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THE MONTGOMERYSHIRE COLLECTIONS

The Transactions of the Powys-land Club



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The Powys-land Club

For the Collection and Printing for the use of its Members of the Historical,
Ecclesiastical, Genealogical, Topographical, and Literary Remains of
Montgomeryshire.

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An Appreciation

of Mr. E. D. Jones's article on

“15th Century Poetry relating to Montgomeryshire”

(MONT. COLLECTIONS, Vol. 52).

By W. A. GRIFFITHS, Officier d'Académie.

I am sure that every student of early Montgomeryshire history is grateful to Mr. E. D. Jones, Head of the Manuscript Department of the National Library of Wales, for his valuable contribution to Volume 52 of the *Montgomeryshire Collections* on our 15th Century Poetry.

Not only has he drawn attention to new sources of information regarding our earlier history, but he has also brought to light new facts on the career of our Powysian hero, Sir Griffith Vaughan of Garth, and his kinsfolk. Of course, it is sad to find that there is no truth in the statement made by John Salusbury of Erbistoke, in his history of the family of the Wynnes of Garth, dated 1677, in which he described Sir Griffith Vaughan as a Knight Banneret of Agincourt.

His discovery in the Calendar of Patent Rolls of 1444 of the grant of the lands forfeited by Sir Griffith Vaughan and his kinsfolk to Sir John Sutton, Lord Dudley, is of real importance as hitherto there seemed to have been a mysterious veil drawn over the history of the Guilsfield neighbourhood for the second half of the 15th Century. I therefore turned up this Calendar to see if it gave any fuller information and made a full copy of the entry. At Mr. E. D. Jones's suggestion, I now give it. I have kept to the original spelling except that I have corrected three copying errors, substituting a letter 'n' for 'm' in "Breaniarth," and "u' for a 'n' in "Deudour," and an 'e' for a 'g' in "Eyneon." It is as follows :

CALENDAR OF PATENT ROLLS. 22 HENRY VI. (1444).

“ July 18. At Westminster.

Grant to John Sutton, Lord Duddley, knight of the Manor and town of Breaniarth and other lands, rents, reversions and services in South Stradmarchell, Teirtreff, Deudour and Llanerchuddoll, in the land of Powys in Wales and the

Marches thereof late of Griffith Vaughan of Treflydyan, knight, Ieuan ap. Griffith of Guilsfield, esquire, Reignold ap Lord Griffith of Treflydyan, gentleman, David Lloyd ap Ievan ap Griffith of Guilsfield, esquire, David ap Reignold of Botyngton, yoman, Guttyn ap Deio ap Ithel of Botyngton, yoman, Madoc ap Guttyn of Pole, yoman, Ievan Gogh Grith of Pole, yoman, Howell ap Atha of Pole, yoman, Richard ap Ievan ap Eyneon of Pole, yoman, Ievan Vaughan of Treflydyan, yoman, Medwyr ap Penwyn of Treflydyan, yoman, Griffith ap David of Deudour, yoman, John ap Madogyn of Botyngton, yoman, and Llewellyn Bath of Botyngton, yoman, in the King's Hand by reason of their treason for which they were outlawed to hold to the said John and his heirs at the rent of a pair of gloves ;

Grant also to him that he may have the royal courts and jurisdictions over the tenants of the premises with all issues forfeitures and amercements thereof as freely as Edward Charleton late Lord of Powys had the same within the Lordship."

From the foregoing it will be seen that the death at Caus Castle of Sir Christopher Talbot at the hands of Sir Griffith Vaughan, a feudal tenant of the Lordship of Caus, was not a single-handed affair, but a clash between sixteen Welshmen and an unspecified number of Englishmen, and doubtless some others were also killed or wounded. It will also be noticed that the elder brother of Sir Griffith Vaughan took part in the fight, namely Evan ap Griffith of Guilsfield, together with his son, David Lloyd ap Evan ap Griffith, as well as Sir Griffith's own son, David Lloyd ap Griffith Vaughan.

It will also be observed that Sir Griffith's abode is given as Trelydan and not Garth, while his elder brother's abode is given as Guilsfield—his house may possibly have been on the site of the present Broniarth Hall.

The yeomen taking part in the fight were doubtless free tenants of Evan ap Griffith and Sir Griffith his brother. As Mr. E. D. Jones surmised, this clash may have arisen out of political differences which later developed into the Wars of the Roses.

Mr. E. D. Jones has drawn special attention to the value of the Bardic Elegies preserved at the National Library of Wales. Bards are usually allowed a large measure of poetic licence. In the extracts by Mr. E. D. Jones reference is made to "Brochwels' Lineage," "Line of the Earl of Chester," Vortimer (son of Vortigern), and other early notabilities. How far can reliance be placed on these Elegies? So far as those affecting Evan ap Griffith and his brother Sir Griffith, I think that they may be accepted as correct because there existed

at the time these poems were written definite records going back to these ancient times. The Pillar of Eliseg, the remains of which can still be seen at Llangollen, was engraved with the pedigree in the male line of Cyngen ap Cadell, Prince of Powys, back to Brochwel Yscythrog, "King of Powys, Earl of Chester, and Baron of Denbigh," and still further back to Vortigern and his wife Seveira, daughter of the Emperor Maximus, who governed Britain from York. Although the inscription has now practically vanished, sufficient was copied by Humphrey Llwyd the Antiquary in the 17th Century to enable the rest to be known. In addition to Eliseg's Pillar, there were also the writings of Nennius who gives the pedigree of Vortigern back to Glevi (= Glevus, Clovis or Lewis) after whom Gloucester was named. Doubtless the Bards were well acquainted with these sources of information.

By the way, what a pity it is that the Pillar of Eliseg has not been copied, complete with the inscription. It could be erected at Mathravel, the old capital of Powys, or possibly in Powis Castle Park as a permanent reminder of the old Kingdom of Powys. Neither Gwynedd nor South Wales possess such a memento of their old native Princes.

Mr. E. D. Jones's article recalls the illustrious descent of Sir Griffith Vaughan's family, which is well known to specialists but may not be to the general reader. Roughly it is as follows. The descent from Vortigern, who ruled over the area between the Wye and the Severn, is ignored as he was so hated by the Welsh for his alliance with the Saxon and Jutish invaders. Instead the descent from Brochwel Yscythrog was emphasised. King Brochwel took part in the meeting with St. Augustine on Church matters, fought at the critical Battle of Chester, and died about 617. The Kingship of Powys remained in his family in the male line until the death at Rome in 854 of Prince Cyngen, when his sister Nesta secured it for her husband, to the permanent loss of the male heir, Brochwel ap Aiddan. Clawd Eliseg, Bwlch Aiddan, and Llanerch Brochwel, all in Guilsfield Parish, commemorate these former Princes. Brochwel ap Aiddan had to be content with the lands immediately around Mathraval. From him was descended Gwenwys ap Griffith of Garth in Guilsfield, often mentioned in the Elegies.

At the time of Owen Glyndwr's Rising, Griffith ap Evan ap Madoc ap Gwenwys dwelled "Under Breiddin," as the Welsh students at Oxford addressed their appeal to him to support Glyndwr. He also held lands in the Barony of Caus for which he owed feudal service. In consequence, at the final defeat of Glyndwr, Griffith ap Evan was outlawed and his estates were forfeited in 1404.

He had two sons, Evan and Griffith, but it is not certain that they were old enough to take any really active part in the war, although they were both included in the outlawry.

The story of the capture of Sir John Oldcastle, the Lollard leader, at Pant Mawr in Broniarth Forest is well known. After a year or two safely hidden there, he was taken a prisoner by Evan and Griffith, assisted by two stout yeomen. We are not proud of this feat of valour, but it is only fair to Evan and Griffith to remember that Oldcastle had been a distinguished leader for the English during Glyndwr's War and that their father's property has been sequestered. Doubtless Griffith ap Evan had been allowed to retain sufficient of his property to support his family. Sir John Oldcastle came from Cooling Castle, a mile or two east of Rochester, Kent, and married Joan, Lady Cobham, whose tomb, surrounded by the kneeling figures of her four husbands, can still be seen in Cobham Church, near Rochester. Oldcastle held lands near Builth on military tenure of the English Crown, and so had to fight on its side. Later he became a leading Lollard (or early Puritan), and so incurred the vengeance of the reigning Archbishop of Canterbury, who persuaded Parliament to offer large and still larger rewards for his final capture. It was therefore only natural that Evan and Griffith should take the opportunity of obtaining their own pardon and the restoration of their family lands. In July, 1419, they were pardoned for any previous offences and were granted lands in South Ystrad Marchell Manor, formerly the property of their father and grandfather on the payment annually of one barbed arrow to the Lord of Powys on St. John the Baptist's Day (24th June). In 1421, they were still further rewarded by being granted jointly the Manor of Broniarth, in Guilsfield Parish, on the payment annually of one red Rose to the Lord of Powys. It was this Manor which they forfeited in 1443 and which was granted by the King to Sir John Sutton, Lord Dudley, in 1444.

When I finally retired from the Admiralty service in January, 1947, I wrote to Lord Harlech, the present Lord of the Manor of Broniarth, for permission to examine the Manor records deposited at the National Library of Wales. I had a letter by return of post, very charmingly worded, giving me every facility, a very encouraging act not always experienced elsewhere. I found nothing covering the years from 1444 until 1536, in which year a Charter was issued by Edward Lloyd ap David and Evan Lloyd Vaughan, Joint Lords of the Manor of Broniarth, laying down, among other things, the Law of Inheritance in the Manor, viz., firstly, Heirs male; secondly, Bastard Sons; Thirdly, Heirs female, and lastly the next of kin. From this it will be seen that the Manor had then ceased to belong to the Sutton family.

Evan Lloyd Vaughan was of Abertanat and had a son, Thomas Tanat of Abertanat, who purchased from Humphrey Lloyd, son of the above mentioned Edward Lloyd ap David, his half of the Manor of Broniarth, thus becoming its sole Lord. A later Tanat heiress conveyed the Manor to the Godolphins, who conveyed it to the Owens of Porkington. The latter conveyed it to the Ormsby-Gores, now Barons Harlech, the present Lord of the Manor.

I will now trace back the devolution of Broniarth Manor so far as I am able. As already mentioned, Thomas Tanat of Abertanat (Sheriff in 1570) was sole Lord of this Manor. An Inquisition Post Mortem was held on 22nd September, 1586, to ascertain his property at death. It found that Thomas Tanat held the Manor of Broniarth from Sir Edward Herbert as of his Barony or Lordship of Powys by Fidelity and payment of one red Rose on St. John the Baptist's Day (24 June), annually, for and in lieu of all services and demands. They also found that the said Manor was of value beyond all reprises, £12.

It will be noted that the manor was held of Edward Herbert and not of the Sutton family.

The Inquisition Post Mortem of Sir Edward Herbert of Montgomery, whose tomb is in the chancel of St. Mary's, Pool, was held on 19th September, 1595. It states that Sir Edward Herbert had bought the Barony or Lordship of Powys, with its dependant Manors, etc., from Edward Grey, Lord Powys, and Gristogon his wife for a competent sum of money (amount not stated). This shows the reason for Thomas Tanat holding the Manor from Sir Edward Herbert.

The Charter of 20th March, 1536, issued by Edward Lloyd ap David and Evan Lloyd Vaughan, Joint Lords of the Manor, already mentioned, does not state from whom the Manor was held nor the annual acknowledgment due to its overlord, but it does give its annual value as £12 beyond reprises.

It will be recalled that the annual acknowledgement in the 1421 Charter was one Red Rose, payable on St. John the Baptist's Day. In the 1444 Charter, Sir John Sutton, Lord Dudley, had to pay the crown annually one pair of gloves on St. John the Baptist's Day, while Thomas Tanat had to make an annual acknowledgement of one red Rose, also on St. John the Baptist's Day, as was done in the 1421 Charter.

No record has yet been found showing how the Manor ceased to belong to the Sutton family, and came to Edward Lloyd ap David and Evan Lloyd Vaughan.

Evan Lloyd Vaughan of Abertanat was descended through his mother from Evan ap Griffith of the 1421 Charter while Edward Lloyd ap David was descended in the male line from Sir Griffith Vaughan. The Manor was returned somehow to descendants of its 1421 owners.

David Lloyd, son of Evan ap Griffith of Guilsfield, both outlawed for the death of Sir Christopher Talbot, married Maud Hanmer and had at least three children, namely, a son Meredith and two daughters, Mali Wen and Maud. Meredith ap David Lloyd ap Evan ap Griffith married Jane, daughter of Madoc of Dolwern; Mali Wen became the ancestress of the Bonnor-Maurices of Llanfechain, while Maud married Evan Lloyd of Abertanat and had a son, Evan Lloyd Vaughan, the joint Lord of Broniarth Manor mentioned in the 1536 Charter. The terms of the new grant of Broniarth Manor apparently debarred Meredith, the son of the outlawed David Lloyd ap Evan ap Griffith of Guilsfield, from holding it, assuming that he was still alive at that date. His sister's son held it instead.

Edward Lloyd ap David, the other Lord of Broniarth Manor mentioned in the 1536 Charter, was of Gungrog Vawr, and was descended in the male line from Sir Griffith Vaughan of Trelydan. Incidentally, I wonder why it has been customary to describe Sir Griffith Vaughan as "of Garth" when he actually was "of Trelydan" as shown in the 1444 Grant.

The late Rev. W. V. Lloyd wrote extensively in the *Mont. Collections* of the family of Sir Griffith Vaughan, but only gave a brief footnote mentioning the descendants in the male line from Sir Griffith's elder brother, Evan ap Griffith of Guilsfield. Meredith ap David Lloyd ap Evan ap Griffith had several sons, including Griffith, Llewellyn and Owen. Griffith ap Meredith ap David Lloyd lived at Plas Madoc (Rhandregynwen) in Llandysilio Parish and from him are descended the Griffiths family formerly of Glanhavren, Pool, Trederwen House and Belan House (now demolished), Arddleen, and later of Keel, Ceunant, Middle Main (where my father was born) and now of Cynhinfa, Forge Farm, Kilthrew, etc., in the Meifod area. The eldest son of Cynhinfa is Mr. R. W. Griffiths, of Woodlands, Forden, Sheriff in 1953, being about the 25th of the House of Brochwel to hold that office since 1541, if the late Rev. W. V. Lloyd's figures are correct.

The old family of Jones of Llanlloddian in Llanfair Caereinion Parish also appear to be descended from Meredith ap David Lloyd of Broniarth through his son Evan, shown in a deed of 1544 concerning certain lands in Llanfair

Caereinion. Hester Jones, the only daughter and heiress of Evan Jones of Llanlloddian married, in 1704, George Devereux of Cefngwernfa and thus conveyed the estate to that family. The Jones family were very keen on their descent from Brochwel.

Although I have mentioned the names of only two families descended from the elder brother of Sir Griffith Vaughan, there must be many others. For example, Richard ap Griffith ap Meredith ap David Lloyd, of Plas Madoc, who died in 1587, had seven sons, one of whom, being a lawyer, soon adopted a fixed surname and became Richard Griffiths, the first of Glanhavren, Pool, Coroner for the County from 1575 to 1588. The sons of his six brothers all had other surnames.

Thomas Challoner, the Chester Herald, who compiled the Plas Madoc pedigree in much detail about 1592, states that Plas Madoc was named after their ancestor, Madoc ap Gwenwys of Garth. Madoc also gave his name to Pont Madoc, Maen Madoc, and Ysptyty Madoc, all in the same neighbourhood. "Ysptyty Madoc" has now become corrupted into "Spadock," the name of a field near Rhandregynwen and Domgay. Thus the memory of Madoc ap Gwenwys, often mentioned in our 15th Century Poetry, is preserved in this area.

In conclusion, may I assure anyone interested in Montgomeryshire history that they will receive every assistance from the librarian and his staff at the National Library of Wales, today being honoured by a visit by Her Gracious Majesty the Queen, accompanied by His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, Earl of Merioneth. There is a wealth of information there at present almost untouched.

Marchfield,

10, Monckton Road,
Alverstoke, Hants.

8th August, 1955.