.[14] Tate was also ordered to execute any dissenters or opposition to his expedition.[15]

As a counterpoint to this and to facilitate rebellion, Tate was ordered to spread Republican propaganda and, perhaps more significantly, if not cynically, to hand out money and alcohol in order to incite them either to swell their ranks or to attack the property of the landowners.[16] It should not be forgotten that the primary purpose of this raid was to spread panic and terror throughout Great Britain and that Tate's orders were designed to achieve this.

To augment the meagre troops at his disposal, as well as to further undermine Britain's war effort, Tate was to enlist the local workers and any disaffected locals into military units, which were to be kept separate from the main body of *La Legion Noire*[17] (lit. 'The Black Legion'), the name adopted for Tate's troops on account of the dark overcoats they were issued with from the spoils of the failed 1796 Royalist uprising at Quiberon; additionally, he was ordered to do the same with any deserters or Frenchmen that he might encounter in England.[18] These Frenchman were presumed to be those who had fled the Revolution and who might serve in the *émigré* regiments.

This expedition does not appear to have been planned in isolation. Originally, *La Legion Noire* was intended as a diversionary force for a much larger invasion staged in December 1796 in Ireland, but this was not ready in time;[19] its primary objective was to prevent reinforcements being dispatched from Britain to Ireland, where, encouraged by Irishmen such as Wolfe Tone, it was hoped that a rebellion on a massive scale would result in the overthrow of British rule.

It has baffled many historians that Tate's force was dispatched after the proposed invasion of Ireland had failed; its *raison d'être* had failed and the force was small and composed of disparate troops under a new and inexperienced leader. However, its intended success lay in its daring and in its objectives. By landing in Wales, which was relatively undefended (all regular and most of the militia forces were amassed on the S coast, where an invasion seemed more likely), the way lay open to assault and ransom or sack Liverpool, Bristol and Chester; Tate was ordered to re-embark as soon as possible,

[12] Ibid, p.137
[13] Ibid, p.137
[14] Ibid, p.138
[15] Ibid, p.139
[16] Ibid, p.136
[17] Ibid, P.138
[18] Ibid, p.139
[19] R. Quinalt, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: A Bicentennial Assessment*, p.621

and his orders make it clear that he was not, under any circumstances, to engage any regular troops and to avoid all major engagements where possible; the French force was not designed to fight pitch battles.

The Expedition and its Aftermath

The French Landing

The military expedition was to be transported to Cardigan Bay via the mouth of the Severn by a small naval squadron under the command of Commodore Castagnier, whose log has been preserved, providing detailed evidence of their journey. Having set sail from Brest at 7am on February 19th 1797, the squadron reached the Bristol Channel on February 21st and, having reconnoitred it in the evening and found it to be inaccessible through adverse weather conditions, proceeded to the landing point, weighing anchor in Cardigan Bay at 4pm on February 22nd.[20] The landing started that afternoon and had been fully accomplished by 2am the following day.[21] This timeline is confirmed by a number of British sources, such as a memorandum of the Milford Estate[22] and the Register of Roch Church.[23]

It would appear that the Castagnier sent a lugger, *Le Vatour*, into the bay in order to judge the defences, which rapidly about-turned after a warning shot was fired from Fishguard Fort, giving the impression that a landing would be strongly contested; ironically, the Fort only had three rounds of ammunition.[24] This appears to be why the French force landed at the rocky headland of Carregwastad; this location, however, did have a number of advantages for an invading force, such as a relatively deep water anchorage, meaning that the ships could approach the shore, and its remote location, meaning it was unlikely to be defended.

However, a letter written by Lord Cawdor, the commander of the British forces, to the Duke of Portland, the Home Secretary, mentions that: 'it was obvious that the Fishguard Battery was as useless for land operations as it had been to impede the disembarkation',[25] which could imply that no such warning shot was fired; indeed, a letter written by Gwynn Vaughan, the Governor of Fishguard Fort, to the Duke of Portland, the Home Secretary, laments the poor state of his magazine and alludes to the destruction that would have been wrought by the French had they sailed into the Bay and opened fire, but omits any reference to cannon-fire. However, Pamela Horn mentions the testimony of the innkeeper Peter Davies, one of the volunteer artillerymen stationed in Fishguard Fort at the time, which states that a French Lugger entered the bay and the battery opened fire with blanks

[20] Commodore Castagnier's Log in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.140
[21] Ibid, p.140
[22] Undated memorandum of the Milford estate office, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.147
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[25] Cawdor to the Duke of Portland, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p164

in a bid to scare them off: '*We did fight famous...and the French did run away, and we fired after them*'.[26]

The British Response

The British reaction to the French invasion appears to have been fast and relatively decisive, hampered only by the limited forces able to respond to the muster. The French naval squadron under Castagnier was spotted early, near Lundy Island, on the morning of February 21st by the *St. Ives*, of St. Ives, which put into Swansea;[27] in spite of this, it would appear that the British authorities in Wales did not comprehend correctly the nature of the threat. It appears that the SW coast of England was deemed the more likely landing point, when the French squadron was spotted off Ilfracombe on February 22nd, which led to the assembling of the North Devon Volunteers.[28]

Initially, there does appear to have been a dispute over who would lead the British forces. As Lord Lieutenant of Pembrokeshire, the responsibility fell to Lord Milford to summon and lead the militia and regular forces at his disposal (although it should be noted that there were no regular troops stationed in the county at that time and that the Pembrokeshire Militia had been moved to Felixstowe to counter any possible invasion in what seemed a much more likely spot[29]) but he suffered regularly from gout and so appointed Lord Cawdor of the Stackpole Estate in his stead upon his suggestion.[30]

However, Cawdor was outranked by Lieutenant-Colonel Knox and Lieutenant-Colonel Colby, both of whom believed they were entitled to command in Milford's absence. Indeed, the precise military rank of Cawdor is unclear: he commanded the Pembrokeshire (Castlemartin) Yeomanry[31] but his main criteria for assuming command appear to have been that he was a major landholder and the first to ask Milford.[32] Lieutenant-Colonel Colby, who commanded the Pembrokeshire Militia, was the most senior and, upon hearing word of the invasion, proceeded to Fishguard from Haverfordwest, where he was based, having already begun to muster those of the Pembrokeshire Militia who were in the county and sending summonses to the neighbouring military units, such as the Cardiganshire Militia.[33] Once in Fishguard, he met up with Lieutenant-Colonel Knox, who commanded the Fishguard Fencibles, and advised him to send out scouts in civilian clothes to reconnoitre the enemy and also to position some of his troops on high ground in the hope of dissuading the French from marching inland.[34] From here, he appears to

[26] Pamela Horn, *History of the French Invasion of Fishguard, 1797*, p.5
[27] Samuel Hancorne, Collector of the Port of Swansea, to the Duke of Portland, February 22nd, 1797, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p142-3
[28] Lieutenant-Colonel Orchard to the Duke of Portland, February 23rd, 1797, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p143
[29] R. Quinalt, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: A Bicentennial Assessment*, p.623
[30] J. E. Thomas, *Britain's Last Invasion: Fishguard, 1797*, (Stroud 2007), p.80
[31] R. Quinalt, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: A Bicentennial Assessment*, p.623
[32] Pamela Horn, *History of the French Invasion of Fishguard, 1797,* p.8
[33] J. E. Thomas, *Britain's Last Invasion: Fishguard, 1797*, (Stroud 2007), p.79
[34] Ibid, p.79

have returned to Haverfordwest to collect his forces, which had gathered in Castle Square.[35]

Writing in *Some account of the proceedings that took place on the landing of the French near Fishguard* in 1800,[36] Knox gives his version of events in an attempt to exculpate himself for his conduct, which was roundly condemned in the weeks following the conclusion of the expedition. In this 'Account', Knox states that, upon being informed of the supposed French invasion, which was described to him as being 'under Trehowel', near sunset, while at a ball at Tregwynt (about five miles SW of Fishguard), he proceeded to Trehowel from where he could see the French ships but no evidence of a landing.[37]

Proceeding to Fishguard Fort, he intercepted a group of 60 to 70 men from the Fishguard Volunteers, accompanied by a number of civilians, who, by Knox's own admission, were *en route* to prevent the French from landing;[38] it should be noted that Lord Cawdor believed that just such an attempt would have been successful, on account of the harshness of the terrain and choice of landing point.[39] Once at the fort, having assumed control of the Fishguard Volunteers and marched them off with him (much to their resentment), Knox set about sending requests for reinforcements to the neighbouring districts and, at midnight, Lieutenant-Colonel Colby arrived, giving him the instructions above. The following morning, Knox received intelligence from a French prisoner that the force numbered between 1200 and 1400 men; he then decided to retreat towards Haverfordwest in an attempt to link up with reinforcements heading from Pembroke and so ordered the fort's powder destroyed and guns spiked, as was attested in a letter of complaint by a Mr Hassel, which formed part of the case for the Inquiry into Knox's conduct.[40] During the course of this march, Knox met up with Cawdor, who assumed overall command, and turned his force back towards Fishguard.

In a letter from Cawdor to the Duke of Portland, he describes his actions in response to reports of the French invasion. He writes that, at 11pm on February 22nd, while he was at Haverfordwest, he was alerted to the landing of a French force and immediately began mustering the troops at his disposal, during the course of which the news was confirmed in a circular letter issued by the Lord Lieutenant of Pembrokeshire, Lord Milford.[41] Having then set about cementing command, with Lord Milford's assent, he made a reconnaissance of the enemy positions and to 'animate the county' and then proceeded towards Fishguard (presumably on the road detailed on the contemporary map by T. Propert). By chance, Cawdor intercepted Lieutenant-Colonel Knox with his 'Fencibles',

[35] Ibid, p.79
[36] Partially reprinted in D. Salmon, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, (Carmarthen 1929), p.175-177
[37] Ibid, p.175
[38] Ibid, p.175
[39] Cawdor to the Duke of Portland, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.164
[40] D. Salmon, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, (Carmarthen 1929), p.177
[41] Cawdor to the Duke of Portland, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.164

who were marching towards Haverfordwest, and promptly impressed them into his service on the authority of the Lord-Lieutenant.[42]

It would appear that Knox, while happy to retreat, was not as content to relinquish his command;[43] upon meeting Cawdor, Knox seems to have attempted to take overall command for himself, on account of his seniority, prompting Cawdor to reply that he had no time 'to enter into Etiquette of Military Rank and only required from him [Knox] an answer [whether] it was his intention to give me his assistance and put the corps he commanded under my Orders', to which Knox agreed. [44] By contrast, Colby appears to have readily accepted Cawdor as a leader, as Cawdor writes: 'Lieut. Colby readily acquiesced and, during the whole affair, gave me his utmost assistance'.[45]

Upon reaching Fishguard on February 23rd, and having set up headquarters in a house which was to become the Royal Oak Inn, Cawdor began preparations to engage the enemy: 'it was not impossible to dislodge them [the French] from their position but it was easy to hem them in and cut off supply. It required every union of regular and irregular forces to oppose the desperate effort to be expected from an Enemy in such a position'.[46] This implies that Cawdor realised that his men were both outnumbered and probably outclassed by the French force of seemingly regular troops and so probably intended to wait for reinforcements and attempt to repel the French should they attack him.

At some point on February 23rd, Colonel Tate sent a messenger to Cawdor asking to surrender, to which Cawdor agreed; however, Cawdor accomplished a small *ruse de guerre* as, in his reply, he not only accepts Tate's surrender but highlights that his force outnumbers the French and is constantly being reinforced, and even goes so far as to state terms: 'The Superiority of the Force under my command, which is hourly increasing, must prevent my treating upon any Terms short of your surrendering your whole Force Prisoners of War'.[47] Tate's response has not survived but was affirmative and on February 24th, with the British forces watching-on from the heights near Fishguard, the French troops marched down to Goodwick Sands with pomp and ceremony and laid down their arms. From there, they were issued with bread and provisions and marched off into captivity.

The Activities of the French and their subsequent Surrender

The reasons for Tate's decision to surrender without shots being fired in anger (from a military point of view, this was bloodless; however, there do appear to have been several engagements with civilians) are as varied as they are uncertain. Perhaps the most important factor in Tate's capitulation was the poor morale of the troops; in fact, so low

[42] Ibid, p.164
[43] Pamela Horn, *History of the French Invasion of Fishguard, 1797*, (Fishguard 1980), p.9
[44] Manuscript account of the French landing by Lord Cawdor at Carmarthen Record Office: 223/8
[45] Cawdor to the Duke of Portland, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.164
[46] Ibid, p.164
[47] Cawdor to Tate, 23rd February, 1797, printed in *Britain's Last Invasion: Fishguard, 1797*, by J. E. Thomas, (Stroud 2007) p.87

was this that the French soldiers appear to have been mutinous.[48] *La Legion Noire* consisted of men drawn from the galleys and prisons, comprising many former *émigré* soldiers and Irishmen. In addition, their officers appear to have been either very young or very old (such as the 20-year-old Lieutenant St Leger and the 60-year-old Colonel Tate, respectively), with neither age group having a particularly successful military career.[49] Furthermore, there does not appear to have much time to forge them into a cohesive unit with a clear sense of purpose and identity.

The French soldiers' spirit appears to have manifested itself in their enthusiasm for pillaging and marauding throughout the countryside, as was common practice for the French Army; however, they appear to have done so on an *ad hoc* basis rather than as organized units of foragers, possibly as a result of alcohol. However, it should be noted that the French forces were issued with minimal supplies, consisting of biscuits, cheese and brandy to last four days, so it was always the intention that foraging on this scale should be carried out.[50]

There are numerous instances of French forces looting the surrounding Welsh countryside. These included attempted raids on Manorowen, the home of the rector of Llangan and a farmhouse at Trellewelyn, as well as skirmishes with the local inhabitants at Carnwnda and a number of incidents of rape, including that of Mary Williams of Caerlem.[51] However, it should be noted that the French, ostensibly at least, had been ordered to requisition packhorses and supplies, although the majority of the former had been removed by the fleeing Welsh.[52]

While it might be unsurprising that the main body of French troops was mutinous, it is perhaps more remarkable that the Grenadiers, attached to this force from the regular French Army, appear to have been affected. Lieutenant Barry St Leger went ashore with a group of 25 Grenadiers to seize Trehowel for Tate's headquarters; he claims that he ordered the Grenadiers not to plunder the house, which they refused, and that he would shoot the first man who did so, to which the Grenadiers replied that they would shoot him if he tried.[53]

This breakdown in discipline might have been exacerbated by the discovery of large quantities of alcohol in the surrounding area. Trehowel had been stockpiled with food and drink in preparation for the forthcoming wedding of John Mortimer, the owner.[54] Additionally, smuggling was acknowledged as being endemic in Pembrokeshire at this time, a Portuguese vessel carrying a large shipment of wine, for example, having been wrecked off the coast and plundered by local cottagers.[55] Such activities resulted in a large amount of strong alcohol being present throughout the locality.

[48] J. E. Thomas, *Britain's Last Invasion: Fishguard, 1797*, (Stroud 2007), p.85
[49] Pamela Horn, *History of the French Invasion of Fishguard, 1797*, (Fishguard 1980), p.2
[50] PRO, PC.1/37, A.114: Examination of Robert Morrison, 5th March, 1797
[51] J. E. Thomas, *Britain's Last Invasion: Fishguard, 1797*, (Stroud 2007), p.80-4
[52] Ibid, p.80
[53] PRO, PC.1/37, A.114: Examination of Barry St Leger, 5th March, 1797
[54] HO 42/40: H. Mathias to Lord Milford, 24th April, 1797
[55] Pamela Horn, *History of the French Invasion of Fishguard, 1797*, (Fishguard 1980), p.7

As stated, at about 4pm on February 24th 1797, the majority of the French forces, excluding the officers, were issued with bread and cheese and marched from Goodwick Sands to Haverfordwest under military escort, where they were imprisoned at various locations, including the local gaol and three churches;[56] those either too sick or too drunk to march were put in carts two days later and joined them in captivity.[57] The majority of the officers were placed on parole in Carmarthen.

The more important of the enemy officers (i.e. Tate, 'Le Brun' and the Irish contingent) were also escorted to Carmarthen but on March 2nd were taken to London under the escort of Lord Cawdor.[58] Upon their arrival, the Irish officers were interrogated before a Privy Council, as they were considered for charges of High Treason, these being substantiated but dropped as a the result of political expediency[59] and they were then held in Portchester Castle, having spent a brief spell aboard the *Royal Oak* prison ship in Portsmouth.[60] The rank and file of the French expedition was also moved to Portsmouth as part of official policy (such as prisoner-exchange), as outlined in a letter from the Home Secretary [the Duke of Portland] to Lord Milford,[61] and to alleviate the burden upon the local authorities in Carmarthen and Pembrokeshire.

Troops and Casualties

According to an undated memorandum of the Milford Estate, contained in the National Library of Wales and presumed to have been drawn up in August 1797, the forces under Lord Cawdor numbered 100 men of the Cardigan Militia, 100 cavalrymen of the Pembrokeshire Fencibles, 190 men of Knox's Fencibles, 50 men of the Castlemartin Yeomanry (under the direct command of Cawdor himself) and 150 seamen, who brought with them two cannons from the *Speedwell*, a cutter under the command of Captain Hopkins;[62] in addition to this, an unspecified number of civilians attached themselves to this force, which included a group of 400 women equipped with red shawls, which, from a distance, gave the impression that they were regular British infantry.[63] However, this does not appear to have been a *ruse de guerre* on the part of Lord Cawdor but rather a fortunate happenstance, as stated by Cawdor's son in his letter to *The Times* on December 27th, 1859.[64]

British sources do not agree on the numbers that made up *La Legion Noire*; however, a letter written by General Lazare Hoche indicates that the force comprised 600 men drawn from the prisons in his (Hoche's) district and another 600 taken from the pick of the

[56] Ibid, p.11-12
[57] Ibid, p.12
[58] Ibid, p.12
[59] PRO, PC.1/37, A.114: Letter from the Attorney & Solicitor General to the Home Secretary
[60] Pamela Horn, *History of the French Invasion of Fishguard, 1797*, (Fishguard 1980), p.13
[61] PRO, HO. 42/40: Duke of Portland to Lord Milford, 28th February, 1797
[62] Undated memorandum from the Milford estate office, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.146
[63] John Mends to his son, Feb. 27th 1797, printed in *French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon, (Carmarthen 1929), p. 156
[64] Draft letter from Lord Cawdor to the editor of *The Times*, 27th December, 1859, at Carmarthen Record Office, Cawdor: 223/3

galley crews.[65] However, Hoche's instructions to Colonel Tate indicate that the force allocated to him numbered only 1050,[66] although Quinalt asserts that it contained two companies of regular French Grenadiers.[67]

At least one of the men, an officer whose *nom de guerre* was 'Le Brun', but whose real name was Le Baron de Rochemule, had fought with the *émigré* army that had been defeated at Quiberon, while a number of the officers and men were Irish; furthermore, the number of prisoners is said to have been in excess of 1300.[68] To counter this, John Mends, a local writing to his son in the days after the surrender of the French, states that the prisoners numbered 1800, while a further 200 men had escaped.[69] The strategy drawn up by Carnot for official review by the Directory lists the number of men in the proposed army as 2000.[70] All sources agree that the French, while adequately supplied with muskets and gunpowder, did not have any artillery or, seemingly, cavalry.

The French force was transported in a squadron of four ships under the command of Commodore Castagnier, these being the frigates *La Vengeance* (Castagnier's own ship) and the 48-gun *La Résistance* (one of the largest and newest French frigates),[71] commanded by Monsieur Montagne, the 24-gun corvette *La Constance*, commanded by Monsieur Desauney and the lugger *Le Vautour*.[72] *La Résistance* and *La Constance* were captured on March 7th, 1797 by Captain Sir Harry Neale of HMS *St Fiorenzo* and by Captain Cooke on HMS *La Nymphe* - both frigates - not far from Point St Matthew, near Brest.[73]

Crucially, there was no battle involved in this expedition; the morale of the troops had plummeted to such a depth that Tate was obliged to surrender before any engagement could commence. For that matter, it does not appear that either side drew up battle-lines – Tate surrendered to the British forces under Lord Cawdor's command while they were in Fishguard, although, depending on interpretation, this may have been on the eve of battle, or at least manoeuvres designed to encircle the French forces.[74]

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[65] Lazare Hoche to the Directory, Dec. 11th 1796, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.136

[66] Lazare Hoche to Colonel Tate, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.139

[67] R. Quinalt, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: A Bicentennial Assessment*, p.622

[68] Undated memorandum from the Milford estate office, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.145

[69] John Mends to his son, Feb. 27th 1797, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.156

[70] Carnot's Plan, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early letters*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.134

[71] R. Quinalt, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: A Bicentennial Assessment*, p.622

[72] General Hoche's Instructions to Colonel Tate, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.139

[73] Sir Harry Neale to Admiral Lord Bridport, 10th March 1797, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.141

[74] Cawdor to the Duke of Portland, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p164

As a result, the 'Battle' resulted in no loss of life on either side. However, the French engaged in raids and general pillaging of the local countryside, which, while generally unopposed, resulted in both French and Welsh casualties. During the initial landing at Carregwastad Point, one of the French boats capsized, resulting in the loss of eight soldiers and a number of arms.[75] Pamela Horn also claims that two Welshmen who attempted to stop the looting were killed, while a woman was attacked and had her leg shattered by a musket-ball, for which she received an annual pension of £40.[76] In addition, a group of sailors from Solva, led by a Liverpool engineer, Henry Whitesides, marched towards Fishguard and the rampaging Frenchmen, supposedly attracting followers numbering hundreds; near Carn Gelli, they encountered a group of five French soldiers and shots were exchanged, resulting in the death of one of them and the wounding of another two.[77] The Frenchman was rumoured to have been buried in a field called 'Parc-y-Ffrancwr' ('French Field'), which appears on the latest Ordnance Survey map at approximately NGR SM 929 380. There was another encounter near Carnwnda, where two Welshmen attacked a group of Frenchman, killing one of them; both the locals were killed.[78]

5.13.4 Assessment

Battle Location

While there was no military encounter between the two opposing forces, several of the key landmarks of the short-lived expedition can be identified, courtesy of several contemporary (or near-contemporary) maps commemorating the victory, as well as a number of letters chronicling the movements of the French and British forces, chiefly from the principal British commander, Lord Cawdor.

The first steps of the expedition are unclear but they appear to be recorded on a near-contemporary map dedicated to Lord Cawdor drawn up by Thomas Propert, a local surveyor from St David's.[79] The map details the various troop movements and phases of the short-lived campaign leading up to the surrender of the French. On the map, Castagnier's squadron sails immediately to Carregwastad rather than investigating the Bay beneath Fishguard Fort. Once there, the French encamped on the cliff-top but Trehowel is noted as being 'The French General's Head Quarters'; additionally, 'The advanced Guard of the Enemy consisting of about 800 Men' is noted as being positioned along a ridge running NE from Carn Gelly (Carn Gelli) and, to the SE of which, placed along a road leading from Cwrgy towards Carn Gelly, was deployed 'The Piquet Guard of the Enemy lying in Ambush for the British Troops'.

There are several other campaign maps that describe the movements of the respective sides, which, in broad terms, agree with the picture given in the Propert map. However, there does appear to be a discrepancy in the positioning of the French Piquet and camp.

[75] Pamela Horn, *History of the French Invasion of Fishguard, 1797*, (Fishguard 1980), p.5
[76] Ibid, p.7
[77] J. E. Thomas, *Britain's Last Invasion: Fishguard, 1797*, (Stroud 2007), p.81-2
[78] Ibid, p.83
[79] Thomas Propert to Lord Cawdor, *A Plan of the County of Pembroke and that part called Pen-Caer*

The Laurie & Whittle map of March 20th, 1797 details that the French encamped around Llanwnda Church, while their advanced position was positioned behind 'Pencarne Rock' immediately to the S.[80] Furthermore, Cawdor, in an official dispatch to the Duke of Portland, writes that 'the position taken up by the Enemy was upon the heights of Pencaern, about 2 miles to the W of Fishguard'.[81]

Another map, the *Map of the French Landing at Fishguard, 1797*, agrees with the Propert map in placing the initial French encampment on the cliffs overlooking Carregwastad, with Trehowel being Tate's headquarters, but, as with the Laurie & Whittle map, puts the French forward position on Pencarne Rock, with Llanunda Village (and Church) being unoccupied.[82] Neither the Laurie & Whittle map nor the *Map of the French Invasion at Fishguard, 1797* make any mention of a potential French ambush.

The Propert map also details the advance of the British forces. On Thursday evening, the British forces mustered and drew up on the Turnpike Road, which runs SW from Fishguard, and proceeded along a road towards the French encampment, the course of which, while lying to the S of Fishguard, runs W, passing through Maes-gwin, Llanfartin and Manorowen Mill to Cwrgy, from where it branches off and runs directly towards *Carn Gelly*; it was along this road that the French ambush party was lying in wait. The map gives the impression that, approaching the ambush point, the British forces decided (and not before time) to retreat on account of the 'Darkness of the Night' and so returned to their starting point.

The French ambush might be a fabrication of the map's author, perhaps intended to heighten the sense of drama. There is no mention of any such ambush in any of Cawdor's dispatches or in any of the correspondence of those writing at the time; nor does Lieutenant-Colonel Knox (who would have been present in this force and who, later, went to such lengths to clear his name over his conduct in this affair) make any reference to an ambush. However, it is possible that a strong Piquet might have been positioned in front of the advance positions of the French army in order to surprise any British soldiers marching towards them, but there is simply no mention of this.

Discussion of Primary Sources

The primary sources for this campaign can be divided into documentary records, comprising official reports and personal correspondence written by the key figures from both sides (the majority from the English side) and cartographic records, consisting chiefly of campaign maps drawn up to chronicle or commemorate the victory. The majority of the documentary materials relating to the course of the 1797 campaign are preserved in the Home Office records in the National Archives (chiefly in Class HO 42), which recorded both the correspondence sent to the Home Secretary (and the Admiralty), as well as those documents that fell into British hands upon the surrender of the French. Other important contemporary documents relating to the campaign are contained in the muniments of the Cawdor and Milford estates.

[80] Laurie & Whittle, *A Plan of Fishguard Bay*, 20th March, 1797
[81] Cawdor to the Duke of Portland, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p164
[82] National Library of Wales: Map of the French Invasion at Fishguard, 1797

From the British perspective, there is a plethora of official letters and correspondence that has survived in an unaltered state courtesy of this episode having occurred in the late 18th century, which letters chronicle some of the more specific details of the expedition, such as Castagnier's squadron being sighted off the Cornish coast[83] and its subsequent capture later in the year.[84]

Perhaps the most enlightening letter for discerning the manoeuvres and plans of the scratch British force is that from Lord Cawdor to the Home Secretary, the Duke of Portland, written on March 5th, 1797. Written nine days after the surrender was formally made on Goodwick Sands by the commander of the British troops, it is an official dispatch, which provides an insight on Cawdor's motivations and movements prior to Tate's capitulations; there is little reason to dispute the majority of the content of this letter, as, beyond praise for the local people and commendations for those who helped him, Cawdor's prose contains little emotion and appears largely factual, although it comes to close to a criticism of Knox (who is unnamed) when he writes that the French landed on a spot 'so unfavourable for debarkation that 50 men, instructed and prepared to avail themselves of the natural advantages, would have rendered a landing impracticable'.[85]

Cawdor's letter to Portland also agrees in its narrative with several of the other letters written at the time, although many of them, such as that of John Mends to his son writing in the immediate aftermath of the victory, give only the broadest outline of the campaign, but which also give other, more specific insights, such as the instance of the 400 women dressed in red flannel being mistaken for regular British infantry.[86] Cawdor's letter to Portland also agrees with Knox's 'Account', although this last should be treated as extremely suspect; Knox was writing three years after the event with a very definite aim, namely to exonerate himself and his actions and his version of events reflects this.[87]

While there is a wealth of first-hand accounts from the British perspective, no such documentary record has survived from the French, which might be unsurprising when one considers that the entire force was marched off into captivity, with only a few escapees. However, there have survived a number of official documents that are of great importance, such as the original Plans and orders of Carnot[88] and Lazare Hoche.[89] These

[83] E.g. Samuel Hancorne to the Duke of Portland, 22nd February, 1797, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.142

[84] E.g. Sir Harry Neale to Admiral Lord Bridport, 10th March 1797, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.141

[85] Cawdor to the Duke of Portland, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p164

[86] John Mends to his son, Feb. 27th 1797, printed in *French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon, (Carmarthen 1929), p. 156

[87] Partially reprinted in D. Salmon, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, (Carmarthen 1929), p.175-7

[88] Carnot's Plan, printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early letters*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.134-5

give a great insight into the motivations and policies that lay behind the impetus for the expedition and, as they are written by men in high office before the force was even assembled, let alone dispatched, the documents are dispassionate and free of bias or preference. Also, they provide an interesting counterpoint by which Tate's actions and the progress of the campaign can be measured.

There are also a number of cartographic sources, which take the form of commemorative maps detailing the various phases of the campaign.[90] The Propert map was published on the February 1st, 1798, by Thomas Propert, a Pembrokeshire land-surveyor, and is dedicated to Lord Cawdor[91]. It appears to be the most accurate of the cartographic accounts, and provides a wealth of information concerning the landing and activities of the French, as well as the movements and responses of the British. The Laurie and Whittle map, published on March 20th, 1797, in Fleet Street, London, is also informative, but focuses on the surrender on Goodwick Sands and the final hours of the expedition; consequently, the information about the campaign in general is more limited[92]. The *Map of the Invasion at Pembrokeshire, 1797*, is also contemporary, and also details the French movements, clearly identifying the French encampment as being on the heights of Carregwastad Point; however, the map is hindered by its relative simplistic depiction of the geography of the area, and by its focus on the surrender[93].

While they are interesting in the conflicting evidence they present, they also agree in broad terms about the core facts, such as the route the British army took and the rough location of the French force; the Propert map includes the location of a French ambush force, a facet of the campaign that does not appear elsewhere.[94] While the maps are ostensibly impersonal and therefore appear very dispassionate, it is important to remember that, while reproducing the facts, they are not free of bias; Propert's map is dedicated to Lord Cawdor and the inclusion of an ambush force ahead of the point at which the British troops turned back might have been a reflection of this.

Discussion of Secondary Sources

This campaign has been relatively well documented and chronicled by writers and historians during the intervening 212 years, as a result of the resurgence in the popularity of invasion stories (particularly unsuccessful ones) in the 1930s and 1940s but also of other events such as the Fashoda Incident of 1892.[95] More recently, the expedition at Fishguard has been the subject of several studies by a number of authors, such as Commander Jones[96], Pamela Horn[97], Phil Carradice[98] and J. Thomas[99]; however, one of

[89] E.g.General Hoche's Instructions to Colonel Tate, partially re-printed in *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929), p.136-9
[90] I.e. Thomas Propert to Lord Cawdor, *A Plan of the County of Pembroke and that part called Pen-Caer*, Laurie & Whittle, *A Plan of Fishguard Bay*, 20th March, 1797, & *Map of the Invasion at Pembrokeshire, 1797*
[91] Thomas Propert to Lord Cawdor, *A Plan of the County of Pembroke and that part called Pen-Caer*
[92] Laurie & Whittle, *A Plan of Fishguard Bay*, 20th March, 1797
[93] NLW: *Map of the Invasion at Pembrokeshire, 1797*
[94] Thomas Propert to Lord Cawdor, *A Plan of the County of Pembroke and that part called Pen-Caer*
[95] R Quinalt, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: A Bicentennial Assessment*, p.640
[96] *The Last Invasion of Britain*, by Commander E. H. Jones R.N., (Cardiff 1950)

the most useful secondary sources is the collection of original documents contained in the work of David Salmon, who reproduces contemporary and early records from both sides.[100]

Thomas's work appears to be the latest (published in 2007) and gives a very useful and detailed account of every aspect of the French expedition and the British response to it. Its reliability can be verified by close comparison with a number of the primary sources from which it draws a great deal of information, often in the form of quotes. Pamela Horn's work, while considerably shorter, has great merit, for similar reasons; it also contains transcripts of the evidence given by a number of the Irish officers in Tate's service, given as Appendices.[101]

These scholars share broadly similar views and utilise much of the same evidence, interpreting it in similar ways. Horn, Quinalt and Thomas, among others, do not give any mention of a French ambush party, as mentioned in the Propert map, and all sources agree that the French troops experienced low morale that was exacerbated by access to strong drink.

Archaeology and Historic Terrain Assessment

As there was no set-piece battle or engagement of any kind between the French and British forces, there is no battlefield as such to be identified. However, interpreting the primary and secondary sources can lead to the identification of some of the principal locations occupied by the French, as well as some of the properties that they looted.

It can be said with a degree of confidence that the French began their landing at Carregwastad Point in the late afternoon of February 22nd, finishing on the 23rd (NGR SM 9264 3986). A similar degree of confidence can be shown in identifying Trehowel as being the headquarters of Colonel Tate (NGR SM 9170 3986). The small-scale clashes between the French and the local Welsh were *ad hoc* affairs and, as such, the majority cannot be identified with any degree of certainty; as such, the encounter near Carnwnda cannot be more accurately located. However, Parc-y-Ffrancwr is the reputed burial place of a Frenchman shot during an engagement between a group of sailors from Solva and a small band of Frenchmen (NGR SM 929 380).

There is limited potential for further archaeological investigation of the area; particularly in view of the fact that the whole campaign lasted a mere 48 hours. However, Trehowel was supposedly plundered by the French Grenadiers, in spite of Lieutenant St Leger's orders, and evidence of this might be sought. In addition, the French probably made camp on the heights immediately to the S of Carregwastad Point and it is possible that there might be evidence of this in the form of earthworks or latrine pits, or *minutiae* such

[97] *History of the French Invasion of Fishguard, 1797,* by Pamela Horn (Fishguard 1980)
[98] *The Last Invasion: The Story of the French Landing in Wales*, by Phil Carradice (Pontypool 1992)
[99] *Britain's Last Invasion: Fishguard, 1797*, by J. E. Thomas, (Stroud 2007)
[100] *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: official documents, contemporary letters and early narratives*, ed. D. Salmon (Carmarthen 1929)
[101] Pamela Horn, *History of the French Invasion of Fishguard, 1797*, p. 19-23

as artefacts dropped by the French. Parc-y-Ffrancwr could be examined in order to find trace of the supposed burial.

The area in which these sites are identified contain soils that are predominantly typical brown podzolic soils of the MALVERN series (611a), consisting of well-drained, very stony loamy soils on moderate to steep boulder slopes, with crags and scree locally extensive. The underlying solid geology comprises Igneous Rock[102]. The presence of podzolic soils, which are naturally acidic (i.e. with a pH typically less than 5.5) has significant implications for the survival of buried remains, as any wood, bone, keratinous material or teeth might be damaged by the acidity of the soil[103]; however, this should be tempered with the realisation that the finds relating to this period are less than 250 years old, meaning that any finds of this nature should survive in a relatively good condition.

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

Beyond the military aspect of this short-lived incursion, perhaps the greatest impact this battle had on Great Britain was economic, precipitating as it did a massive devaluation of Bank of England bullion reserves, from which, coupled with other factors, such as the vast financial subsidies to Britain's continental allies throughout the Napoleonic Wars and individual occurrences such as the naval mutiny in the Nore in April 1797, the Bank of England did not fully recover until 1821.[104]

In military terms, the invasion was both short-lived and a complete (and almost bloodless) victory for the British forces, which consisted primarily of outnumbered local, volunteer militia forces with attached groups of *ad hoc* locally drawn civilians, motivated by the need and desire to protect their property from depredating French forces as much as patriotism.

5.13.5 Bibliography & Cartography

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[102] Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983, Silsoe
[103] Ibid, p.6-7
[104] R. Quinalt, *The French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797: A Bicentennial Assessment*, p.633

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5.14 Newport Rising, (November 5th, 1839)

5.14.1 Site of Battle

The Battle, the result of an uprising by militant Welsh industrial workers, took place on the November 5th, 1839; the battle-site can confidently be located at Westgate Hotel (ST 31050 88100) and in John Frost Square (ST 31242 87937).

5.14.2 Summary

Historical Context

The Newport Rising represents the last major armed civil insurrection on the British mainland and can also be viewed in the wider context of the industrial unrest in 19th century Britain, specifically against the backdrop of the Chartists' Movement, some of whose members took an active part in the organisation and orchestration of the march on Newport.

The Chartist movement campaigned for Universal Suffrage and Equal Representation for the burgeoning Working Classes, as well as improvements in pay and working conditions. Undoubtedly, this attracted a vast numbers of disillusioned and downtrodden men and women, particularly in the Industrial centres of England and Wales. The Chartist philosophy, while relatively uniform in its ultimate aims, was divided as to how the Charter (the name of the document which they wished introduced, and so a by-word for their beliefs) should be implemented; some advocated violence and the use of force to make those they perceived (with some good reason) unwilling to listen take heed, while others urged a more peaceful route to achieve their objectives, namely through the use of persistent petitioning and canvassing.

The Newport Rising was apparently intended to be a culmination of a carefully planned rebellion across much of the Industrial heartland of South Wales, which would result in the creation of a so-called 'Worker's Republic' (the Silurian Republic) with its frontier established along the Usk and the Severn.[1] The attack on Newport can also be seen in the broader context of an overall Chartist plan, which appears to have been contemplated for all of Britain, not just Wales; rather than an isolated attack on Newport by members of the South Wales Lodges, there were Chartist uprisings planned in concert across Britain, intended perhaps some 10 days later than the attack on the Westgate.[2] However, this may have been a long term concern, the Chartists' actions appearing to have been motivated by the arrest and imprisonment of Henry Vincent and other leading Chartists with their immediate objectives reflecting both anger at their detention and a desire to see them free.[3]

Henry Vincent, a young and charismatic Chartist speaker, was arrested in May of 1839 and tried and imprisoned on the August 2nd, 1839.[4] While the Chartists' aims appear to included Vincent's release, E. Dowling, utilising the first-hand testimony of John

[1] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.184
[2] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection of 1839*, p.114
[3] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.24
[4] E. Dowling, *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p.36-7

O'Dwyer, a Newport man who became one of the special constables that held the Westgate Hotel against the Chartists' assault, wrote that Vincent's arrest appeared to have had the desired effect, and that the Chartists' sermons and rallies were moderated and that no hostile action or unrest was witnessed in the immediate aftermath.[5]

5.14.3 Narrative of Battle

Prelude to the Battle

The march on Newport was meticulously and carefully planned, although the actual course of the descent from the valleys and the subsequent attack on the Westgate deviated somewhat from the agreed strategy as devised by Frost and his chief lieutenants. The plan appears to have been drawn up in collusion with other leading Chartists from around Britain, including a young Yorkshireman of medium height and build who may have been Charles Jones.[6] He appears to have counselled a delay of up to 10 days in order that the assault on Newport might occur in concert with other attacks across the country that were originally planned for November 3rd-5th, but were being similarly postponed.[7] However, Frost, for reasons that are unclear, appears to have answered that the rest of the country could follow the example of South Wales.[8]

The original plan appears to have been as follows: all the Chartist Lodges were to canvass their subscription paying members for volunteers for an expedition (the ultimate target was kept secret) and then to assemble them armed and ready to march, equipped with food and provisions for up to two days, which they were to provide themselves.[9] The Lodges were to provide the weapons for a small fee, although many made their own pikes from little more than a stick and a knife.[10] Having assembled, officers or 'captains' were appointed over them[11] and then these men were either to join the Chartist columns that were making their way towards their target or be picked up by them, whichever the officers thought best.[12] Along the way, the rank and file, perhaps under orders from their officers, were to plunder any likely houses or buildings that might contain firearms and powder, as these were in short supply.[13]

While these were the orders for the rank and file of the Chartist marchers, there was a general strategy. There were to be three principal columns to which all the assembled 'volunteers' were to join themselves; these were a column under Frost which was to set out from Blackwood, another under Zephaniah Williams marching from the Ebbw Valleys and a final smaller one under William Jones proceeding from Pontypool.[14] They

[5] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.24; E. Dowling, *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p.37
[6] D. J. V. Jones, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.114
[7] Ibid, p.114
[8] Ibid, p.114
[9] D. J. V. Jones, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.115; I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.184
[10] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection*, p.126
[11] Ibid, p.115
[12] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.186
[13] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection*, p.119
[14] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.24

were to number 5000 each, with the column under William Jones numbering 2000, but this appear to have been notional figures.[15]

The plan itself fails to highlight the far-reaching levels of organisation and discipline that must have underpinned the campaign; while the majority of the Chartists were only told perhaps 48 hours in advance of the expedition (and so to them it would have appeared as a somewhat *ad hoc* affair), there was undoubtedly a high degree of planning that may have stretched back some months preceding the actual engagement in Newport, as there must have been preparation well in advance in order to manufacture the pikes.[16]

While the plan itself was, in the main, carried out according to its own design, there were a couple of deviations. Primarily, the smaller band under William Jones appears to have been delayed and never actually joined the combined column of Frost and Williams; rather, by 10am on the Monday morning, by which time the rioters who had assaulted the Westgate Hotel were in full retreat, Jones' men had only just reached Cefn.[17] Additionally, there appears to have been some difficulty in assembling the numbers of men envisaged, and the Chartist leaders were forced to resort to press-ganging; an example of this can be seen in the case of William Howell, a gas-worker noted for his hostility to Chartism, who was impressed by a band of four armed men when he was walking to chapel with his wife on the Sunday.[18] This type of affair appears to have been widespread, with men coercing, often at the end of a levelled pike or gun, those less willing, regardless of their political inclination.

The Battle and Its Aftermath

Having reached the outskirts of Newport, the rebel force (at this stage up to 5000 strong) met up with bands of Newport Chartists and impressed men and marched down Stow Hill, on towards the Westgate Hotel.[19] At this point, it was some time before nine o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, November 5th, 1839,[20] the attack on the Westgate actually beginning at approximately ten past nine.[21] It would appear that the original plan was for the Chartists, upon first reaching Stow Hill, were to fire off fireworks[22] and that this would alert Chartists within Newport itself to go about their appointed tasks, which included tasks such as the seizure and occupation of the town homes of leading citizens.[23]

The route taken by the rebels took them past the Union Workhouse, where the detachment from the 45th Foot (the Nottinghamshire Regiment) was stationed and where Captain Stack and a unit of soldiers were stationed to protect chiefly a small arsenal of muskets;[24] however, it would appear that the mob decided to ignore the soldiers[25] (who

[15] Ibid, p.27
[16] W. N. Johns, *The Chartist Riots in Newport, November, 1839*, p.9
[17] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.31
[18] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection*, p.128-9
[19] Ibid, p.144-5
[20] Ibid, p.149
[21] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.199
[22] Ibid, p.198
[23] HO40/45: letter from T.J. Phillips, November, 1839
[24] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.198
[25] Ibid, p.198

paraded as a show of strength in front of the main entrance)[26], although it would appear that there were Chartist plans to seize the weapons in the early hours of the assault.[27]

Upon reaching the Westgate Hotel at ten past nine, the rioters were marshalled and formed up by Frost and (chiefly) John Rees (also known as Jack the Fifer),[28] a man who, in 1835, took part in the Texan War of Independence, participating in the assault of San Antonio;[29] this has some parallels with the attempted storming of the Westgate Hotel, as Rees was part of a group of civilian irregulars who seized control of the town from regular Mexican soldiers.

It is difficult to establish with a great deal of certainty the exact course of the engagement; equally, there is some doubt as to which side fired first, as both the Chartists and the military point the finger at the other. It would appear that one of the Chartist captains shouted something at the defenders of the Westgate, although it is unclear as to exactly what it was. Dowling suggests that it was '*Deliver up your prisoners*'[30] (these being the Chartist stragglers and those who had become separated from the main body of marchers who had been arrested by the patrols of the special constables); other witnesses agree with this, but others suggest that it was a demand for the defenders to surrender themselves as prisoners.[31] Whatever the demand about prisoners, the answer was in the negative.

According to Dowling, this answer precipitated the engagement; in response to a shouted '*No, never!*', a Chartist gunman (possibly the spokesman who issued the demand) standing at the doorway levelled his weapon at the head of one of the special constables who was holding the door open and who slammed it against the gun, which promptly went off, providing the impetus for the rioters to open fire *en masse* on the defenders standing in the windows.[32] It is not clear whether the gun was fired intentionally or not, nor is it certain that any answer was actually given.[33]

The speed with which events unravelled took the defenders (and undoubtedly many of the attackers) by surprise.[34] After the shout for surrender and the scuffle that lead to the first shot being fired, the Chartist mob opened fire on the hotel.[35] In response to this, it would appear that the Mayor, Thomas Phillips, ordered himself, Lieutenant Gray and Sergeant Daly to remove the shutters on the first floor that had been securely placed over all the windows[36] and then leant out into the square where the Chartists had drawn up with the intention of reading the Riot Act;[37] the Chartists then focused their fire on the upper floor windows, as is evidenced by the Mayor and Sergeant Daly being then

[26] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.33
[27] HO40/45: letter from T.J. Phillips, November, 1839
[28] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection*, p.151
[29] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.186
[30] E. Dowling, *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p.41
[31] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.33
[32] E. Dowling, *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p.41-2
[33] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection*, p.151
[34] Ibid, p.152
[35] E. Dowling, *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p.42
[36] Ibid, p.42
[37] Ibid, p.42

wounded, to the hip and left arm and to the forehead ('*with two slugs, made of lead apparently from a window frame*').[38] Under the covering fire of the guns, the pikemen attempted to force entry into the hotel by way of the main hall and entrance, which was defended by the special constables, and also by way of the shuttered windows.[39] While this was going on, some of the Chartists detached themselves from the main force out front and attempted to break in through the rear entrance.[40]

Meanwhile, the shutters removed, the troops of the 45th secured the door to their room and opened fire on the mob to the front of the Hotel.[41] Officially, the soldiers' fire only lasted a few minutes, with them filing past the open windows firing as they went;[42] however, the Chartists and their sympathisers claimed that it lasted much longer than this, speaking of sustained 'target practice' on the hapless crowd.[43] Eventually, after heavy casualties, someone in the midst of the mob gave the command to retreat.[44] Despite the steady and disciplined fire on the mob outside its front, a number managed to break in through the front door and, despite forcing them back initially, became engaged in a fierce melee with the special constables with Mayor Phillips;[45] it would appear that Police Superintendant Hopkins, the man in charge of both the small Police and special constables, and a particular target of the mob himself,[46] fled home as soon as the mob broke in.[47]

With the Chartists' outside the front dispersed, the soldiers then turned their attention to those inside as well as those breaking in through the back.[48] The scene inside was chaotic; on account of the gun-smoke, the Mayor was almost shot by one of the soldiers who mistook him for one of the enemy, and was only saved by one of the special constables pushing the musket away and pointing out who he was.[49] The situation cannot have been helped by the lack of uniform on the part of the special constables, making them indistinguishable at first glance to the rioters, and this type of episode may have been commonplace. The close confines of the inside of the hotel meant that the fire from the military was punishing[50] and the casualties inflicted on the Chartists caused the rest to falter and ultimately to retreat.[51] The entire assault only lasted fifteen minutes.[52]

The extent of the fire from the troops of the 45th is hard to establish; on the one hand, the Chartist casualties appear to have been comparatively light (contemporary newspapers give a figure of 22 killed, with many more wounded),[53] although there are examples of

[38] Ibid, p.42
[39] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection*, p.151
[40] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.199
[41] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.34
[42] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection*, p.153
[43] Ibid, p.153
[44] Ibid, p.153
[45] E. Dowling, *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p.42-3
[46] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection*, p.151
[47] Ibid, p.151
[48] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.34
[49] E. Dowling, *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p.42-3
[50] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.35
[51] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection*, p.199
[52] E. Dowling, *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p.43
[53] *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 5th November, 1839

badly wounded individuals fleeing from Newport to their homes as far away as Brecon,[54] while on the other evidence given by Lieutenant (then Captain) Gray during the inquest into the riot (and, crucially, the military's reaction to it) states that the soldiers were issued with 22 rounds of ammunition each, but fired only, on average, only three.[55] Given that there were 30 soldiers (including Gray and the Sergeants) each firing three rounds, this would make their fire particularly devastating, even at close range. Other testimony suggests that the soldiers stripped the dead rioters of their ammunition (but did not use it)[56] and that a youth was sent to the Union Workhouse and came back with his pockets stuffed full of ammunition, which may suggest that the gunfire was more extensive than Gray admitted.[57]

After they had dispersed the rioters, the soldiers may have prepared for another assault; this is suggested by the soldiers stripping the dead of their ammunition and by their preventing any wounded in the square receiving any medical aid,[58] which might be explained as their wishing to keep the area in front of the Hotel clear, ready for them to recommence fire. Whatever the reasoning behind it, it would appear that an unspecified number of Chartists lay wounded among the dead in the square.[59] Meanwhile, the military and civilian wounded in the Hotel were treated by two Newport doctors.[60]

While the assault party attempted to storm the Westgate Hotel, the rest of the Chartist column still stretched as far back as Stow Hill and, while some undoubtedly fled into the side streets,[61] many fled back in the direction from where they had come, and these men spread their panic among the rest of the marchers; as a result, the entire Chartist column was put to flight before they could enter the battle or achieve their objectives.[62]

Troops

The forces involved in this clash were very different, both numerically and in terms of military training and equipment. A Company of the 45th Regiment of Foot (the Nottinghamshire Regiment) was stationed in Newport under the command of Captain Stack;[63] interestingly, this Company in particular had experience of dealing with rioters, as Captain Stack and his men had driven off rioters in Bosenden Wood in Kent in 1838.[64] While it is uncertain as to the exact number that made up this 'Company' (at this time a Company in the British Army numbered 120 men, but was usually restricted to the command of a Major and it is unclear as to the importance that can be attached to Stack's rank in this regard), D. Jones suggests that the total number may have been 70 men,[65]

[54] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rise of 1839*, p.200
[55] Ibid, p.199
[56] Ibid, p.199
[57] J. N. Johns, *The Chartist Riots at Newport*, p.42
[58] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Rising of 1839*, p.154
[59] E. Dowling, *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p.43
[60] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.36
[61] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Rising of 1849*, p.154
[62] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.36
[63] Col P. H. Dalbiac, *History of the 45th: 1st Nottinghamshire Regiment (the Sherwood Foresters),* p. 145
[64] Ibid, p.147
[65] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection of 1839*, p.146

while I. Wilks suggests that number was around 60.[66] It appears that 30 men, two of whom were Sergeants Daly and Armstrong, (although the *Monmouthshire Merlin* of November 5th, 1839, claims that it was 30 privates and two Sergeants)[67] under the command of Lieutenant Gray were deployed at the Westgate Hotel.[68] The remainder of the detachment remained under the command of Captain Stack at the Union Workhouse, where a stand of 200 arms were deposited and were thought to be at risk.[69]

In addition to the regular soldiers of the 45th Foot, there were a large number of Special Constables sworn in to meet the crisis; the exact number is unclear, but D. Jones suggests that 150 were sworn in on Saturday, November 1st, while a further 500, who had been sworn in over the previous 6 months, were recalled on the afternoon of Sunday November 2nd.[70] These were stationed in Company strength (presumably consisting of 30 men) at various key points in the city, such as at the Union Workhouse, the residence of the Magistrate Lewis Edwards, who was at the Westgate Hotel, the Westgate Hotel itself and at the strategically crucial bridge over the Usk;[71] yet more Special Constables were required to patrol the streets and apprehend any Chartists who had become isolated from the main body and to keep the lines of communication open between the police and military held buildings.[72]

It is difficult to be certain about the numbers of the Rebels, although it is clear that they vastly outnumbered the 30 men of the 45th. E. Dowling gives no clear figure for the total number of combatants that attacked the Westgate Hotel, but states that they learned from an apprehended collier that one band parading at Tredegar Park numbered 4000.[73] Additionally, he states that the body of men that marched into Newport (and from which the assault party was drawn) was estimated at 5000 by an observer on Stow Hill.[74]

In total, the number of Chartists that mustered and marched towards Newport was far greater than that which actually attempted to storm the Westgate Hotel. The original plan appears to have been that a group under Frost would proceed from Blackwood towards Newport via Cefn, where he was to be met by bands under Zephaniah Williams with the men from the area around Blaenau Gwent and William Jones with those from Abersychan and the east, numbering 5000 and 2000 respectively.[75] However, Jones' men never made the muster at Cefn and, while it is unclear as to the exact numbers in either group, Williams' and Frost's combined total appears to have been somewhere in the region of 4000-5000.[76] Of this number, only 200-300 actually formed the assault party that attempted to storm the Westgate Hotel.[77]

[66] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.198
[67] *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 5th November, 1839
[68] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection of 1839*, p.147
[69] Ibid, p.146
[70] Ibid, p.146
[71] Ibid, p.147
[72] Ibid, p.147
[73] E. Dowling, *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p.40
[74] Ibid, p.41
[75] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.27
[76] D. J. V. Jones, *The Last Rising: the Newport Insurrection of 1839*, p.147
[77] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.199

The Chartists, while comprising almost entirely miners and industrial workers from the collieries of South Wales (however, in addition to a number of ex-soldiers, one of the leaders appears to have been a deserter from the 45th Foot[78] and another, John Rees (better known as Jack the Fifer), who was appointed to lead the assault on Newport, took part in the storming of San Antonio during the Texan War of Independence in 1835),[79] appear to have had the semblance of military order and discipline. The Chartists appear to have been divided into units, the smallest of which was of 10 men under the command of a junior officer, called a Deacon or Corporal.[80] Above this there was a Company (of about 50 men) and Brigades (which appear to have consisted of approximately 500 men) under the command of an Officer;[81] larger divisions seem to have been based upon these units.[82]

The force that marched into Newport also appears to have been drawn up with a view to tactics, although the precise nature of the formation appears to differ in accordance with the witness; according to one of the gatekeepers of Tredegar Park, the force that marched through there (which numbered at this stage 3000-5000) marched with pikemen in the front with gunmen following them, and that '*they were very tidy together*'.[83] Further evidence of the possibility of their being relatively disciplined can be seen in the evidence of Lieutenant Gray, when he says that the Chartist marchers formed line from column '*very steadily*'.[84] The assault group, 200-300 men drawn from this body, appear to have been drawn up in ranks of eight, with a gunman on the flanks of six pikemen,[85] while another witness has them in ranks of five, with a gunman on the right of every other file.[86] Dowling suggests that the column was marching twelve abreast on their approach to the Westgate Hotel.[87]

Armaments

The information and sources examined give no specific indication of the equipment and arms used by the 45th in this engagement; however, it is a fair estimate to assume that, as regular troops, they would all have been issued with the standard British muskets of the period. Lieutenant Grey would have been equipped with a light sabre and possibly a pistol. The equipment of the Special Constables is hard to gauge and may not have been uniform; however, there is no mention of their firing upon the Chartists, so it could be assumed that they were not issued with firearms. Indeed, Dowling mentions that they were armed with staves.[88]

In keeping with their nature and make-up, the Chartist forces were equipped with a variety of weapons. Dowling writes that they were armed with '*weapons of every*

[78] Ibis, p.190
[79] Ibid, p.186
[80] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.25
[81] Ibid, p.25
[82] Ibid, p.25
[83] *Morning Chronicle*, 24th December, 1839: evidence of Thomas Evans
[84] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.199
[85] J. Davies, *The Chartist Movement in Monmouthshire*, p.25
[86] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.197
[87] E. Dowling, *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p.41
[88] Ibid, p.40

description – guns, pistols, blunderbusses, swords, bayonets, daggers, pikes (spears a foot long with two sharp hooks, attached to poles about two yards in length), bill-hooks, reaping hooks, hatchets, cleavers, axes, pitchforks, blades of knives, scythes and saws fixed in staves, pieces of iron two and three yards in length, sharpened at the one end, bludgeons of various length and size, hand and sledge-hammers, mandrils (a kind of light pickaxe), in fact, every weapon that could be at all made available'.[89]

Casualties

The actually engagement appears to have lasted only 15 minutes, so the casualties in the engagement were relatively light, especially when the overwhelming numbers of the Chartists are considered. Of the 45th Foot, only Sergeant Daly was seriously wounded;[90] of the civilian defenders, only Mayor Thomas Phillips and two special constables were wounded.[91] However, there were unconfirmed rumours (possibly of Chartist origin) that nine soldiers were killed and buried with full military honours.[92] Despite the official casualties' number, it would appear that a number of soldiers were still recuperating in the Union Workhouse two weeks after the end of the conflict.[93]

On the Chartists' side, the casualties were more severe. However, it is hard to be certain about the precise number of the dead as several of the more seriously wounded were able to travel great distances before being arrested; an example of this was the Sirhowy miner William Jones, who managed to make it back to Tallybont, near Brecon, before being apprehended.[94] However, the *Monmouthshire Merlin* records that 22 rioters were slain, with an unspecified (but large) number wounded.[95]

5.14.4 Assessment

Battle Location

The Battle Location can be readily identified, courtesy of the engagement being well-documented. The rioters, upon marching down Stow Hill, attempted to storm the Westgate Hotel; unfortunately, the original building has been pulled down, but another building of the same name now stands on the site in John Frost Square, named in honour of the Chartist leader.

While the entire focus of the conflict appears to have taken place around the Westgate Hotel, a number of other landmarks appear to present themselves. Perhaps most notably is the Union Workhouse on Stow Hill, where the remainder of the contingent of troops from the 45th under Captain Stack were stationed and in front of which they deployed themselves in order to deter any of the Chartists from seizing the small arsenal of weapons and powder that was stored there.

[89] Ibid, p.41
[90] Col. P. H. Dalbiac, *History of the 45th: 1st Nottinghamshire Regiment (Sherwood Foresters)*, p.146
[91] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, p.200
[92] *Northern Star*, 7th December, 1839
[93] I. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rise of 1839*, p.200
[94] Ibid, p.200
[95] *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 5th November, 1839

Discussion of Primary Sources

The vast majority of the primary sources for this encounter take the form of testimonies extracted during the legal proceedings and investigations into the causes and course of the campaign that culminated in the attack on the Westgate Hotel. Perhaps the most influential source is the testimony of William Davies, a Chartist who was privy to many of the councils and meetings of Frost and his chief lieutenants (as well as a Chartist delegate from Bradford) in the immediate foreground of the march on Newport. As such, he provides valuable information on some of the day to day activities of the Chartists as well as their plans and strategies for the assault itself.[96] However, it should be remembered that Davies's testimony derives from a cross-examination carried out while he was in the custody of the authorities following the failure of the uprising; moreover his trustworthiness is further questioned by the fact that he failed to appear in court at his trial.

Another source of testimony that provides an insight into the build up to the Chartist rising is that of Morgan James, another Chartist who attended a number of meetings and rallies which appear to have been central to the organisation and implementation of the assault. Again, the partisan nature of this statement must be taken into account, as James was present with the marchers on the outskirts of Newport when the attack on the Westgate Hotel took place and was arrested shortly after. [97]

The near-contemporary accounts include that of E. Dowling, a local printer writing in 1840, shortly after the uprising, whose account is based on the first-hand testimony of John O'Dwyer, one of the Special Constables who defended the Westgate Hotel (O'Dwyer seems to have been positioned in the main hall of the Hotel). While it is undoubtedly guilty of anti-Chartist bias, it nevertheless represents a valuable, near contemporary account based on the testimony of a participant in the events of 5th November 1839.

Discussion of Secondary Sources

The types of secondary sources consulted for the purposes of this document can be divided into two groups; those that are near-contemporary to the events they describe and those that are more recent in date.

W. N. Johns, who wrote in 1889, offers an interesting late-19th century perspective on the Newport Rising. Similar to E. Dowling, he appears to have been a Newport printer and, undoubtedly, wrote on a subject that was still very emotive and well-remembered. Despite a noticeable anti-Chartist bias, this source draws on a number of contemporary sources and local legend to produce an informative account of the Riots.

Another perspective on the Newport insurrection is provided by Colonel P.H. Dalbiac's regimental history of the 45th Foot, written in 1902. A former officer of the regiment, he

[96] Examination of William Davies, p.4
[97] Examination of Morgan James of Pillgwenlly, p.3

compiled a detailed and informative account of the activities of the regiment during the rioting, which appears (at least in part) to be derived from the testimony of soldiers who were stationed at Newport during the rioting. Significantly, Dalbiac mentions that Captain Stack and a detachment of the 45th Foot had formerly put down another episode of rioting at Bossenden Wood near Canterbury on May 31st, 1838.

The two major modern scholarly studies of the Newport riots, by I. Wilks and D. J. V. Jones, contain extensive and valuable discussions of the primary sources relating to the uprising. Probably the most detailed and comprehensive of the two studies is. Jones's *The Last Rising*, which contains a comprehensive account of the uprising and its aftermath, clearly placed within its wider political context with extensive references to the available primary sources.

Archaeology and Historic Terrain Assessment

The engagement took place in the centre of Newport (in what is now John Frost Square) and, as a consequence, the Historic Terrain is somewhat altered. While in 1839 the scene of the conflict was similarly urbanised (though, naturally, the degree is somewhat different), the buildings that would have stood witness have mostly disappeared; indeed, the Westgate Hotel itself was demolished in the latter part of the 19th century, although another building of the same name now stands on the site. The original Westgate Hotel was heavily fired upon and evidence of this (in the form of bullet holes) could be seen until its demolition. However, with its destruction, the focal point of the Chartists' wrath and the military's defence has disappeared. The churchyard of St Woolos' Church contains the mass burial of 10 men who are reputed to have been shot and killed outside the Westgate Hotel by the soldiers' fire.[98]

Assessment of the Historic Significance of the Battle

The significance of the Newport Rising can be best be established by placing it within the broader context of Chartist agitation in Britain during the late 1830s. Had the Newport Rising been successful, there is the possibility that it would have precipitated further Chartist insurrections across Britain. Certainly, there is appears to be a dichotomy in the objectives and intentions of the Newport Rising. On the one hand, the Newport Rising was, in its first conception, intended as nothing more than one of many national Chartist rebellions, as is alluded to by the presence of the secretive Bradford delegate who urged Frost to postpone his actions for another 10 days, to bring it back in line with their other planned attacks.[99]

On the other hand, there appears to be a more regional element to the Rising, as it could be suggested that the specific motive of the March on Newport was to protest at the arrest and detention of Vincent. However, the nature and extent of the planning and long-term organisation required to manufacture the arms for the thousands of workers that were mobilised hints at a greater motivation than merely securing Vincent's freedom.[100].

[98] Burial Register of St. Woolos Church, Newport, 1839
[99] Examination of William Davies of Blackwood, p.2
[100] W. N. Johns, *The Chartist Riots in Newport, November, 1839*, p.9

Indeed, the crime for which Vincent was arrested (his militant speeches to Chartist audiences seemingly urging them to fight) may be seen in the background of long-term Chartist strategy. At the end of the day, Frost himself seems to have thought that their plans had gone beyond the point of no return and so decided to proceed with the attack, regardless of the readiness of the Chartist Movement as a whole to act.

As well as the impact on the local populace that the casualties would inevitably have had, the engagement undoubtedly had an impact on the nation in general; several detachments of soldiers, including hussars and two artillery pieces, were sent by the government to Newport to reinforce the garrison already stationed in the town as well as to deter further action.

5.14.5 Bibliography & Cartography

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Cartography

(All maps were obtained from the National Library of Wales unless otherwise stated)

Tithe Map of the Parish of St Woolo's (Newport) - 1841

OS 1st edition 25 inch map (Monmouthshire 28.16, 33.4) - 1883

OS 1st edition 6 inch map (Monmouthshire 28 SE, 33 NE) - 1886

OS 2nd edition 25 inch map (Monmouthshire 28.16, 33.4) - 1902

OS 2nd edition 6 inch map (Monmouthshire 28 SE, 33 NE) - 1902

OS 3rd edition 25 inch map (Monmouthshire 28.16, 33.4) - 1921

OS 3rd edition 6 inch map (Monmouthshire 28 SE, 33 NE) - 1922

OS 4th edition 25 inch map (Monmouthshire 28.16, 33.4) - 1937

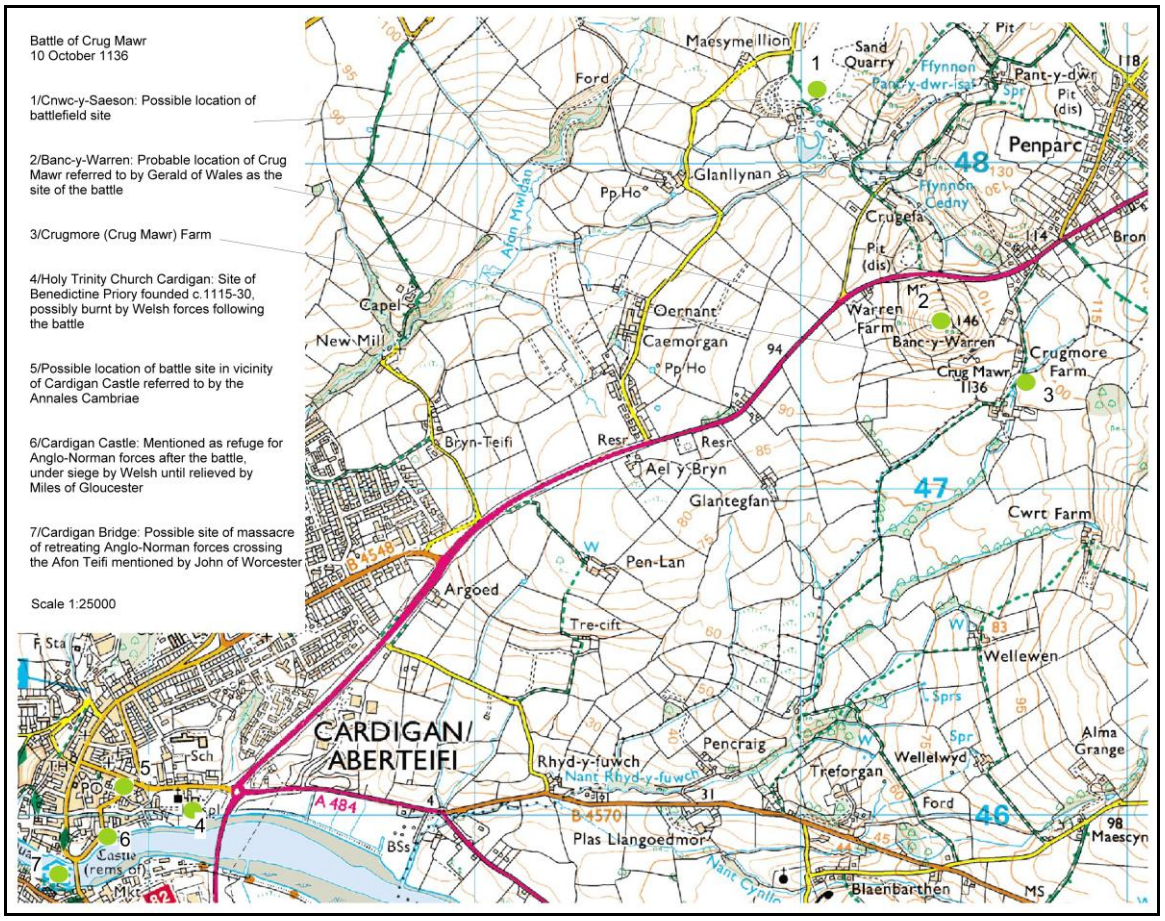
OS 4th edition 6 inch map (Monmouthshire 28 SE, 33 NE) - 1938

6. BATTLEFIELD MAPS

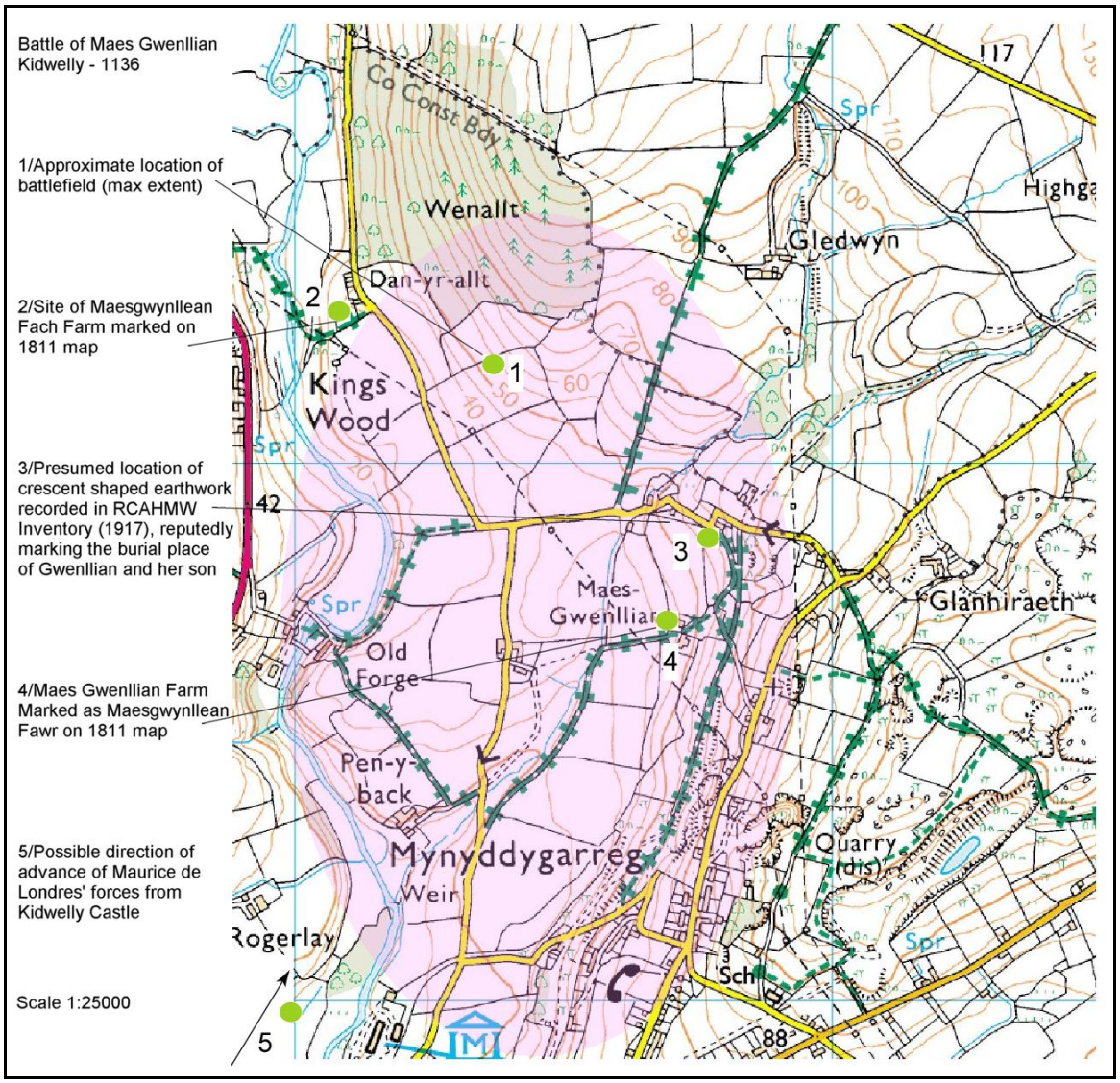
The maps presented here represent approximate locations of the battle sites and (where feasible) the presumed deployments of the opposing forces, based on the available documentary and cartographic evidence.

Due to the difficulties in locating satisfactorily the actual sites of the battlefields for Mynydd Carn (1081) and Coleshill (1157), for which several different locations have been suggested, it has not been possible to produce maps showing these battle sites in their entirety at a convenient scale.

6.1 Crug Mawr (1136)



6.2 Maes Gwenllian (1136)



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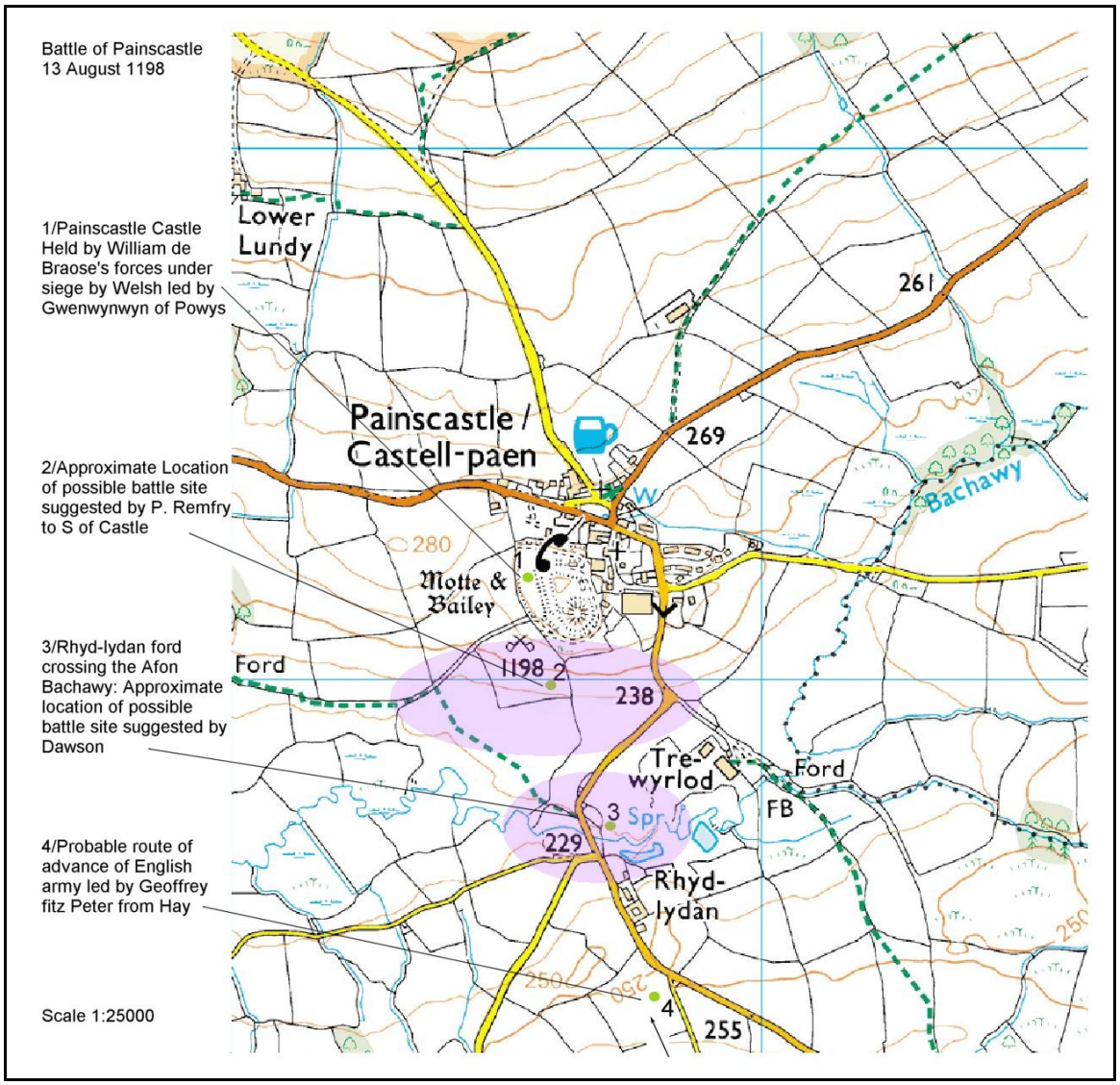

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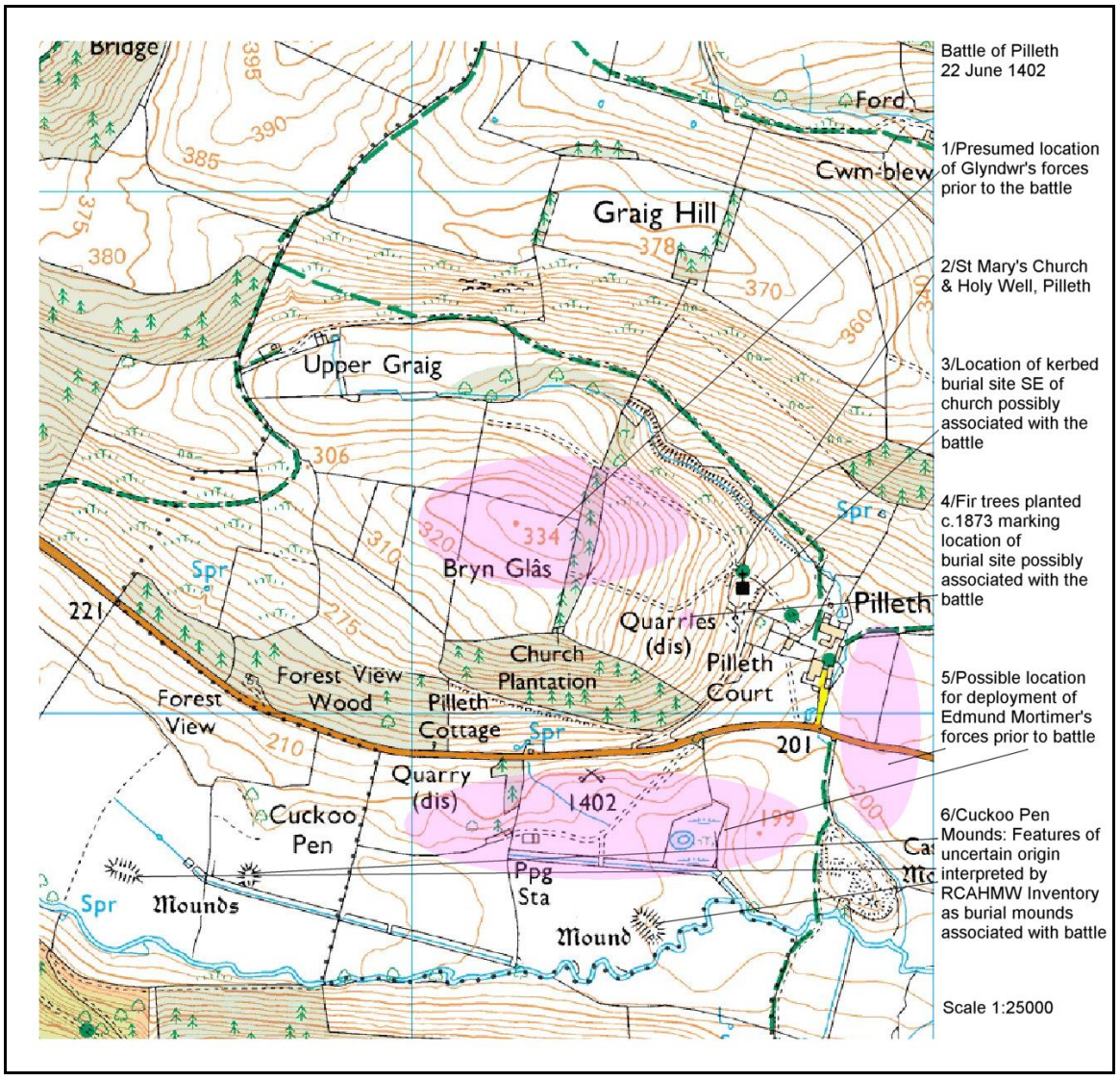
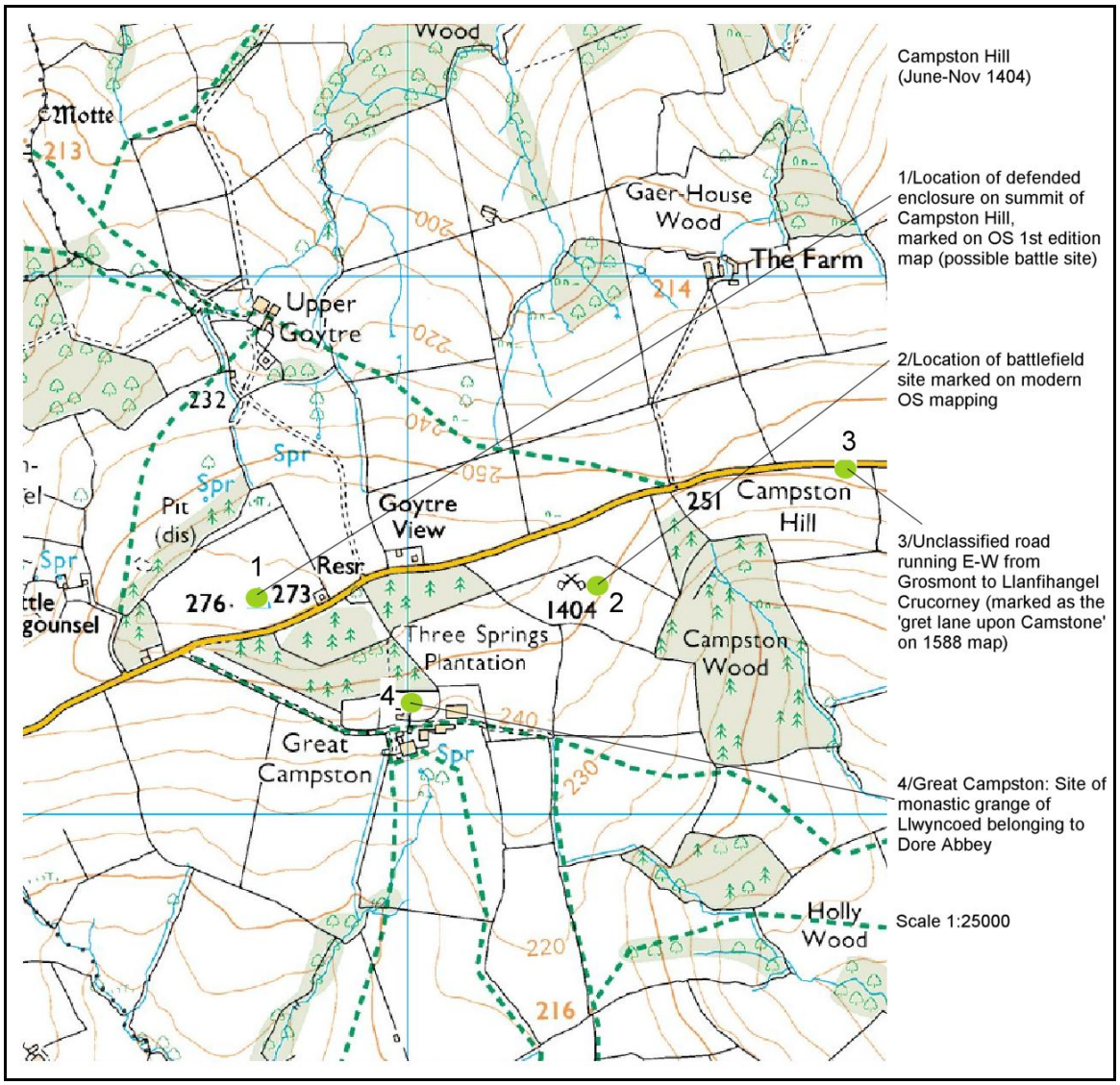
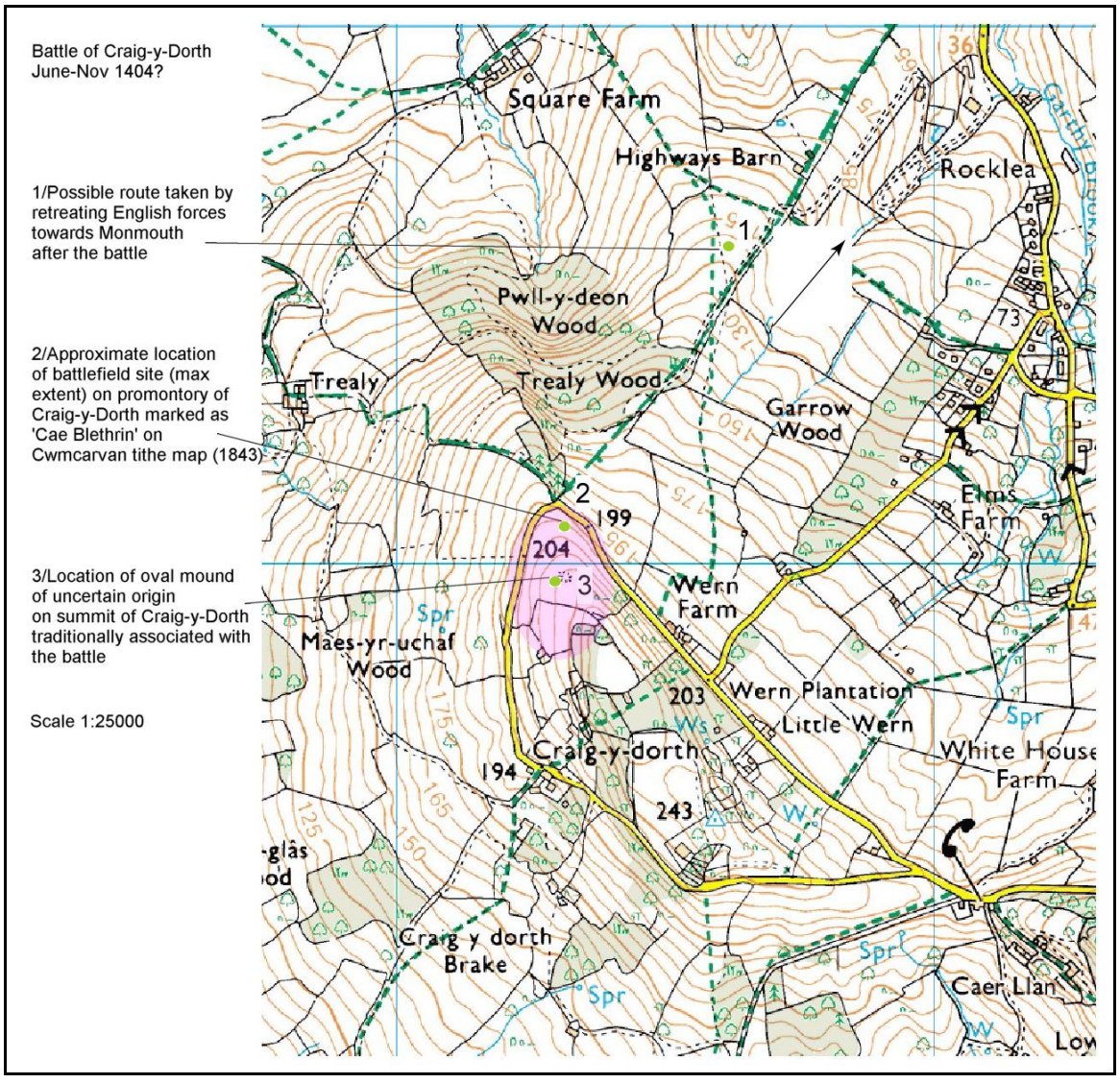


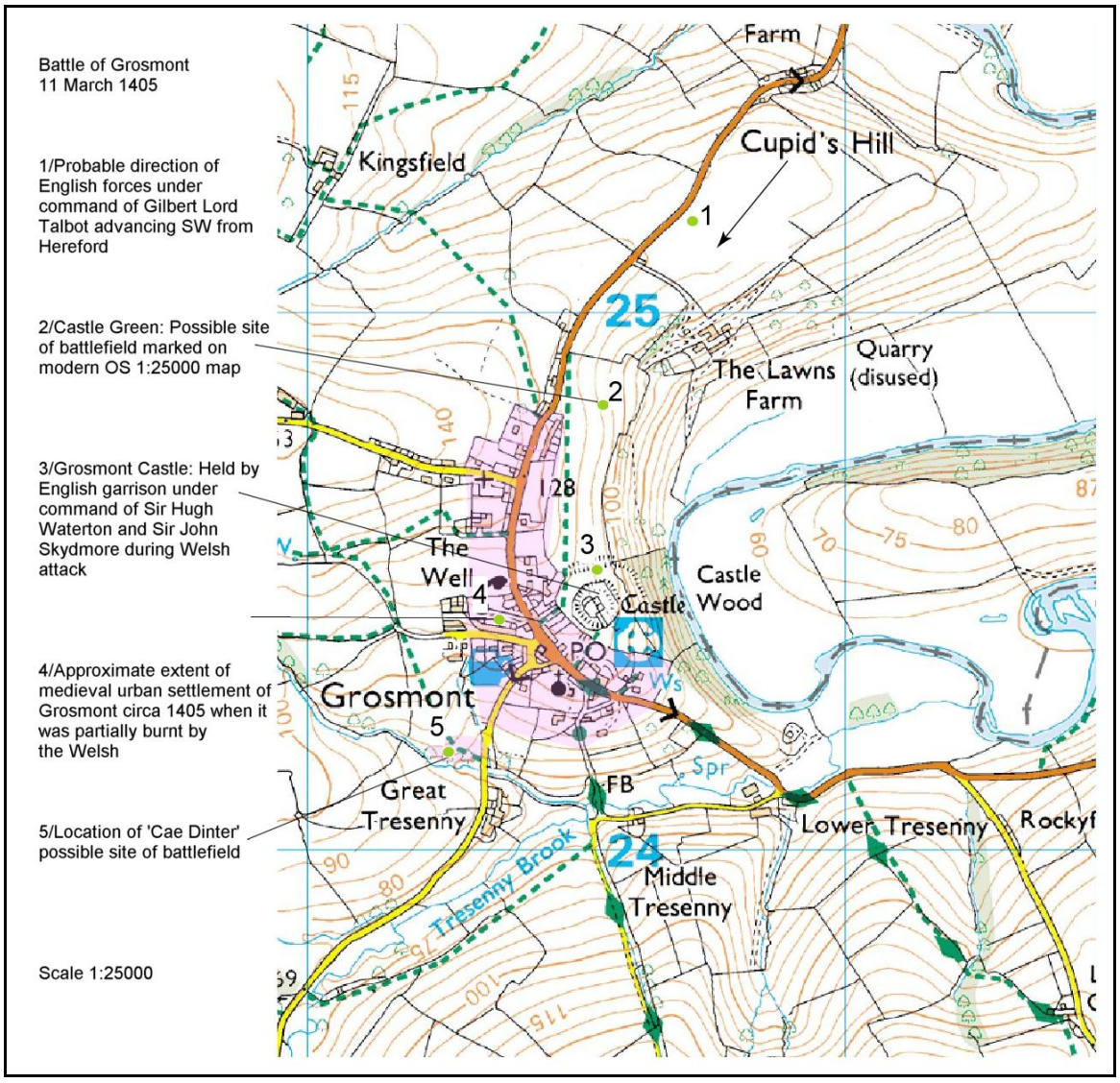
6.5 Campston Hill (1404)



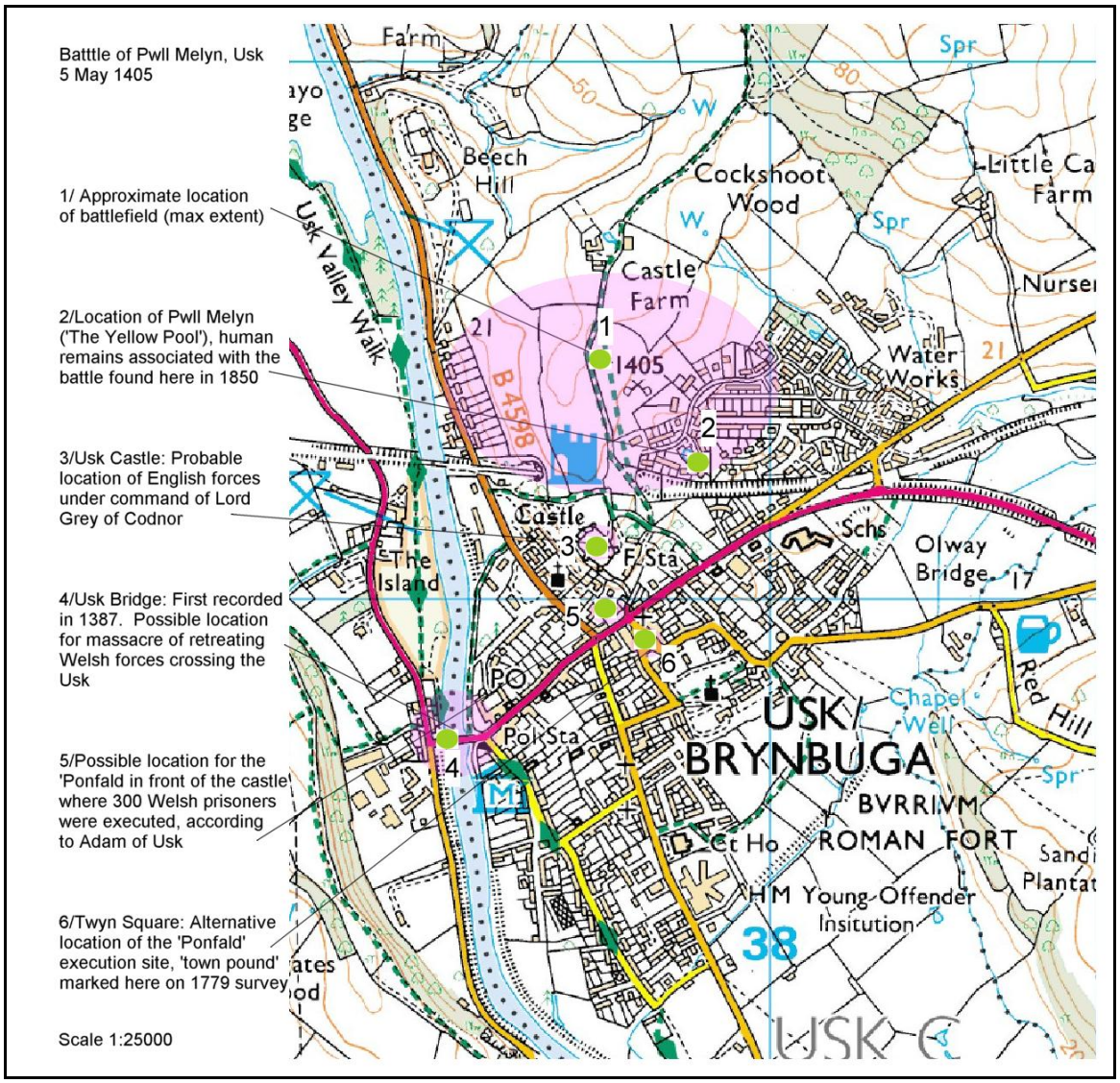
6.6 Craig-y-Dorth (1404)



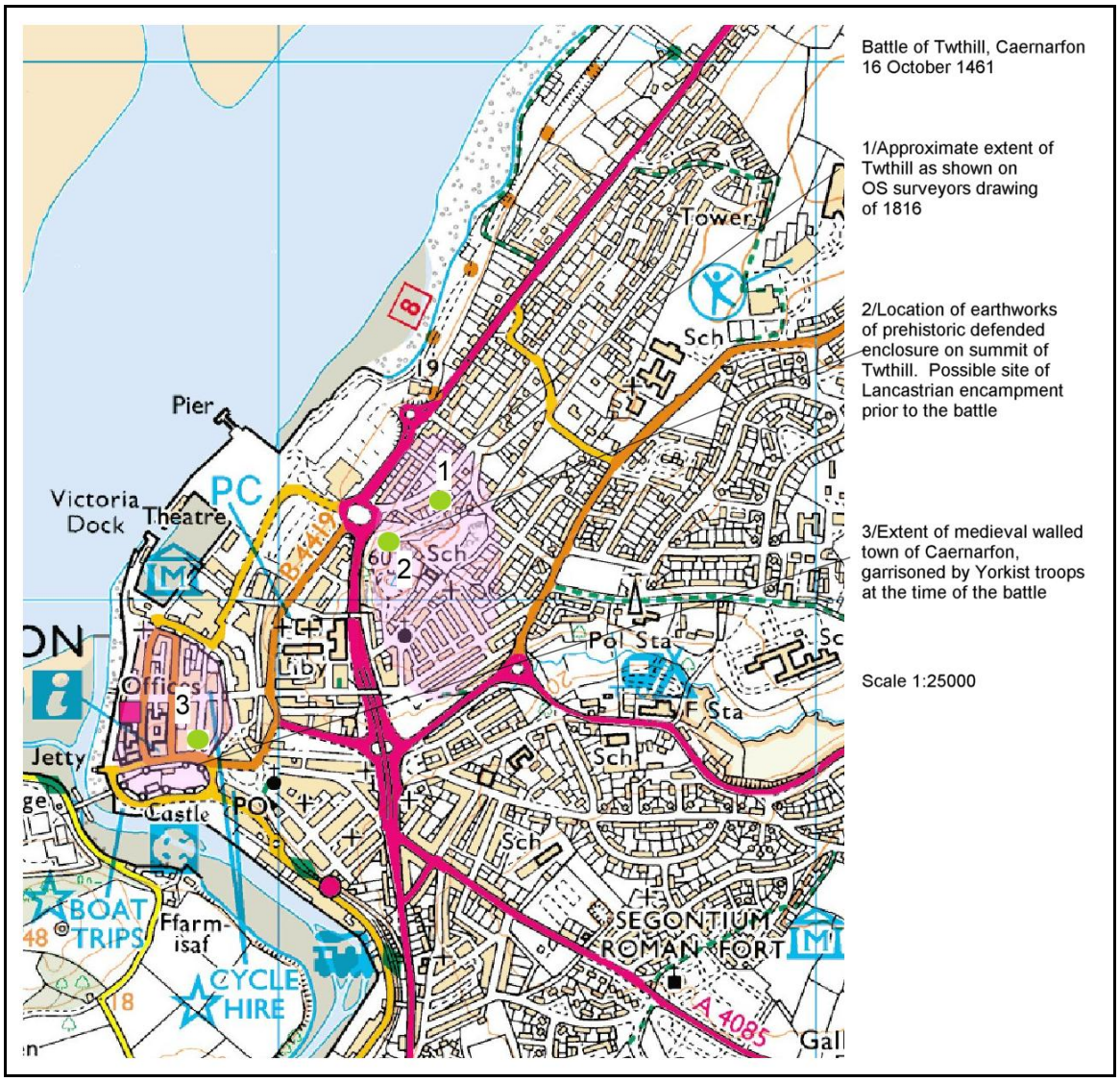
6.7 Grosmont (1405)



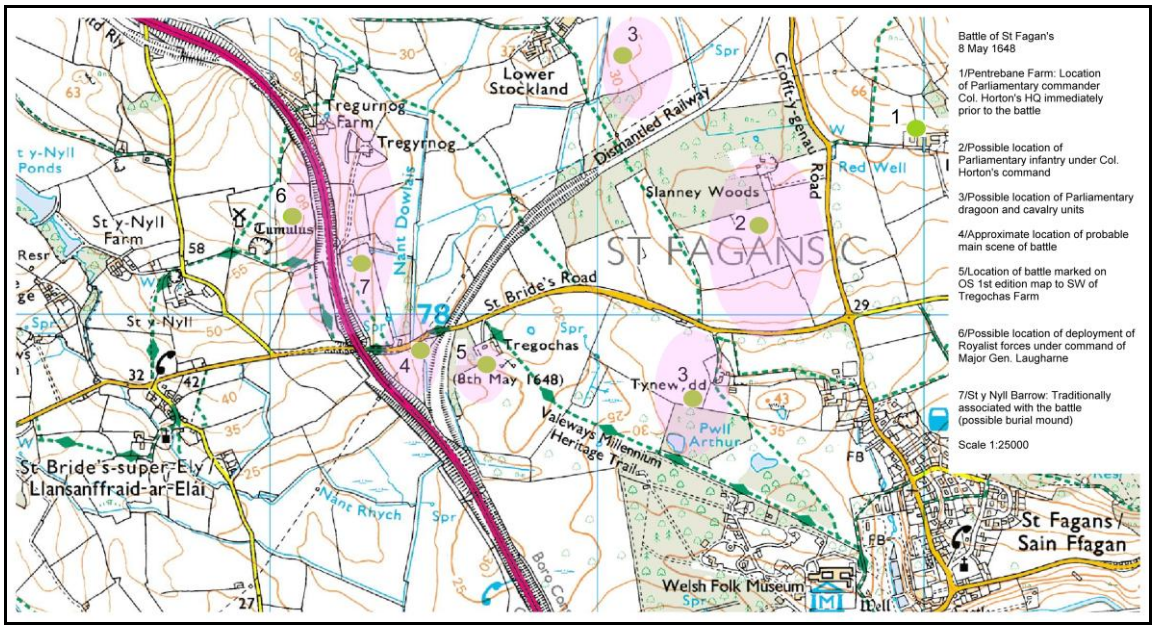
6.8 Pwll Melyn (1405)



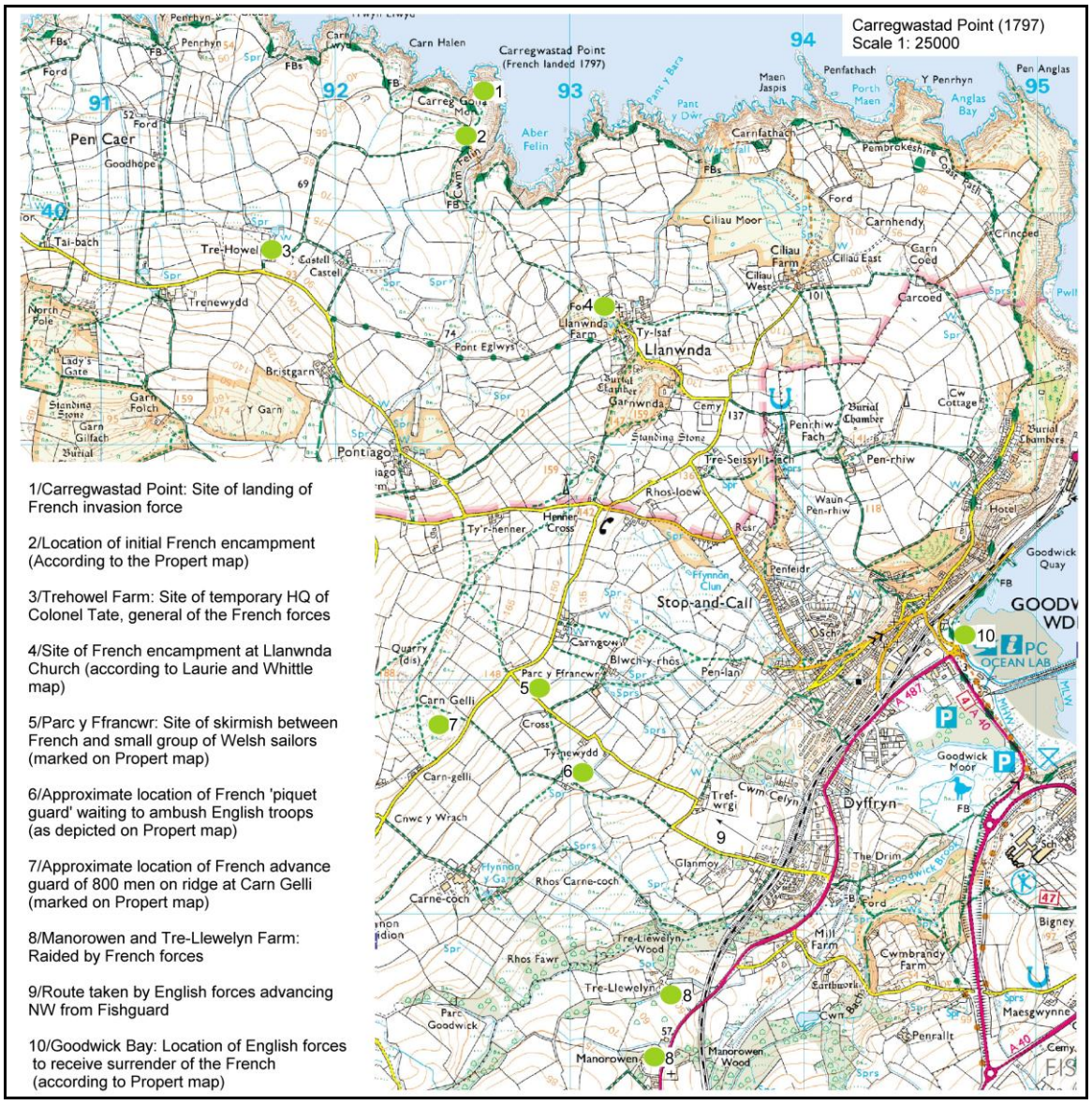
6.9 Twthill (1461)



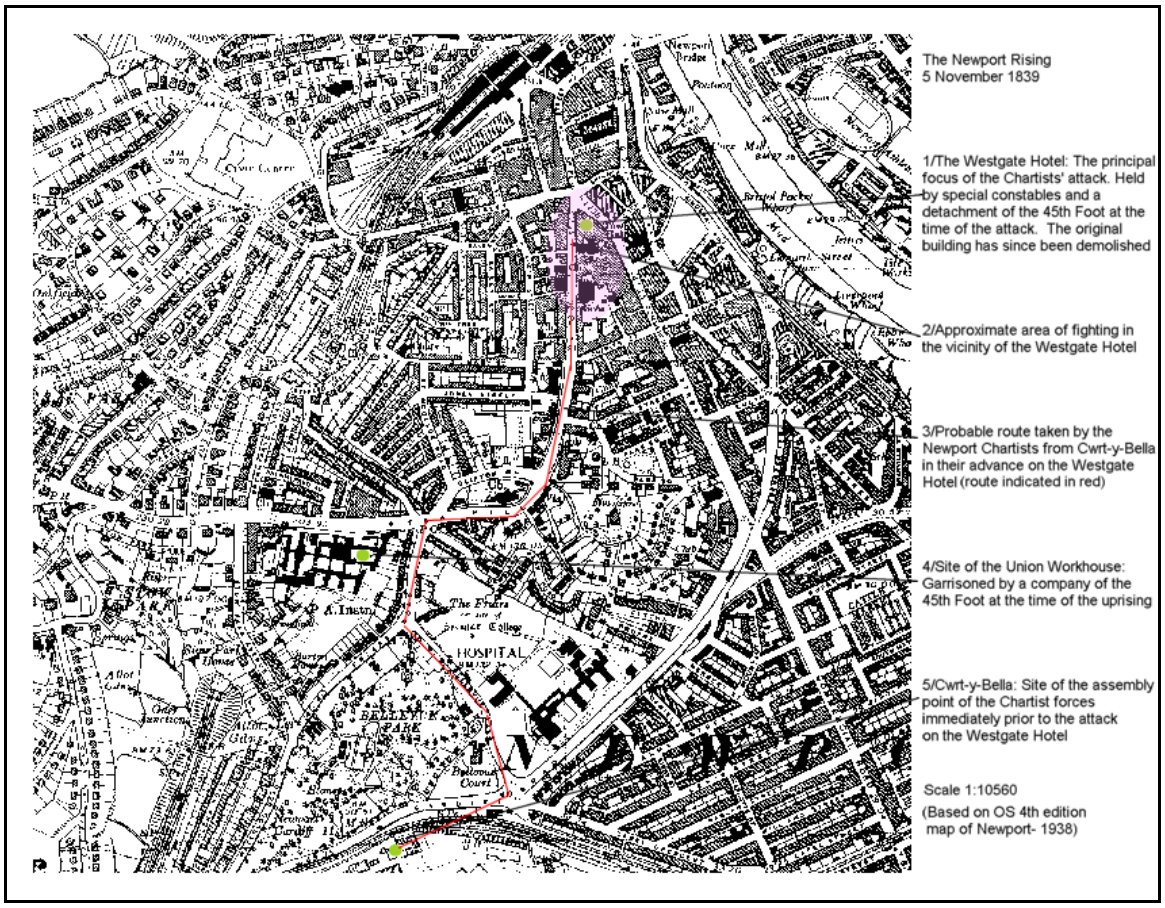
6.10 St Fagan's (1648)



6.11 Fishguard/Carregwastad Point (1797)



6.12 Newport Rising (1839)



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