

**THE HOUSE AND CONTEXT OF LLWYN
CELYN, MONMOUTHSHIRE:
A STUDY OF DOCUMENTS AND
LANDSCAPES**

**Report to the Landmark Trust
October, 2014**

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The House and Context of Llwyn Celyn, Monmouthshire: a study in documents and landscapes

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Contents	Page no.
Timeline for Llwyn Celyn	2
Summary of findings to date	4
1. Introduction	9
2. Location	9
3. Sources	11
4. The estate and wider events	12
5. The descent of Llwyn Celyn	34
6. The Llwyn Celyn 'Farm' and the resources provided by tenant right	52
7. The status of Llwyn Celyn and the architectural sequence	66
9. Potential projects within the community	72
Bibliography	72

Timeline of Llwyn Celyn

Architectural dates in italics.

- c. 1480 *House built* in the manor of Cwmyoy when the Llanthony estate was administered from Gloucester.
- 1538 Dissolution of the Priory
- 1546 Estate, including Cwmyoy, was sold to Nicholas Arnold
- Later 16th c. *Floor in parlour inserted*
- 1597 Llwyn Celyn a copyhold property of the manor of Cwmyoy. Granted to William John Richard for a rent of 8d. He also held another property adjacent of 56 acres for 1s. 4d. The whole would be about 100-120 acres
- 1611 William John Richard still held Llwyn Celyn, but the other property seems to have been reassigned
- c. 1620 Llwyn Celyn assigned to William George (ap David)
- 1630 William George was the leader of a tenant case against the manorial lord
- 1642-1651 Many manorial records lost during the Civil War a time of weak manorial control began lasting up to c. 1700
- 1656 William George died and assigned Llwyn Celyn to William Watkin
- 1669 William Watkin reacquired the 56-acre holding with Y Pant an incroachment onto the commons added to it
- Later 17th c. *Major remodelling of the house: Hall floored over, large stack added against former screen passage, present stairs, new chamber and passage created at new first-floor level. Assumption that Kitchen Wing added at this time. Earliest date for North Barn*
- 1692 Thomas Watkin, son of William acquired a third adjacent holding at a rent of 1s. 8d.
- 1703 Tenants begin court case against Nicholas Arnold, lord of the manor
- 1717 William Watkins, Thomas Watkins and probably Job, son of Thomas all said to be 'of Llwyn Celyn', probably meaning they live there. William holds a consolidated farm at Blaenyoy and Thomas holds Llwyn Celyn, now about 150 acres in extent
- 1719 Tenant case referred to the Lord Chancellor's court
- Early 18thc. *Earliest date for Threshing Barn*
- 1726 Arnolds sell estate to Edward Harley

1733	Thomas died and his son Job Watkins was assigned
1733x1740	Job died and his son James was assigned
1740	James Watkins held the Llwyn Celyn block and probably Blaencoy as well
1762	James Watkins as the result of debts surrendered the Llwyn Celyn holding to the lord, Edward Harley for a payment of £20
1775	Llwyn Celyn farm is leased to William Price for £50 per annum
1799	Sale of Cwmyoy to Col. Sir Mark Wood. Llwyn Celyn now a farm of 148 acres and rented for £70 to Thomas Williams
c. 1800	<i>Piggery and South Barn built</i>
1808	Sale of estate to Walter Savage Landor
Pre 1820	Tenancy of Llwyn Celyn was passed to William and Mary Morgan
1829x1841	Tenancy passed to Benjamin and Mary Davies
1841x1851	Tenancy passed to Thomas and Blanch Griffiths, a holding of just over 150 acres
c. 1854	Tenancy passed to Michael and Mary Jasper farming 120 acres
1884	Michael Jasper died and tenancy passed to William, his eldest son, said to have been a notable member of the community, prosperous farmer and councillor
1923	William died and the tenancy passed to Jack Jasper
1944	Jack Jasper gave up the tenancy and it passed to his brother-in-law, James Abraham Thomas Powell and wife Olive Powell
1958	James and Olive purchased the freehold from the Landor estate
1960's	<i>The west barn considerably rebuilt</i>
2014	The Landmark Trust purchase the farm buildings and field in front from Trefor and Lyndon Powell

Llwyn Celyn

Summary of the historical findings to date

Llwyn Celyn is a hall-house of late medieval form, in plan and construction of a type to be found extensively in the Welsh and English Marches, although more usually executed in timber. Currently the architectural dating suggests an origin around 1480. Until we have dendrochronological accuracy we must accept that this date may be a little later or even a little earlier.

The first thing to establish is that the house was built within the manor of Cwmyoy on its southern boundary where it marched with the freehold manor of Stanton. This manor, from the early 12th century, was a major part of the estate which had been given to the Augustinian Priory of Llanthony by the de Lacy family of Ewyas Lacy. This monastery and its estate underwent several periods of difficulty and seem to have been targeted particularly during wars of Welsh resurgence, as in the mid-12th, the later 13th and the early 15th centuries. As a result of the first episode, a refuge daughter house was established just outside Gloucester and eventually, following the highly destructive events of the Glyndŵr rising in the first decade of the 15th century, Llanthony Prima was effectively and then legally taken over by Llanthony Secunda or Llanthony by Gloucester as it was more frequently known in the Middle Ages. The formal merger was enacted by the crown in 1481. In the early years of the reign of Henry VIII the monastery was slowly prepared for the eventual act of Dissolution in 1538 and finally it was sold to Sir Nicholas Arnold in 1546. The manor followed the Arnold descent until 1726 when it was sold to Edward Harley whose lineage became earls of Oxford and Mortimer. They sold it in 1799 to Colonel Sir Mark Wood who sold it on, very soon after in 1807, to the poet and aesthete Walter Savage Landor. This family retained possession into the 20th century finally selling the freeholds of individual farms usually to their sitting tenants. The Llwyn Celyn freehold, a working farm of 176 acres, was bought from the Landors in 1958 by the Powell family.

From 1611 to 1719 during the Arnold era, the tenants of the manor were in a state of running dispute with their manorial lord. As a consequence there is an astonishing array of documents which reveal not only who held the land, where it was and sometimes its extent, but also the complex and conflicting interpretations that were put on tenurial customs as they had been practiced time out of mind. The dispute ended up in front of the Lord Chancellor for adjudication in 1719. Because of this we can say with a great deal of certainty who held Llwyn Celyn from 1597 to the present day and at the heart of it was a form of land tenure that is a little unusual. This was tenure by copy of the Court Roll. It was 'customary' and unfree. In an inquiry held under the authority of William Herbert Earl of Pembroke in April 1611, a number of key statements were made before a jury of the tenants and local gentry. Two are worth quoting in this summary:

'And finally they say that they find no Freeholder that holdeth his lands of the same manor [Cwmyoy] or that doe belong to the same except the said John Parry John Ychan whom they conceive to be a Freeholder belonging thereunto and for more certaintie thereof they refer themselves to the said records' (NLW CFL MS f.5v.§3)

and

‘Fourthly they say that they find not any customarie holder of Inheritance within or belonging to this manor’ (NLW CFL MS f.5v.§4)

They continue by saying that transmission of any property from one individual to another must be by formal assignment through indenture and copy entered on the Court Roll. These ‘Coppies’ as they were called were granted by the lord to the first tenant who had the right to ‘assign’ the copy to the next tenant as long as this was recorded on the Court Roll and there could be three such assignments before the copy and the tenure had to be surrendered to the lord for re-granting. There was no inheritance, but a father could assign to a son as the next assignee either in his lifetime or by will. It is also clear that an assignment could happen as a result of sale or as fulfilment of a debtor mortgage. This is all complex, but essentially nearly all the land in Cwmyoy was copyhold, and this included Llwyn Celyn. Exactly when this practice began is very uncertain. We do have one statement made in a defence made by a later Nicholas Arnold to a case brought against him by some of his customary tenants in 1703:

‘And all the several persons were by the Steward of the said manor at the said Court duely sworn and admitted Tenants and saith the same is according to the Customs of the said manor in the several reignes of King Henry the 8th, Queen Elizabeth, James 1st Charles 1st as by the Court Rolls and evidences may appear’ (Harley MS **, f.4, dated 1703)

It is clear that these reigns are mentioned because it is only from as far back as Henry VIII’s reign that manorial records had survived to be scrutinised. Only those monastic copies that continued to be current after the Dissolution were available for scrutiny in 1611 when the court records began. The customs were probably much older in origin and I suspect arose out of earlier, oral practices and codified in the years when Llanthony by Gloucester slowly acquired its control following the Glyndŵr rising.

This is all important for the eventual interpretation of the status of the Llwyn Celyn house. As early as we can record the property on which it sits, it was held by a customary tenant. Under the customs of the manor it was the tenant who had the responsibility to construct and maintain any buildings which lay on that property. The tenants could farm their land, sub-let it, mortgage it, even sell it as long as it was recorded in the court records: they could use the upland commons for grazing in an unlimited way, freely take any stone they needed for building and harvest any wood that was under 20 years of growth. In return they had to pay what was called a ‘Chief Rent’; they had to serve on the lord’s manorial court, pay a heriot or fine when the land was reassigned and undertake a series of duties maintaining roads and bridges and doing various tasks at the behest of the lord and his officials when required.

These terms, particularly when lords were lax and their local officials prepared to turn a blind eye, were favourable. The low chief rents, established in the economic circumstances of the fifteenth century usually at a few shillings and pence, were fixed for the lifetime of

the copyholders and their assignees, a time period that could be as long as 120 years. In the circumstances of late medieval and early modern inflation and the growth of the early capitalist economy, this meant that the real value and return on the land was increasingly in the hands of the tenants. By the 17th century when we have records, a farm could be rented from the lord for 2 shillings a year and sub-let for £20 or £30. Thus the legal status of tenant could be given the lie by the real income and disposable wealth of the farmer. Although technically not belonging to the gentry, they could still, especially from the 17th century onwards, aspire to be called 'gentleman' or 'yeoman'. This was particularly true for the local families who held authority in their communities and for those who were able to deploy disposable wealth to acquire leases and to consolidate farm holdings. These are the people who became minor officials of the manor and churchwardens, who arranged good dynastic marriages, who appeared in court to contest with their lords and who probably, unrecorded, brokered social power at the local level for generations. They were not gentry, but could aspire to be.

One other aspect of all this is worth mentioning. Although the terminology of tenure is entirely derived from English and Anglo-Norman feudal and later law it is clear that the bulk of the tenantry were of Welsh descent, tracing their lineages in patronymics and Celtic names. There is no hint in the surviving documents, however, of Welsh legal practice as there is in the next valley westwards, the Grwynne Fawr, where there were Welshry and Englishry living under different manorial customs within the Lordship of Crickhowell. Nevertheless in the secluded valley of the Honddu the Anglo-Norman monastery had tenants who, for the most part, would have had knowledge and social memory of their ancestry and former social distinctions. They may have been registered in the books under the same legal status, 'tenant', but, to borrow Orwell, 'some were more tenant than others'. In the circumstance of their liberal leases and the changing world of Tudor Britain it may well be that an ancient social class re-surfaced in new forms.

In all, therefore, the house built at Llwyn Celyn was not a manor-house nor the gentry house of a freeman, but it certainly had the rhetoric of an aspiring Welshman.

The earliest we can find the property, Tir Loyn Kelin, is in 1597 when a man called William John Richard was given the lease as the first holder of that copy for an annual rent of 8d. (NLW CLF MS 5.15, f.25v. #91). It is almost certain from analysis of other tenancies in the record that this was a grant made after the surrender of a previous copy, one which would have been issued in the time of the monastery before the Dissolution. The record of these monastic leases did not survive unless they were still extant in 1611 when the first surviving court roll in the form of a survey comes down to us. I think it is also possible that his name has a hidden patronymic sequence, i.e. William ap John ap Richard, despite the English forms of the names. Thus it is also possible that he was next in a lineage who needed a new lease because the four lives of the previous one had run out. We can see this happening elsewhere. However, this is probably a speculation too far.

We do not know how large the Llwyn Celyn property was, although from preliminary landscape analysis we can suspect it was around 60 acres, but we do know for certain,

however, that William also had another adjacent property of 56 acres on the higher ground above the house. This seems to have passed notionally into other hands by 1611, but there is a cryptic reference in the document to the presence of 'William Watkin, gent' in the transaction.

The Llwyn Celyn holding passed soon after 1611 to William George ap David who somewhere in his life dropped the patronymic to become simply William George. He was clearly one of the big beasts in the tenantry of the manor and it is he who led the first action taken against his lord in 1630. He held at least two other properties at the time of his death in 1656, both of which he assigned by will to his eldest son, another William George (NA PROB 11/261/154). In this will William George styled himself 'Gent'. Curiously, however, and with no explanation Llwyn Celyn itself he assigned to William Watkin, another of the large players who had land in at least one other neighbouring parish.

William Watkin, a couple of years later in 1669, acquired, with a new lease, the 56 acre holding which had formed part of the combined Llwyn Celyn farm of William John Richard in 1597 (NLW CLF MS 5.15 f.75v. #93). It could even be that William Watkin, whose namesake was present in 1597 probably as Steward of the Manor, was already sub-letting or holding as a mortgage the Llwyn Celyn property. Again this is speculation, but clearly in 1717, William Watkins and his son Thomas are both said to be 'of Loyn Kelin'. Whether this was the same William Watkin as 1656 we have yet to determine. There was also another Watkins, John, who was also said to be 'of Lloyn Kellin' in 1744 (Harley MS 72/40). However in 1717 it was Thomas who by now held Llwyn Celyn itself still for 8d. rent (CFL MS 4.63, p.56), the 56-acre tenement together with another piece of land, an enclosed block of the commons called Y Pant still paying the 1597 rent of 1s. 4d.(NLW, CFL, MS 4/63, pp. 56-7), and another block of five fields to the west for 1s. 8d. (NLW, CFL, MS 4/63, pp. 55). William Watkins, although living at Llwyn Celyn with his son had another three properties all in one block at Blaencoy further up the Honddu valley. This may have been intended for another son and the 1744 John Watkins certainly had an interest there.

When Thomas died in 1733 he assigned all his land, including a property in Llanbeder to the west as well as the Llwyn Celyn block, to his beloved son Job (NA PROB 11/701/332). He may also have held the Blaenyoy estate as well. Job did not last long and by 1740 (Harley MS 86/10/3) his son James was in tenure with a new lease, but by 1762 he was in debt and he was forced to surrender his Llwyn Celyn holdings, now seemingly regarded as one unified block, to the lord, by now Edward Harley. Harley paid James £20 to get the lease back and this was part of the process by which the new landlords were clearly sorting out the tangled web of ancient tenant right and poor manorial returns. The next time we encounter Llwyn Celyn in 1775 it was in the hands of David Price for a rent of £50 p.a. (NLW 1184, unnumbered page), and then in 1799 when the Harley estate was sold it consisted of 148 acres and the tenant was Thomas Williams holding for a rent of £70 p.a. (Bradney, I, pt 2a, 234). In the 1820's the tenants were William and Mary Morgan whose four children were all born there. By 1841 Llwyn Celyn was held by Benjamin Davies and in 1851 by Thoms Griffiths at which point the farm was recorded as 150 acres. Shortly after this the tenancy

was taken on by Michael Jasper and this family held it until 1944 when it passed to the Powells.

History and architecture

The original house built c.1480 was probably the house of an aspirant Welsh tenant. The manor had no freeholds and thus it cannot be of this status and all the recorded officials of the monastic manor lived elsewhere in the region and not in Cwmyoy. Freeholds elsewhere in the area tended, like Stanton or Bwlch Tre-wyn, to be regarded as their own small sub-manors and can be set in a separate class socially and architecturally. The holding we can firmly identify as Llwyn Celyn emerges into the written record in the late 16th century as a tenant property, but clearly one at the centre of a reasonably substantial holding. It is at this point that the architectural history tells us the floor was added in the parlour, probably as an act of modernisation, but no change in status. The holding, which we can estimate as over 100 acres and perhaps a bit more, may or may not fluctuate a little in the early 17th century. Once, however, it is firmly in the hands of the Watkins it is, until the mid 18th century, the centre of an important local farming dynasty and a consolidated farm of 150 acres or more, although debt may have been bearing down on it for a couple of decades before its loss in 1762. The major remodelling of the house identified in the architectural history as occurring in the later 17th century happened while occupied by three, if not more, of the Watkins family at a time when they clearly had extensive holdings in Cwmyoy and elsewhere and very large incomes with extremely low rents. The remodelling, in effect a modernisation of an archaic house, the addition of a chimney stack, the flooring over of the hall, a new kitchen and one if not two barns all seem to fit this narrative; at this point Llwyn Celyn was at its highest point with no change in status and lots of spare cash. From 1762 or thereabouts it becomes an ordinary tenant farm, albeit a fairly large one, but now having the burden of economic rents, moving in a moment from a rent to the Harleys of 3s. 8d. a year to one of £50 and then £70 per annum: an increased burden initially of some 270%. There would have been little to spare for keeping this large building in good repair let alone embellishing it any further. Indeed the burden of repair, under the reformed and normal tenancy arrangements of the later 18th century would have put the onus of repair on the landlord.

1. Introduction.

Llwyn Celyn is a house that demands attention and that, we must think, was the intention of its original builder. The account that follows attempts to identify this person, if not definitely by name, then at least by social context and circumstance. Once built Llwyn Celyn had a continuous life until the recent acquisition by the Landmark Trust, and this piece of historical research attempts to record the biography of that life. Given that little survives of the original documents from its previous owners, tenants and occupiers, there is not always certainty in the ensuing narrative. The interpretation offered is thus, like all pieces of history, subject to challenge, addition and, if necessary, alteration. Some of this might occur very quickly in the process of working with the local community on various pieces of further research which we hope the Llwyn Celyn Project as a whole will inspire.

The report has been prepared by Professor David Austin with the very able assistance of Dr Chris Hodges. We would like to thank particularly Caroline Stanford, Historian and Head of Engagement of the Landmark Trust for commissioning this work when she could so easily have done it herself. Caroline also provided some important first leads and references while her colleague, Kasia Howard, the Education and Engagement Officer, has given much practical support, especially in the early engagements with the community.

Various archivists have helped us along the way, but by far the most important has been Sue Hubbard, the archivist of the Harley Collections at Brampton Bryan in Herefordshire. With the very kind permission of Mr Edward Harley, the present owner, to whom we have been, and continue to be, greatly obliged, we have been able to access documents which have been vital to our research and Sue was instrumental in uncovering and transcribing some important gems for us. It is to be noted that the reproduction of Harley documents within this report is subject to the caveat that they should not be used for other research or publication without the prior permission of Mr Harley.

Staff of the National Library of Wales have also been extremely helpful and we are grateful for access to important documents. Permission to use and reproduce certain documents has been given by the Librarian.

Finally, we are also grateful to members of the community who have come forward to assist with knowledge and expertise which will be important to the progress of the historical research. We would particularly like to note at this stage John Evans.

2. Location (NGR: SO 3095 2181)

Llwyn Celyn is today a farm on the eastern end of the Ffwyddog Ridge, a striking geographical component of the Black Mountains of south-east Wales (Fig.1). Today it lies on the eastern edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park and at the northern end of Monmouthshire, only 200 metres from the east bank of the River Honddu, a tributary of the River Monnow. This river flows, from north to south, through a beautiful and narrow valley called the Vale of Ewyas with the Ffwyddog on its western flank and the Haterall Ridge on its

eastern, before leaving the Black Mountains via the parish of Llanvihangel Crucorney a kilometre and a half downstream.

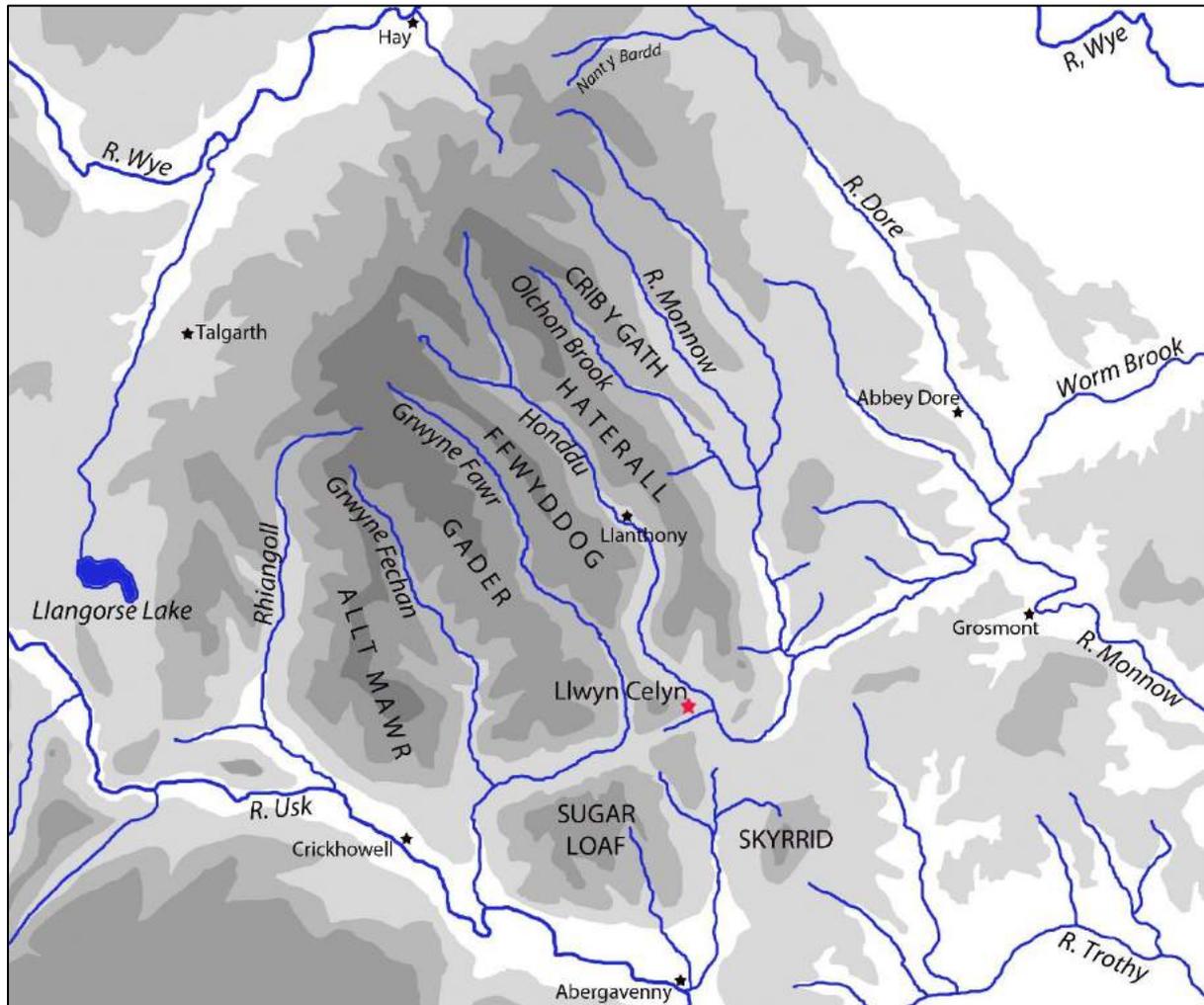


Figure 1: Topography of the Black Mountains and the location of Llwyn Celyn. (Map drawn by David Austin)

The valley, called the Vale of Ewyas, had, from the early 12th century, the Augustinian Priory of Llanthony at its heart and, until its Dissolution in 1538, its lands filled the valley floor, sides and ridge tops (Fig. 5). Llwyn Celyn lay at the very southern end of that core estate, also known in the Middle Ages as 'Hothneyslade', within the manor and ancient parish of Cwmyoy. The parish has since been subdivided and the 13th century church of St Martin, built largely out of the basal Old Red Sandstone, now serves only the Parish of Lower Cwmyoy.

The immediate topography of Llwyn Celyn (Fig. 2) is marked by its position on a terrace built into gently rising ground above and just to the west of the Afon Honddu, and just north of a small stream called, in the early post-medieval documents, the Nant Ddu ('Black Brook') and, in one early medieval text (the Book of Llandaff), the Nant Fechan ('Small Brook'). This tiny, almost imperceptible watercourse, formed the southern boundary of the parish and manor of Cwmyoy, the southern boundary of the ancient territory of Ewyas and the

medieval lordship of Ewyas Lacy which became, after its foundation, the southern boundary also of the lands of Llanthony called Hothneyslade. These lands also included the two sub-manors of Oldcastle and Redcastle to the east

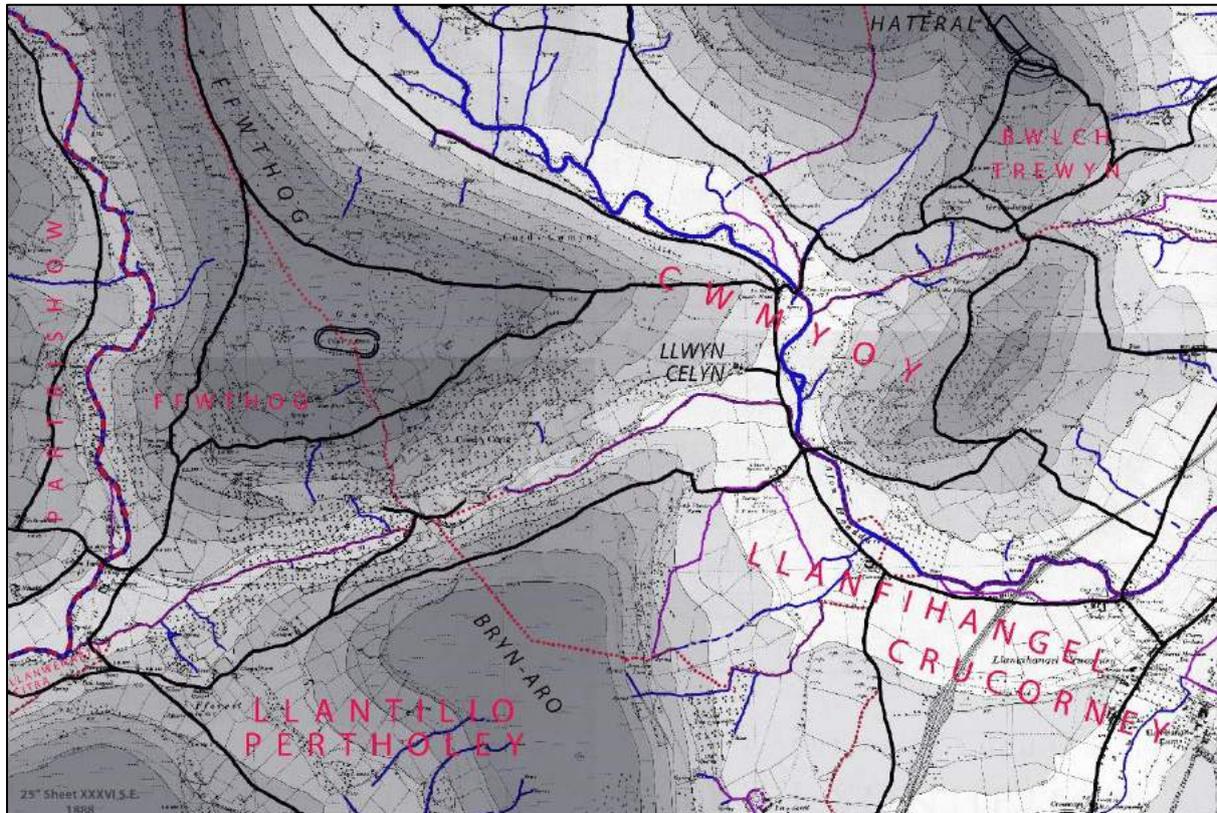


Figure 2: The immediate topography of Llwyn Celyn and the boundaries of parishes (based on the first edition 25-inch-to-the-mile Ordnance Survey map, sheet XXVI S.E., 1888). Map drawn by David Austin.

3. Sources

The sources used in this draft report have been dominated by the extraordinarily rich set of surviving records of the Arnold and Harley tenure of Cwmyoy manor from 1546 to 1799. They are unpublished and are divided between the National Library of Wales (NLW) and the Harley Archive in Brampton Bryan. These NLW holdings seem to derive from the donation made by the Baker-Gabb firm of solicitors in Abergavenny who worked for so many of the great estates in the area for a large number of generations. The Harley collection is a remarkable accumulation of original documents and we are extremely grateful to Mr Edward Harley for his kind permission to view them. There is probably still much to find and the search will continue. Other sources include published and unpublished secondary material, as can be found in the bibliography. Of the unpublished material the MA thesis of Eddie Procter has been an important introduction to the historic landscapes of the Llanthony estate and we are very grateful for access to this through the web-pages of the Ewyas Lacy Study Group.

4. The estate and wider events

a) Early Medieval Ewyas: 6th century to 1066

The specific landscape of the upper Honddu valley only starts to appear in the documentary record at the beginning of the twelfth century in relation to events associated with the founding of Llanthony Priory by Hugh de Lacy as Lord of Ewyas. Before that we can only surmise that it formed part of the territory of a Welsh polity called Ewyas whose origins are the subject of legend and may have been much more extensive than it became by the 8th and 9th centuries, although serious scholars tend to dispute this. It is also possible that the origins of this territory began life in later prehistory with the presence of a large hill-fort, Twyn-y-Gaer perched above Llwyn Celyn at the southern end of the Ffwyddog Ridge (Fig. 2).

The first hard record of the kingdom is an entry in the 12th century Book of Llandaff (Davies 1978, 176; Davies 1979, 114) concerning the origins of Clodock church and an 8th-century (c. 740) grant of land around it whose western edge is the Haterall Ridge. The eponymous martyr of the narrative contextualising the land grant, Clydawg, is said to be 'King in Ewyas', although this might only refer to an overlordship as a king elsewhere. Other key early churches in Ewyas seem to have been Llanveynoe, north of Longtown (Ray 2001), Llancillo also in the Book of Llandaff c. 620 (Davies 1978, 170), and Llanthony itself with its origin story referring to an early church there (Craster 1963, 5). All these churches appear to have been under the episcopal leadership of St David's, although claimed as the territory of Llandaff and Llandeilo according to the submission of Bishop Urban in 1115-1119, who ordered the creation of the Book of Llandaff from older sources as his evidence.

The Book of Llandaff, in its charters and its assertion of a claim to a large swathe of the diocesan territory of St David's, from the Gower to the Black Mountains, contains clauses which describe common boundaries with the Vale of Ewyas and this strongly suggests that this was itself a defined territorial sub-entity within Ewyas itself long before the Norman Conquest. However, we can only begin to define this by mapping these other boundaries, and thus to isolate and so begin to discover the definable limits of the earliest documented Vale of Ewyas (Fig. 3).

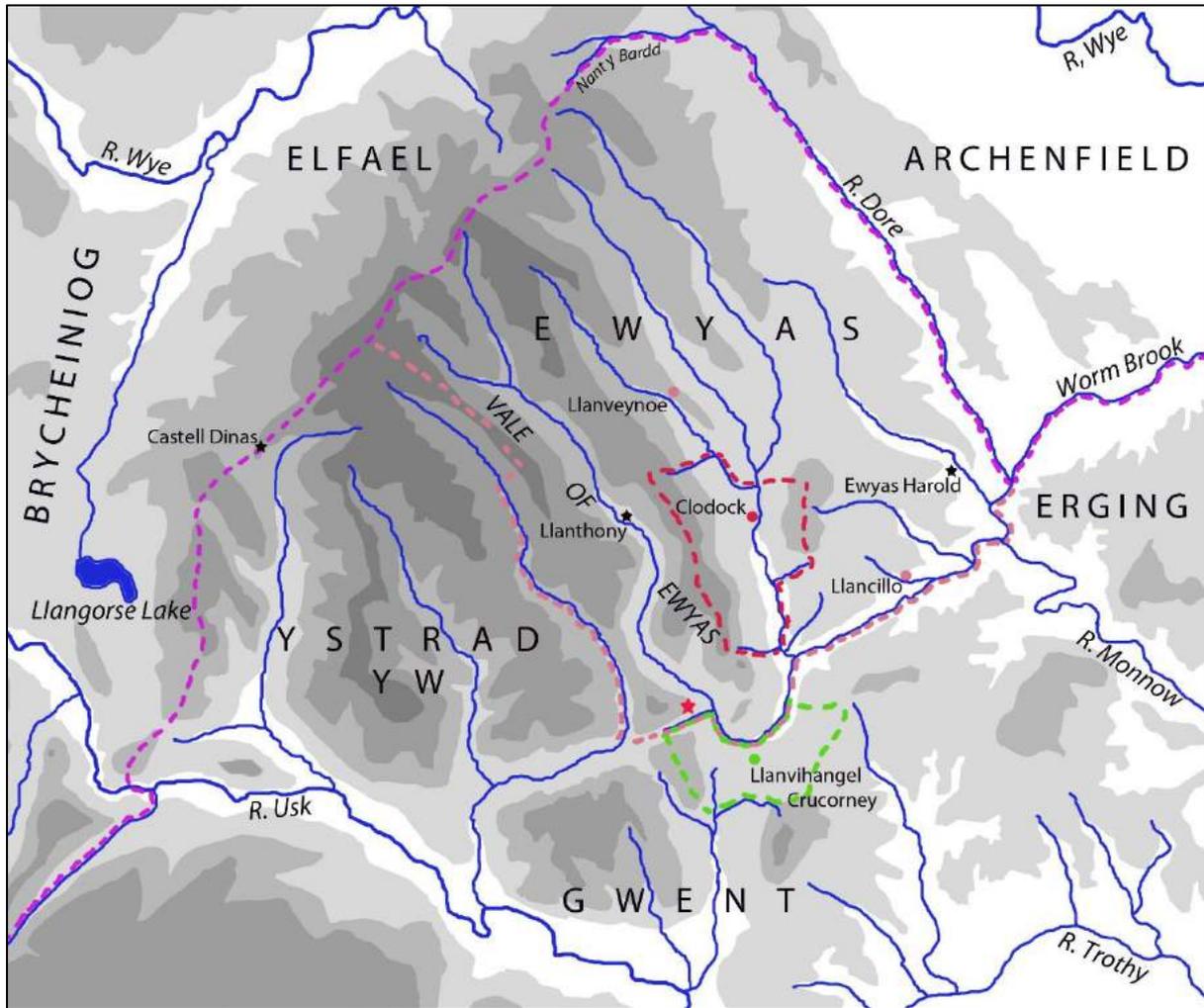


Figure 3: Boundaries in the Book of Llandaff which define Ewias and the Vale of Ewias. (Northern boundary of the claimed Diocese of Llandaff, purple pecked lines. Boundary of Clodock, red pecked lines. Boundary of Llanvihangel, green pecked lines. The southern boundary of Ewias, drawn from later manorial bounds of Ewias Lacy, pink pecked lines (Wedell 2009). N.B. the location of Llwyn Celyn continues to be marked with a red star.

In two separate descriptions of the northern limits of the territory claimed by the Llandaff diocese, we can trace the north-western and north-eastern boundaries of Ewias and the top of the Vale of Ewias. The first is the bounds of Llandaff/Llandeilo in the time of Dubricius, Bishop of Erging (490-545), including the territories of Ystrad Yw and Ewias (*The Book of Llandaff*, f.48r.), containing these indicators, from the River Usk in the west to the River Worm in the east:

....across the Usk to Cil Idris, to Allt Lwyd, to Lech Bichlit on Pinnmarch, to Guornoid, to Rhyd-nant, to the middle of Din Marchtan, to the Goat path, to the breast of Cader Neveni, to the spring of the Grwyne, to Guartha Bwch, to the Vincul, to the Priddell, to Hal Ruva, to the Stone of the Bardd, along the Bardd brook right to the Dore, along it right to the Worm....

The second is the bounds in the time of Oudoceus, Bishop of Llandeilo Fawr (between c.650 and 700), (*The Book of Llandaff*, f.67v.) with these indicators:

....Across the Usk to Cil Idris, to the Allt Lwyd, to Bychit, to the Cecynypynmarch, to Guomoyd, to Rhyd nant, to the middle of DinMarchlythan, to Olygdar to Bron Cader, to the breast of Cader Neveni, to the source of Guomoyd, to Guartha Bwch y Fingal, to Brydell, to Hal Ruma, to Maeny Bardd, at the spring of Nant y Barth. Along Nant y Barth downwards till it falls into the Dour. Along the Dour downwards till it falls into the Guormwy

These are the same boundary, running from the River Usk at modern Cil-wlch a mile to the west of Llangynidr, along the western edge of the Black Mountains (Cefn Moel, Mynydd Llangorse and Mynydd Troed) before then turning north-westwards passing through the middle of the massive hill-fort at Castell Dinas (Din Marchlythan) just above Talgarth. It then climbs back up on to the top of the scarp edge via the Goat Path (Olygdar) to the northern end of the Gader Ridge (Cader Neveni or mod. Wel. *Gadair Nefeni*). It then passes across the top of the source of the Grwynne Fawr (Guomoyd) and the top of the Honddu at what is today known as the Gospel Pass, but whose original name was Gwartha Bwlch y Fingal (*The Hill of Fingal's Pass*). Then it passes to Bridell, perhaps Hay Bluff, to a location called Hal Ruma (or Ruva) otherwise unknown, although the 1086 Domesday Book Herefordshire entry for a place called Ruvenore has been interpreted as Mynnyddbridd by Thorn & Thorn (1983, 23.4), which should be (or on) the ridge (Cefn Hill) just to the north-west of the site of Craswall Grandmontine Priory. It then passes down to a standing stone called Maen y Bardd and then on to the source of the Nant y Bardd. Today there is a standing stone at NGR SO280 399 close to the source of the modern Nant y Bar which seems to fit. Then down this stream to the river Dore and down this to a confluence with the River Worm south of Ewyas Harold.

This boundary identifies the Black Mountains as a coherent geographical and political unit projecting a long way northwards from the main part of the claimed Llandaff diocese. Within this are the polities of Ystradyw, the western valleys of the Black Mountains centred perhaps on Crickhowell, and Ewyas itself probably reaching as far east as the River Dore, although there may have been, on the western side of this river, a rump of Erging, after much had been taken for Anglo-Saxon Archenfield.

Another charter in the *Book of Llandaff* also gives us a useful boundary which shows that Ewyas was broken down into smaller components, part claimed by the early church. This charter concerned land given in the early eighth century to the martyr church or monastery of Clodock, and the bounds clearly identify what is now the eastern boundary of the Vale of Ewyas, including Cwmyoy. This is essentially the Haterall Ridge and the relevant part reads:

The stone in the Weun Vraith on the Cecin, along it to Rhiw Gwrw, to the stone on the Cecin of the Allt, along the Cecin, upwards as far as the stones opposite to Nant Trineint, along it downwards as far as into the Olchon.....Along the Monnow downwards as far as Aber Ffynnon Bist, [along the Ffynnon Bist] as far as its source. From its source to the Cecin straight upwards making for the Weun Vraith on the Cecin of the mountain, as far

as the stone, where the boundary began. (Davies 1978, 176, *Book of Llandaff*, Charter 81, f.85v).

Nina Wedell of the Ewyas Lacy Study Group has recently mapped this boundary (Wedell 2008) and this is reproduced here (Fig. 4), although I have diverged a little from this on Fig. 3 in identifying Hilin as the northern of the two streams, as does William Rees (1933):

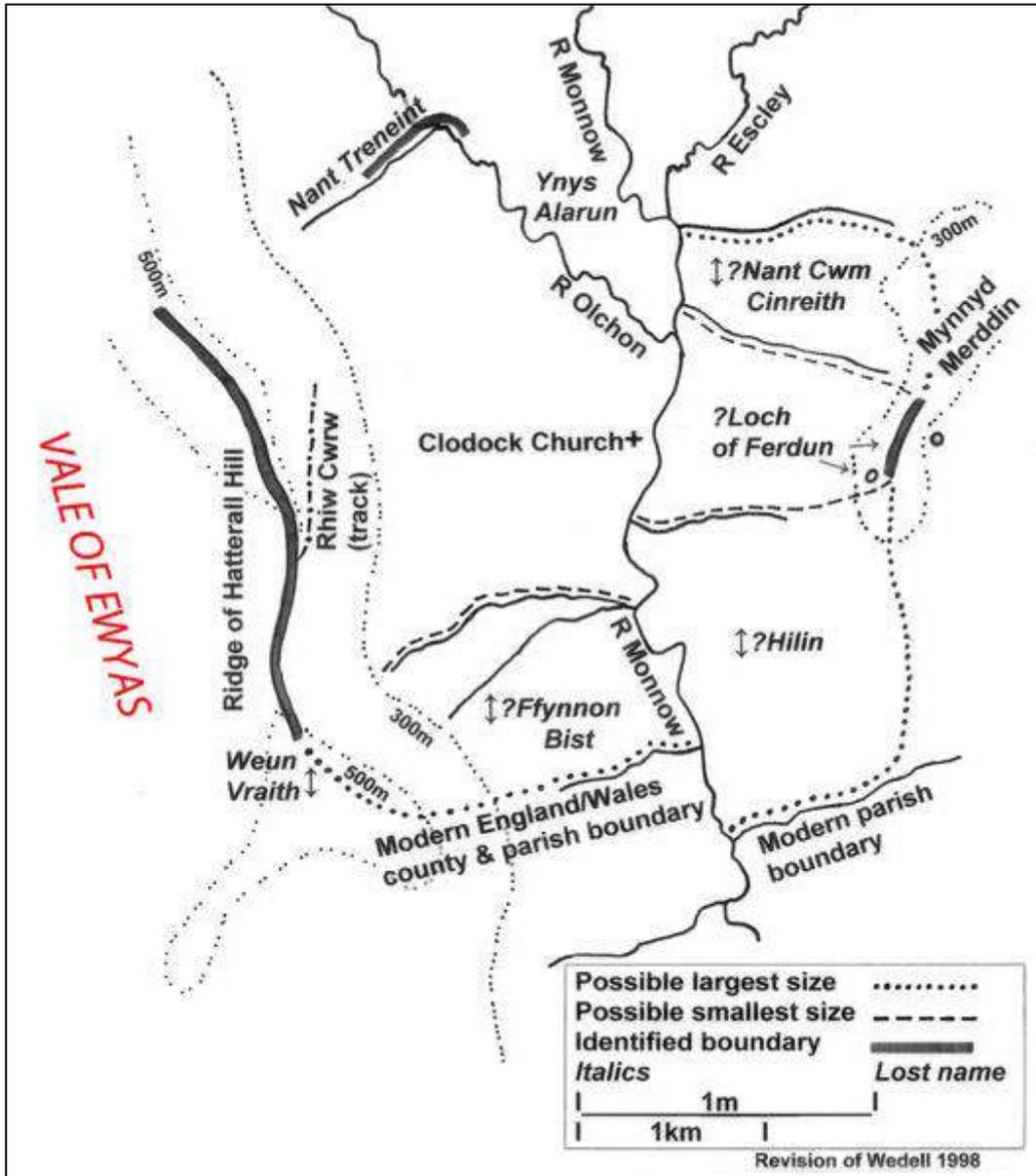


Figure 4: Nina Wedell's reconstruction of the bounds of Clodock (Wedell 2008)

A final charter gives us what appears to be the southern boundary, although there are difficulties in identifying some of its vaguer elements, although the relevant part is actually quite clear. It concerns a grant of land by Morgan Hen, King of Morgannwg (942-74) relating to nine churches, including Llanfihangel Crucorney (Cruc Cornou), the boundary of which reads:

Along the meadow, on the south side, as far as the Gwver. Through the meadow along the Gwver downwards as far the Hodni, (Honddi). Up the Hodni as far as Aber Ffynnon Vechan. Along the Gwver upwards to its spring. From its spring over the Allt in a straight line downwards as far as the Weun to the meadow, where the boundary began. (*Book of Llandaff*, Charter 135, f. 99v.)

It is uncertain what the Gwver was, although it was probably the valley lands to the south of the modern village among the headwaters of the Gavenny. However, it is clear that the boundary ran upstream along the Afon Honddu until its confluence with the Ffynnon Fechan. It is probable that this is the small stream later called Nant Ddu forming today the southern boundary of Cwmyoy. The ancient parish boundary ran up this stream to its source and it can only be presumed that the repeated reference to the Gwver at this point is an error and was actually meant to be Ffynnon Vechan again as would be normal in such clauses. If this is the case then the boundary of Llanfihangel Crucorney rises onto the ridge of Bryn Arw (the Allt of the charter) and down to its southern shoulder (Weun, mod. Welsh *waun*) then back to the starting meadow. Even in the tenth century, therefore, Llanfihangel Crucorney was in the Kingdom of Morgannwg, formerly Gwent and formed the southern edge of Ewys.

Ewys before the 10th century bordered, therefore, another, larger polity to the east called Ergyng by then into a rump separated from its larger original by the creation of Archenfield by the Anglo-Saxon Hwicce, while Ystrad Yw and Brycheiniog lay to the west, with Gwent to the south and Elfael in the Wye valley to the north (Fig. 3). At times too it would seem that Ewys may have been absorbed first into Ergyng and then into Gwent or Glwysing.

An early Welsh record preserved in the *Red Book of the Exchequer* of about 1100 puts Ewys as one of 4 'commotes' making up the larger region of one cantref, the commotes being Talgarth, Ergyng, Ewys and Crickhowell (Coplestone-Crow 1989, 6; *The Red Book of the Exchequer*, 761). As this record post-dates the Norman Conquest, it is thought to reflect an ancient administrative division of Welsh lands: Coplestone-Crow argues that since at least the 10th century, Ergyng, the neighbour of Ewys to the east, had been in the sphere of Saxon settlement which by the 11th century had reached the eastern fringe of Ewys along the Dore valley (Coplestone-Crow 1989, 5; Page 1908, 347-52). It is, however, to be noted that, *contra* the above, William Rees in his map of Wales Administrative Divisions (Rees 1951, Plate 28; Richards 1969) Ewys is in the Morgannwg/Gwent commote of Uwch Coed.

In the period 1051-2, according to the E version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 'Frenchmen', taken to be Norman followers of Edward the Confessor, appear to have built two castles, and one called Pentecost's Castle is usually taken to be Ewys Harold (Brown, R.A. 1976, 43). It is argued that this castle, built on the western edge of the territory of Godwin, Earl of Mercia, in his absence, was a boundary fortification against the Welsh. In 1086 this castle and 5 carucates of land at Ewys Harold were held by Alfred of Marlborough directly of the king, but as granted by Count William (FitzOsbern), Earl of Hereford (Thorn and Thorn 19, 1).

b) Ewyas and the Normans 1066-1100

Following the Conquest in 1066, Ewyas remained in Welsh hands briefly under Rydderch ap Caradog (died 1076), apparently as a client ruler of Ewyas subject to William the Conqueror (Remfrey 1997, 3). In this account Ewyas can be seen to have been preserved as an intact entity into the later 11th century and it was acquired shortly afterwards by Walter de Lacy, a prominent member of the Conqueror's inner core of soldiers. In 1069 he had gone into Wales with William Fitz Osbern, Earl of Hereford, against the people of Brecknock led by the Welsh princes, Rhys ap Owen, Cadogan ap Blethyn, and Meredith ap Owen. These they attacked and defeated. It was probably at this point that the lordship was granted, along with many others (163 manors in 7 counties) including what became his principal stronghold at Ludlow in Shropshire. Walter would probably originally have been a subinfeudatory of the Earl of Hereford (Coplestone-Crow 2000, 21). Subsequently de Lacy assisted Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, and Urso d'Abitot, sheriff of Worcestershire, in preventing the passing of the Severn by the Earls of Hereford and Norfolk, as they tried to effect a junction of their forces in their rising against William I in 1075 (Douglas 1964, 231–233). With the suppression of the Earldom of Hereford following the failure of this rebellion, Walter de Lacy came to hold Ewyas and their other lands as tenants-in-chief of the king, as documented in Domesday Book (Coplestone-Crow 2000, 22). Walter de Lacy died in an accident at Hereford Cathedral in 1085 and it was his son, Roger, who held the land in 1086.

At this date, the Domesday survey shows Ewyas still as an entity (*terra*) in its own right, still beyond the civil jurisdiction of the shire and also outside of the feudal and Marcher castlery of Ewyas Harold. The full entry reads:

Roger has a land called Ewias within the boundary of Ewias. This land does not belong to the castlery nor to the hundred. From this land Roger has 15 sesters of honey, 15 pigs when the men are there, and (administers) justice over them' (Thorn & Thorn 1983, 10,2).

The renders of honey and pigs show that the landscape was probably still heavily wooded and the detachment from English systems of authority suggests also that the land was probably still under a form of tenure governed by Welsh rather than English law.

One of the things that may have been happening at this time, although not directly documented was the imposition of Forest Law over significant areas of the Ewyas Lacy lordship. This was common in upland areas where hunting rights were being reserved to lords in the early post-Conquest period, although it is also clear that these often consolidated pre-existing hunting grounds. Indeed the first clear reference to Ewyas in the account of Clwydog's martyrdom given as background to the Clodock charter tells the story of a king in Ewyas out hunting, perhaps in the upper valleys of the Olchon and Dore. Another advantage to the Norman lords, one actively resisted by tenants, was that Forest Law, by definition as *forinsecta (foresta)*, i.e. beyond suit of common law, put the land and both its customary and free tenants under the arbitrary and direct jurisdiction of the lord himself. In this way upland areas, often remote and subject to local custom and practice not

always in the lord's best interests, could be managed in a peremptory and sometimes brutal fashion. Whole tracts of the borderland and disputed landscapes of the northern Pennines, for example, were placed under Forest Law, often in contiguous blocks from one lordship to another (Austin 2007, 84, fig. 3.1). By the fourteenth century (Rees 1933; Linnard 2000, 240, Appendix 2: Named Woods and Forests in South Wales, Fourteenth Century), we can identify five such forests in the upland parts of Ewyas: the Forest of Monnow; Forest Hen; Forest Olchon; and Forest Ffwddog. To these we must add the forest areas of Cwmyoy manor identified in the early 16th century documents as 'forest waste of the lord'. This forest jurisdiction may lie behind an otherwise inexplicable statement in an early 13th century charter of Walter de Lacy II (d. 1241) that the prior had jurisdiction in Honddu Slade over hunting rights and over assault, murder, bloodshed and breaches of the peace, including theft, homicide, rape and arson. No steward, constable, bailiff or forester from elsewhere might enter his jurisdiction (*Monasticon*, 138). This charter was confirmed by Henry III in 1324 showing that the Priory's legal reach covered both upland and valley floor where he gave, *in extenso*, to the Prior and canons, the power of holding courts with jurisdiction upon all offences, of whatever kind, whether against person or property; and he adds: " I grant that they shall have a gallows to belong to their court of justice, and to do justice in what part of their lands they shall think fit" (*Cal Ch. 1300-1326*, 475; Roberts 1846). This is a perfect description of Forest Law and the lawlessness (from the lord's perspective) requiring such localised and summary powers may have been endemic to the remoteness of this area. Gerald of Wales makes direct reference to this early in his travels around Wales in 1188:

To the east stretch the Black Mountains of Talgarth and Ewias. The natives of these parts are much given to implacable quarrels and never-ending disputes. They spend their time fighting each other and shed their blood freely in internecine feuds. I leave it to others to tell you about their inhuman crimes which have been committed there in their own lifetime: marriages most cruelly brought about, inflicted rather than contracted, only to be cut short by separation and blood-shed, and many other savage acts of violence. (*Giraldus Cambrensis*, 96)

Such a reputation, filtered perhaps also through Gerald's notoriously jaundiced eye, may also have stemmed from a resistant and persistent usage of Welsh customary law by the indigenous communities of this area of the March: 'law-less' in the sense that it was not English law. That Llanthony Priory was seen as a very English and alien Marcher presence was witnessed by Gerald himself as well as the later events of severe depredation by incursions of Welsh political and military action from the 12th to 15th centuries.

Roger de Lacy held the territory of Ewyas de Lacy in 1086 among some 96 lordships in all, the majority in Gloucestershire. In 1095, however, he supported the rebellions of Odo of Bayeux and Roger de Mowbray of Northumberland, an act for which he was attainted by William II. His lands were passed by the king to Roger's brother, Hugh de Lacy, who remained lord of Ewyas until his death at some date between 1113 and 1115.

c) The founding and early years of Llanthony Priory: 1100-1175

The de Lacy family, during the course of the 12th century, played an essential role in the creation of a monastery in the Vale of Ewyas. It was during the first Hugh de Lacy's tenure that we have the founding narrative of Llanthony Priory, as told in three separate texts:

1. Latin *History of Llanthony* purporting to be written by an anonymous monk of the priory and thought to be a source for Giraldus Cambrensis (*Anonymous History*)
2. *Mirror of the Life of the Venerable Robert de Betun, Bishop of Hereford, by William de Wycombe* Robert was the second prior and William the fourth (1137 to c. 1150) Lambeth Palace MS 475 ff 109-80 (*William of Wycombe*)
3. Giraldus, 1188, though doubtful whether he passed through the valley during this particular itinerary, probable that he knew Llanthony as he lived at Llandell, near Brecon. (*Giraldus Cambrensis*, 96-108)

The story is well-known (e.g. Craster 1963, 5-6; *Ch. Henry*, 1-2): towards the end of the 11th century, Hugh de Lacy, lord of Ewyas, William de Lacy, his relative and a knight in his retinue, and others were hunting across the upland areas of the lordship. They entered the remote valley of Ewyas and William lying down to rest fell to thinking about his life and in that spot he saw a ruined chapel of St David. He there and then decided to give up his worldly way of life and spend his time rather in contemplation and study as a hermit in that location. A little later, after William 'had lived long in that place', his reputation attracted the attention of Ernisius who had been chaplain to Queen Matilda, wife of Henry I and in 1103 he visited William and decided to join him in the eremitic life. Together they attracted a number of followers, building a church probably on the site of the later Priory church, and this was consecrated by the Bishops of Llandaff and Hereford in 1108 and dedicated to St John the Baptist. Hugh de Lacy, lord of Ewyas, gave this fledgling community grants of land and money, most particularly the Vale of Ewyas at its core. After seeking advice from Anselm Archbishop of Canterbury who died in 1109 and probably from Queen Matilda as well, Ernisius, it is said in the *Anonymous History*, persuaded a reluctant William to agree to found a convent of the Augustinian order, which had not long arrived in England, at Colchester in 1107. Monks from other houses of this order, notably Merton, Holy Trinity London and Colchester arrived to join the community, with full adoption of the Augustinian Rule about 1118 (Craster 1963, 6), although this might be earlier.

Among the first grants to Llanthony given by Hugh de Lacy and Pain Fitz John were the manors which came to be known as 'Hothneyslade' within and to the south of the Vale of Ewyas. A confirmation of this grant by King Henry I has recently been translated, transcribed and analysed by Carpenter (*Ch. Henry I*, pp. 16-18) as follows:

H(enricus) rex Angl(orum)a et dux Normannorum omnibus archiepiscopis episcopis abbatibus et omnibus baronibus suis francis et anglis et omnibus sancte ecclesie filiis salutem. Notum sit uobis omnibus me concessisse ecclesie sancti Iohannis Baptiste in

Lanthoeni et fratribus ibi deo seruiantibus pro mea salute et uxoris mee et pro animabus patris mei et matris mee et uxoris mee Matild(is) et filii mei Willelmi et antecessorum meorum [1] quicquid Hugo de Laceio et Paganus filius Iohannis eidem predicte ecclesie in elemosinam dederunt scilicet Commiou et Rethresanc et Rethwernan et Veterem uillam....

Henry king of the English and duke of the Normans to all archbishops bishops abbots and all his barons French and English and all sons of holy church greeting. Be it known to you all that I have granted to the church of St John the Baptist in Llanthony and the brethren there serving God for my salvation and that of my wife and for the souls of my father and my mother and my wife Matilda and my son William and my ancestors [1] whatever Hugh de Lacy and Pain fitz John gave to the foresaid church in alms, namely Cwmyoy (Monm) and Rethresanc (? Redcastle, Mon) and Rethwernan (unidentified) and Vetus Villa (Oldcastle, Mon)....

Although this charter is fabricated, there is little doubt that it provides a good guide to the early benefactions of Llanthony. §§ 1–6 are repeated almost verbatim at the beginning of Henry II's general confirmation of 1155 (H2/1602). The papal confirmations of 1131 and 1146 do not follow this charter so closely and sometimes provide additional information. The 1131 papal confirmation gives more detailed information on the gifts in the immediate vicinity of the priory: 'in ualle uidelicet circa ipsam ecclesiam prata et pascua certis metis distincta et de nemore, quantum sufficit fratrum necessitatibus, que ex dono Hugonis predicte ecclesie fundatoris et Pagani Iohannis filii concessione eidem sunt ecclesie attributa, inferius in eadem ualle Rumenou, Cunnou, Rederessou et uetus castellum' [DA translates this as: 'in the valley around the church itself meadows and floodlands distinguished by certain bounds and of wood-pasture, as much as would satisfy the needs of the brothers which by the gift of Hugh, the founder of the aforesaid church, and Pain Fitz John were assigned by grant to the same church, lower down in the same valley *Rumenou*, *Cwmyoy*, *Redcastle* and *Oldcastle*'].]

The confirmation charter of 1324, mentioned above, identifies what was meant by 'the valley around the church':

...all the valley with all its appurtenances, in which the church of St. John Baptist, of the first Llanthony, is situated; to wit, on one side of Kevencassec and Askaresweye and along the Ruggesweye up to Autefyn and on the side of Haterel from the land of Seisel son of Gilbert by the Ruggewey to the bounds of Talgarth

This might be identified as a boundary which passes northwards up the Ffwyddog [Cefn Carreg (?)] and the road of Ys Gares (perhaps Y Gaer, that is Twyn y Gaer) and along the ridge way up to Allt y Ffin [Autefyn], and on the Haterall side from the land of Seisel son of Gilbert [Old Castle] by another ridgeway to the boundary of Talgarth land. As a description this might suggest that the whole valley was granted along the tops of the two main ridges and around the top above Hay and Talgarth where the boundary of Llandaff was defined in the *Book of Llandaff* (as in fig. 3). However, at some point, and probably before the grant was made to found Llanthony Priory, the territory of Ewyas had lost the upper part of the Honddu valley to the lordship of Hay. This area, or sub-manor, was called Glenhothney,

forming part of the Welshry (area under Welsh legal and customary practice of tenure and render) of the Lordship of Hay. This may have been exchanged for the sub-manor of Cusop to the north of Hay Bluff, but there is no extant evidence for this and an explanation is hard to see. Whatever the reason for the exchange, it is now at this point we can map the extent and nature of the land given to Llanthony and the high medieval shape of what became known as the Lordship of Ewyas Lacy (Fig. 5).

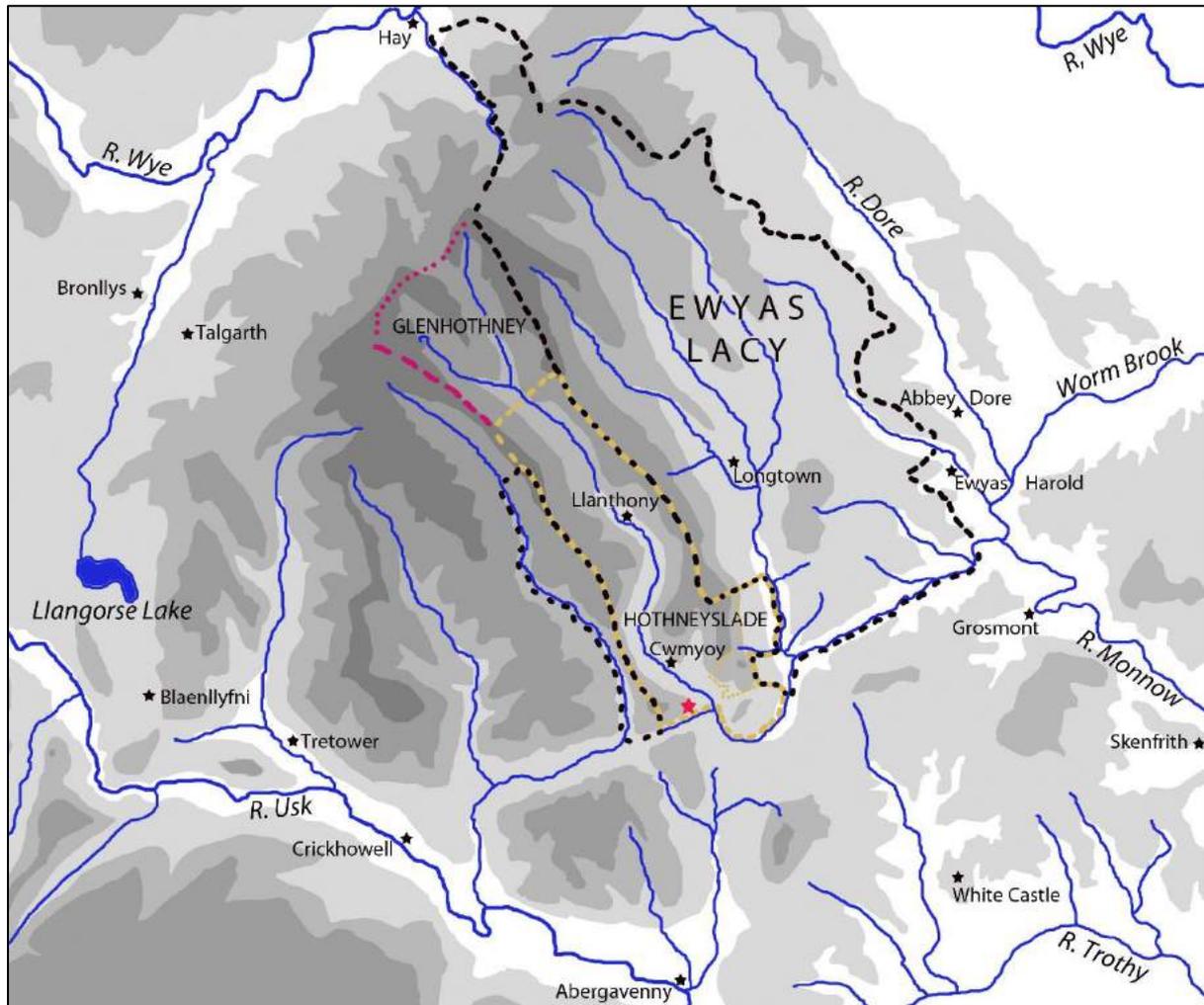


Figure 5: The core lands of Llanthony (Hothneyslade including the Priory demesne, the manor of Cwmyoy and the sub-manors of Redcastle and Oldcastle) and the extent of the Lordship of Ewyas Lacy. The portion of the Welshry of the Lordship of Hay (Glenhothney) in the upper part of the Honddu valley is marked in red.

We also have some sense of what this landscape looked like at the time. In the anonymous history we find:

‘very fruitful pastures...and rich meadows for feeding cattle which did compensate for the barrenness of other parts, and made amends for the want of corn’. (*Anonymous History* cited by Roberts 1847, 48)

Gerald of Wales in his tour of Wales with Archbishop Baldwin in 1188 passed through this area and made this comment about the landscapes of the early years at Llanthony:

In their desire for poverty, they refused many offers of manors and churches in these early years. Situated as they were in the wilderness, they refused to permit the overgrown recesses of the valley, where it widened out into an impenetrable wood, ever to be cleared or levelled off to make an open meadow, for they had no wish to abandon their eremitical mode of life. In the end it started acquiring wealth and endowments at tremendous speed. (*Giraldus Cambrensis*, 100)

A little earlier in extolling the healthy virtues of the place he says of the monks of 1188:

As they sit in their cloisters in this monastery, breathing the fresh air, the monks gaze up at distant prospects which rise above their own lofty roof-tops, and there they see, as far as their eye can reach, mountain peaks which rise to meet the sky and often enough herds of wild deer which are grazing on their summits....This was formerly a happy, a delightful spot, most suited to the life of contemplation, a place from its first founding fruitful and to itself sufficient. Once it was free, but it has since been reduced to servitude, through the boundless extravagance of the English, its own reputation for rich living, uncontrolled ambition, the ever-growing vice of ingratitude, the negligence of its prelates and patrons and, far worse than all of these, the fact that the daughter house [Llanthony-by-Gloucester], become a step-daughter, has odiously and enviously supplanted its own mother. (*Giraldus Cambrensis*, 97-8)

What this all suggests is that the upper part of the Vale of Ewyas, in the area where the first church was built, was, for a while at least, largely an area of some clearance in wood pastures on the valley floor with denser woodland on the valley sides, while the mountain tops were open and clear moorland, still well-stocked with game. It is this wood pasture which became, in due course, the core of the Abbey demesne which, in the early 16th century, consisted of 438 acres stocked with cattle and sheep and including rabbit warrens and fish weirs (*Valor Eccl.* ii, 431). It is also just possible that this was the land of the pre-Conquest chapel of St David mentioned in the foundation histories. Further down the valley were named communities, including Cwmyoy itself, suggesting that these lands were already settled by farmers exploiting at least some arable ground, albeit still perhaps largely pastoral in their economy.

The eremitic paradise described in these early sources did not long survive being partly, as Gerald intimated, a victim of its own success: there were over forty canons at Llanthony by the 1120's. Ernisius was the first Prior and, when some time later he died, he was succeeded by Robert de Bethune who a little while later, in 1131, became the Bishop of Hereford. After this and during the fraught years of the 12th century there were a number of priors who, in one way or another, did not help the fortunes or reputation of the house (for the biographies of all the Priors of Llanthony and principal events see the website *Monastic Wales*). The troubles were, however, much compounded by the uncertainties of the times and this began in the period of Robert of Bethune's successor, Prior Robert de Braci (1131-37).

One uncertainty was the problematic issue of the Lacy succession and hence of the Priory's patronage. Hugh de Lacy had remained lord of Ewyas, but died between 1113 and 1115 without male issue. What happened at this point to the Ewyas lordship is unclear and scholars disagree about its succession particularly in the difficult years of the war of Stephen and Matilda. Most scholars believe that the land passed to his daughter Sybil de Lacy and

thus to her husband, Pain Fitz John, on their marriage in 1115 (Keats-Rohan 1999, 919; Green 2006, 133; Dalton 1996, 360; Holden 2008, 17-18; Wightman 1966, 175). Others believe, however, that the Sybil whom Pain married was actually the daughter of Geoffrey Talbot and his wife Agnes thought to be the daughter of the attainted Roger de Lacy and hence Hugh's niece (Mason 2008; Cokayne 1982, 270-1; Coplestone-Crow 1995, 179; Crouch 2000, 79 fn.21). Pain was named as Lord of Ewyas by Gerald of Wales in his account of an incident near Llangorse Lake (*Giraldus Cambrensis*, 94). Pain's stronghold was Ludlow Castle and he sought to increase his holdings in that area. Pain was killed in 1137, according to the *Chronicle of John of Worcester*, during an ambush by the Welsh as he led a relief expedition to Carmarthen, and the inheritance passed to his daughter Cecily who then married, later that same year, Roger FitzMiles, the son of Milo, the first Earl of Hereford.

However, in all this mix, there was uncertainty as Roger de Lacy's son, Gilbert, had also laid claim to the ancestral holdings and sought tirelessly to recover them (Wightman 1966, 169-70). By 1133 Gilbert had inherited his father's unconfiscated lands in Normandy and by 1136 was in England with King Stephen (Keats-Rohan, 536-8). In the later 1140's Gilbert was able to recover his father's Welsh Marcher lands (Lewis 2004). By 1138 Gilbert was fighting on the side of the Empress Matilda and in June 1153, de Lacy was in the company of Matilda's son, Henry fitz Empress, who became King Henry II of England in 1154, thus backing the right side in the end (Crouch 2000, 274). Gilbert surrendered his lands to his eldest son, Robert in 1158 when he went on Crusade with the Templars, but in 1162 Robert died without an heir and his younger brother, Hugh, inherited. Hugh, the fourth Baron Lacy, played a key role in Henry II's campaigns to annexe Ireland in the later 12th century and was granted Meath in 1172, a holding he ensured in 1177, along with interests in Offaly, Clare and Wicklow.

All these uncertainties of succession and patronage were compounded by wider political considerations impinging on the life of the Vale of Ewyas. When Henry I died in 1135, the Welsh broke out in a series of attacks on Anglo-Norman authority which had been established quite extensively, if not entirely securely, across the native principalities and territories (Davies 1987, 45-55). The capacity of the English, whether king or Marcher lord was limited by the turmoil of the dispute between Stephen and Matilda in which allegiance and power shifted and even the Welsh themselves became engaged. As we have seen, the secular patron of Llanthony Pain Fitz John, Lord of Ewyas, was killed on 10 July 1137. Even before that the prior and canons at Llanthony were feeling vulnerable and there had almost certainly been local attacks on the possessions of this very English establishment in the Vale of Ewyas. As a result Robert de Bethune, the former prior, now Bishop of Hereford, invited the monks to take refuge with him in his palace at Hereford itself (Craster 1963, 6).

It was Robert who then persuaded Miles of Gloucester, then Constable of England and Castellain of Gloucester, to assist the Llanthony community with a grant of land sufficient for them to establish a second, and safer, home. This was consecrated in 1136 and soon after Miles' son Roger had married the Fitz John heiress, Cecily. Miles and his son changed sides in early 1139 to follow the Empress Matilda who rewarded him by conferring on him the title of Earl of Hereford in 1141. The land for the new conventual buildings was on the south-western outskirts of Gloucester itself and there were many grants of land in

Gloucestershire and neighbouring counties which followed. Llanthony Secunda or Llanthony-by-Gloucester, as it came variously to be called, was conceived originally as a daughter cell and dependency of Llanthony Prima or Llanthony-in-Wales. It was intended that all but thirteen of the canons should return to Wales when security returned there, and, indeed certain canons did visit the mother house for some months each year (Craster 1963, 6-7). Gerald of Wales, who in his youth in the 1160's may even have accompanied one of these visits while he was himself in Gloucester Abbey, was scathing and entirely judgmental about what happened in the decades following the establishment of Llanthony Secunda:

In my opinion it is a fact worthy of remark that all the priors who did harm to the establishment about which I am telling you were punished by God when their moment came to die. Prior William [of Wycombe, 1137-c.1150] who was the first to despoil the house of its herds and stores, was deposed in the end [for being too severe] and expelled by the brothers, with the result that he was held unworthy to be buried with the other priors. Clement [of Gloucester, c.1150-c.1174] seemed to be attached to the place, and he spent much of his time there in study and prayer. All the same he followed the example of the priest Eli [I Samuel, 2], in that he made no attempt to reprove the brothers or to restrain them when they plundered the house and committed other outrages. In the end he died from a paralytic stroke. Prior Roger [of Norwich, c.1174-c.1189] did even more damage than his predecessors. He did not even try to disguise the fact that he was busy stealing every single thing which they had left behind. He stripped the church of all its books, ornaments and charters. Long before his death he became paralysed. He resigned from appointment, but he lingered on from day to day as a very sick man. Some short time later he died without recovering his health. (*Giraldus Cambrensis*, 98-9)

d) Llanthony Priory and the de Lacy revival: 1175-1241

Things were, however, already getting better for Llanthony-in-Wales, at least materially. Henry II had come to the English throne, a degree of accommodation was reached with regional Welsh rulers and the March, inasmuch as it ever did, was settling down (Davies 1987, 94). Much was also achieved in releasing the pressure of dynastic rivalry when Henry II undertook the royal conquest of Ireland in 1171 during which he drew many members of Marcher families to the project. One of these was Hugh de Lacy, son of Gilbert who had by then recovered his family's interests in the March, including the lordship of Ewyas. Hugh was made Lord of Meath in 1172, a position in which he was confirmed when he broke local resistance in 1177. As a result Llanthony benefited, receiving the church of Drogheda and many other grants in Ireland (*Irish Cartularies*; Cowley 1977, 31-32; Hogan 2007; Simms 1988) and on the back of this handsome revenue stream splendid new architecture was created in the Vale of Ewyas. It is this phase of building which still provides the bulk of the architectural experience at Llanthony Prima (Craster 1963, Newman *et al* 2002, 338-350). Although Craster feels that work began as early as 1175, Newman is of the view that it probably started only after the death of Prior Roger of Norwich in 1189, whom Gerald of Wales had accused of such major despoliation of the mother house. Whatever the start date the buildings were completed in one campaign of work by 1230 perhaps with a pause between 1186 when Hugh de Lacy died and 1194 when his son, Walter was confirmed in his lordship of Meath. The success of this building campaign must have been due in large part to an agreement, struck in 1205 under pressure from Henry de Bohun, Earl of Gloucester,

for the two Llanthony priories to separate and become independent (Williams 2009-10, 18-19). For twelve years, however, Llanthony Prima was allowed to retain the substantial revenues from Duleek church in Ireland for the sole purpose of funding the completion of the building programme.

It might have been at about this time too that matters were sufficiently settled administratively and economically for the priory in the Vale of Ewyas to begin to pursue reforms in the running of its estate. About 1214 Walter de Lacy gave Llanthony Prima a new charter in most cases reaffirming earlier grants, but as David Williams comments, it was regarded almost as if it were a founding charter and constant reference was made to it later and was reaffirmed on several occasions. Somewhere also, between 1216 and 1220, the Lord of Abergavenny and Breson, Reginald de Braose, confirmed earlier grants and made his own benefactions (Williams 2009-10, 33). This has all the feel of a new start, with secure and sufficient income, not only to complete the ambitious architectures but also to give the community a long-term sense of stability. Notably the building programme saw the creation of a precinct for the conventual buildings and this might perhaps have involved, at the same time, the creation of the demesne, a home farm, which became a feature of the medieval and post-medieval landscape around the priory (Evans *et al* 1984). Whether or not this reform extended further than the demesne into the lands of Hothneyslade we are unlikely to know from documentary sources. However, the house was re-gaining its reputation in the outside world and in 1242 Archbishop Albert of Armagh praised the monastery, following a period of exile there:

Situated in the midst of two warring nations ... you extend the hands of charity to both, being liberal to guests, merciful to the poor and compassionate towards the weak and infirm. (*Irish Cartularies*, 25)

e) Llanthony's difficult years: 1241-1481

This, however, may have been a high point, for in 1241 Walter de Lacy died and the strong patronage of the de Lacy family ended with inheritance passing to two grand-daughters, Margery and Maud. The evidence suggests that, after this in the later 13th and early 14th centuries, the going was getting tougher. In 1276 at the time of the first Edwardian campaign in Wales, a royal clerk was appointed to oversee the priory's temporal affairs since it was, by then, in debt (*Cal Pat 1272-1291*, 232). On three separate occasions in 1277, 1279 and 1299 cattle were seized, and very expensive and protracted litigation followed in the king's courts. In the 1279 incident, it was the lord of Ewyas Lacy himself, Thomas de Verdun, Margary's son, who not only took cattle, but also seized the priory lands at Redcastle and Oldcastle. Some of this was clearly about debt and the house being unable to fulfill its obligations: David Williams suggests that this may have caused at least two priors to be ill or seek to resign (Williams 2009-10, 23-4).

The most penetrating and damning of all the commentaries on Llanthony at this time, however, resulted from the visitation of John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury, made in 1284, just at the end of the second Edwardian campaign (*Reg. Peckham*, 800-805). The impositions he placed on the house were extensive and reveal the monastery as being in total administrative and spiritual disarray (Cowley 1977, 104-107). He ordered, for example, the appointment of a layman as Steward and the creation of a central treasury responsible for regular audits. There were a series of punishments for recalcitrant canons offending

against the rule and secular law, and the provision of a prison for the more severe cases was ordered. All of this suggests that in the atmosphere of war and unrest, the priory was struggling badly, although this cannot be ascribed to the lack of wealth. In the *Taxatio* of 1291 (*Taxatio Eccl.*), Llanthony's income from its manors in Britain and Ireland amounted to some £230 *per annum* (Robinson 1980, i, 120).

The next century was no better and the impression is of a house in severe decline with persistent internal problems and lack of leadership. From 1301 to 1399 there were several recorded incidents of trouble, some involving physical violence (Cowley 1977, 134). In 1348 the Priory was taken back into royal administration, presumably again for being in financial difficulties (*Cal Pat. 1348-50*, 217), and in 1381 only seven monks were registered for the Poll Tax: the Sub-Prior Ralph, Walter Crok, John Mara, John Abergavenny, Nicholas Carylum, Robert Winter and John Loundon (Jurkowski 2009). There would also have been serious difficulties with the Black Death and its consequences in mid-century, although nothing is specifically known about this at Llanthony. Then, at the very end of the century, this troubled institution was, like many others in Wales, given a near-fatal blow.

Between 1399 and 1405, the valley and the Priory were devastated by the armies and supporters of Owain Glyndŵr (*Cal. Pat. 1405-8*, 53). There was general uncertainty in the countryside and much real damage. In 1407 the Abbot of Tintern was given dispensation from collecting taxes in the diocese of Llandaff because of the scale of the devastation and even 40 years later in 1448 the king exempted the Prior of Llanthony from collecting taxes on the grounds that their lands and possessions were so wasted by the wars of Henry IV in Wales and other events that they could not support divine services and other costs (Craster 1963, 11). Indeed, as Oswin Craster also notes at this point, there is no trace in the surviving architecture that any money was spared for new works on the Priory buildings, unlike many other monasteries in Wales in the later 15th century which show some signs of revival.

f) Llanthony's merger and closure: 1481-1538

In 1481, King Edward IV, by virtue of his position as Earl of March and thus, *de iure*, founder and patron of Llanthony Prima, made a grant of frank almoin licencing its transfer to Prior Henry Deane of Llanthony Secunda for a fee to the king of 300 marks. The reasons given were, by now, familiar;

... its possessions have been devastated and John Adams, the Prior, has wasted and destroyed the profits, revenues and emoluments of the said Priory...and does keep and sustain no more than four Canons besides himself, who lead no very good lives (*Cal. Pat. 1476-1485*, 284)

The new prior was charged that he

...shall for ever appoint and sustain, at their own cost and charges, in the said Priory of Llanthony the First, in Wales, one Prior...and four canons, to perform masses and divine offices for ever...and to administer the sacrament to the parishioners in that place, if not disturbed or hindered from it, by any rebellion or open breach of the peace. (*Cal. Pat. 1476-1485*, 284)

However, the merger was not straightforward and appears to have been disputed and it was only in 1504, when Edmund Forest was Prior, that a final agreement was struck (Smith 2008,

469), although there appears to have been some additional difficulty even then. Rhodes in his edition of the registers of the last Priors says

...a royal escheator seized the former property of Llanthony-in-Wales and denied Prior Forest's title to it on the grounds that the Welsh house was not mentioned in his *congé d'élire* a finding which the king's council confirmed. The lost property was recovered between 1504 and 1507 through the efforts of the prior and William Greville of Arle in Cheltenham, later a justice of common pleas. (Rhodes 2002, xxi)

Before 1481 we can only suspect that the Priors of Llanthony Prima had been largely unable to run the estates in its charge and that effective management was already being overseen from Gloucester. A hint of this may be that the first secular Steward of the Hothneyslade lands we can identify by name, David ap Gwilym ap Morgan, was in that post before 1481 and remained in office until 1524. He was a substantial man within the region in his own right: resident of Llanddewi Skirrid (Monmouthshire) and Arkstone in Kingstone (Herefordshire); Lord of Llanddewi Skirrid by inheritance; Lord of Arkstone with land in Lulham in Madley, Eaton Bishop and Wormbridge, (Herefordshire) by marriage to Lucy de la Hay; purchaser of land at Llanwenarth (Monmouthshire); Lord of Stoke Lacy, Lawton in Kingsland and Winsley in Hope-under-Dinsmore (all in Herefordshire) 1488-c.1502 by marriage to Margaret Wynnesley; and J.P. for Herefordshire. 1501-1515, nominated as sheriff there 1511. He was succeeded in this office by James Nichols despite an attempt to lay hold of it, as recorded in Prior Forest's Register, by none other than Charles Somerset Lord Herbert the King's chamberlain and his son Henry. They sought (and were initially granted leave) to have the reversion of the office of steward of Cwmyoy, Oldcastle and other manors in Hothneyslade when vacated by the incumbent steward David [G]welim Morgan, and they were to receive 40s. yearly from the bailiff of Cwmyoy as a fee. This grant was to be void if anyone else proved to have the reversion by grant of the priory of Llanthony Prima, something which clearly occurred (Rhodes 2002, 108-9). That such an office was sought by the men as powerful as Morgan and Somerset suggests that there was more to this office than the income of 40 shillings a year.

The Steward of Hothneyslade exercised part of the prior's jurisdiction as a marcher lord and was assisted by an understeward, two serjeants and a constable gaoler (Rhodes 2002, 108-9). It is likely that some of these lesser officials at least were drawn from the tenantry of Cwmyoy and the other Priory manors in the area. The only understeward recorded before the Dissolution was Arthur Porter who gave great assistance, in 1538, to the final Prior in arranging the details of the transfer to the crown. In 1511, in the Register of Prior Edmund Forest, there is also record of the appointment of another layman, William Phelipps, as porter (*ianitor*) of Llanthony in Wales receiving 6s. 8d. *per annum*, a gown a year worth 5s. at the discretion of the proctor and 7 quarts a week of conventual ale from the cellarer of Llanthony-in-Wales (Rhodes 2002, p. 103, #251). In all there were clearly a number of laymen of different ranks all drawing on the still substantial revenues of the Llanthony-in-Wales estates: stewards, understewards, bailiffs, proctors, porters, serjeants and constables. Even in 1544, the account of Sir Nicholas Arnold, then receiver of the revenues of the former priory, reveals that 40s. *per annum* was still being paid to the Steward, Sir William Vaughan, 13s..4d. (one mark) to Thomas Lewes, Clerk of the Manorial Court, 6s..8d.

to Thomas ap Howell, Constable of the Castle of Llanthony and Janitor (probably the Gatehouse with its prison), and 26s. 8d. to James Nicholles, the Bailiff of the Manor of Cwmyoy (*NA MS SC6 Hen VIII 2509*).

When surveyed in 1535 for the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* the annual income of the Priory was £112..0s..5d. of which the site and demesne of the Priory returned £5..17s..2d. and the manor of Cwmyoy £32 (*Valor Eccl.* 431). On 10 March 1538 both Llanthony Prima and Llanthony Secunda were surrendered to the Crown for Dissolution. There were four canons at Llanthony-in-Wales at this time. On 17 March three Crown representatives visited the priory and reported back to Thomas Cromwell. They explained that Llanthony had surrendered, but that they had not yet surveyed the lands of either the Gloucester house or its cell in Wales since Sir Nicholas Arnold, a member of the royal household, and Mr [Arthur] Porter maintained that Cromwell was happy that they should have the two 'according to the value certified for the payments of the tenths' (Williams 2009-10, 31-32). Sir Nicholas Arnold became Receiver for the revenues of Llanthony Prima for the Court of Augmentations and in his returns the Priory demesne was worth £5..10s..10d. per annum and the Manor of Cwmyoy £47..2s. Finally in 1547 he was given by the King, in exchange for a single payment of £160, everything that had been held by the Priory at the Dissolution (Bradney 1907, 234).

g) The Llanthony medieval estate legacy

In this account of the estate of Llanthony Prima it is clear that it had only two relatively short periods of stability: in the few years after its foundation; and in the period from 1177 to 1241 when Hugh and Walter de Lacy were strong and committed patrons. I have speculated that the demesne lands may well have been established in that second period when the former wood pastures of the foundation phase were probably cleared away with some of the steeper hill slopes still wooded and the open ridge-tops kept for rough grazing and hunting. What, however, was happening lower down the valley in the rest of Hothneyslade is uncertain. It is probable that there were active communities of farmers on whose rents and perhaps some labour services the Priory and its demesne depended, but there is nothing to support David Robinson's unsupported assertion that Llanthony adopted an agricultural practice akin to that of the Cistercians (Robinson 1980, i, 275). Edward Procter (2007) in his archaeological work on the landscapes of this valley also found, in my view, nothing to support this view. Rather I believe that, as in other parts of the Welsh upland, the monasteries, when granted their lands, tended not to intervene in the difficult business of hill farming, but chose instead to live off the ancient renders, converted to money rents, which had been given to lords in a deeper, Welsh past. This suggests that, as the farms and their names, together with details of revenues, obligations and rights, come into view towards the end of the Middle Ages, including Llwyn Celyn, many of them were actually situated on sites and lands created many hundreds, if not thousands of years before. These were what a later owner called 'ancient tenements' (see below).

These farms begin to appear about 1500 in the surviving records of the Court Baron of Cwmyoy Manor as it was acquired by Sir Nicholas Arnold in 1547. They were all tenant farmers holding their land by a system of copyhold leasing that was quite unusual, as we shall see. It was not based on inheritance, but rather on assignment by one copyholder to another on three separate occasions (i.e. effectively granted for four lives) without the lord of the manor being able to intervene. Elsewhere in Ewyas Lacy and throughout the March,

the system was transfer by inheritance subject to Common Law (Beddoe 1900). The Llanthony copyhold gave the tenants security of tenure over very long periods of time (up to 150 years in some cases) as well as the capacity for them to sell or mortgage their leases in the market-place without interference from the lord. This system may have emerged as a result of the aeons of uncertainty, incompetent management, wanton destruction and wilful waste which dogged the history of Llanthony Prima for most of its history. In essence it was a liberal form of tenure that gave the tenants the latitude to be responsible for their own management when no other system of recovery was available. In return the Priory received a fixed and assured income, albeit relatively small. This they could do because of the Irish revenues they received from 1177 onwards. When this system was introduced we cannot know for sure. The earliest dated document is 1501, but it is clear from references within the primary source, a survey of 1612, that this is only the earliest surviving at that date and that there had been at least one cycle of copyholding before that, if not more. This suggests that it was being implemented perhaps in the years following the Glyndŵr devastation and lay under the supervision of lay officials, the lower echelons of whom would almost certainly have come from the more senior and powerful members of the Hothneyslade community. The guarantors of this system were the Stewards who came from regionally powerful secular families in the March with important and independent holdings of their own. I am suggesting the early part of the 15th century for the creation of this pattern of tenure, but it is possible to see in the requirements for reform laid down by Archbishop Peckham in 1284 some of the seeds of this secular pattern of independent management. It may have emerged through a long process of evolution.

One other piece of evidence is also worth noting at this point. The upper part of the Vale of Ewyas (Glenhothney) which had passed, by some process into the hands of the Lordship of Hay was held by an entirely different form of tenure as noted in an extent or survey of the tenants and rents due made in 1340 (Morgan 1995-6, 16). In this we can see that the tenants all held very small acreages of land, although this may be the larger Welsh acre and only refer to their arable holdings, and these people, men and women alike, were of clearly Welsh native stock and probably bonded peasants. They also paid a tribute every second year of 'Calammai' (the May tribute), which is an ancient obligation in Welsh law to give recompense to their lord for the right to pasture their animals on the upland open pastures. All of this is in sharp contrast to the forms of tenure identified in the manor of Cwmyoy. It rather suggests that the Welsh tenure was swept away, lock, stock and barrel, perhaps quite early on in the Anglo-Norman organisation of Hothneyslade, and that in the 1340 document we are looking at a Welsh prehistory of how the Vale of Ewyas was once farmed and used.

h) The Arnold estate

What is unmistakable is that Sir Nicholas Arnold with the assistance of Arthur Porter, an official of the former priory, his brother-in-law and himself a member of a prominent regional family, worked very hard to get his hands on the Llanthony estate. However, at the time, he probably had little idea the problem he and his family would have down the generations in making it all pay. The fault lay in the Cwmyoy copyhold system, one which the tenants for nearly 200 years fought to retain and the Arnolds attempted to abolish or circumnavigate.

Sir Nicholas Arnold came from a relatively minor Gloucestershire gentry family, but it traced its lineage back to the kings of Gwent and Gwilym ap Meurig. The family crossed the Wye and established themselves at Highnam in Gloucestershire (Gray 1989, 16) and through marriage and descent was well connected to the more prominent Berkeleys, Porters and Wriothesleys. He trained as a lawyer in Lincoln's Inn and by 1537 was in the service of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's Chief Minister. Cromwell arranged his appointment into the King's Household as a member of the royal bodyguard, fighting in France for four years in the 1540s. He was also able to secure a position as a surveyor and receiver of former monastic lands and used this office to secure the Llanthony estate. Arnold entered Parliament in 1545 as MP for Gloucestershire and remained there until his death in 1580. As an ardent Protestant he continued with these roles under Edward VI (1547-53), receiving a knighthood for his services to the Crown in 1550, but he quickly fell foul of Queen Mary (1553-8) and was imprisoned twice before his final release in 1557. With the accession of Queen Elizabeth, however, he settled to an active and prominent Parliamentary career (Fuidge 1982). In terms of running the Llanthony estate, we must assume, from the sequence of leases recorded in the survey of 1612 (NLW, CFL MS 5/15) which will be discussed extensively later, that his officials, under a Steward and Clerk of the Court administered it much as their predecessors had in the latter years of the Priory.

John Arnold, as younger son of Sir Nicholas inherited the Llanthony estate in 1580, although this was disputed in 1597 by William Cooke of Highnam who had married a descendant of Sir Nicholas Arnold. This was not upheld, but Cooke with Sir Robert Cecil did successfully lobby to prevent John Arnold from becoming sheriff of Monmouthshire. The dispute with the Cecils was compounded by a running battle with Paul de la Hay of Trewyn who was son-in-law of William Cecil of Allt-yr-Ynys, head of the senior branch of the family. Although an active MP as knight of the shire of Monmouth, elected in 1597, his dispute with the Cecil faction led him to support the Earl of Essex in his failed rising against Queen Elizabeth in early 1601. Fortunately he was at home in Wales when the rising actually happened, but he was closely questioned about his role, especially in his frequent dealings with Robert Devereux's Welsh agent, Gelly Meyrick. Arnold escaped punishment, but his public career was over and he died in 1606 (A.H.D. 1981). Again there seems to have been no change, during his tenure of the Llanthony estate, in the systems of administration and many copyholds were renewed for a further 4 lives at this time. John Arnold did, however, at some stage have to lease out his Llanthony manor to Owen Hopton (NA E178/335, cited in Bowen 2010, n.14), suggesting that he was in some financial difficulty. Indeed he died in debt to the Crown. This might explain the flurry of lease renewals in the 1590s and early 1600s as an attempt to draw more revenue through entry fines from the copyholders.

As a result of his early death, probably at the age of about 45, John Arnold's heir, Nicholas Arnold, was still in his minority, being only 6 at the time (Bowen 2010 for this and much of what follows for Nicholas Arnold). William Cooke again tried to intercede, claiming the wardship, but John's mother persuaded William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke to obtain it instead. Cooke then continued his campaign of trying to claim the estate, but Herbert fought this off and had the wardship assigned to his steward, Thomas Morgan. In the period

until Nicholas Arnold attained his majority in 1620, Morgan ruthlessly exploited the estate to his own ends to the tune of an estimated £20,000 according to claims later made by Arnold himself. During this period, in 1612, an exhaustive survey was made of the lands, modes of tenure and titles of every copyhold in the Llanthony estate (NLW CFL 5/15). Although conducted in the name of Nicholas Arnold as lord of the manor, the preamble to the document makes it very clear where the control lay, and it is hard to escape the conclusion that this was part of Morgan's managerial strategy for fleecing the tenants, of whom the most prominent were sworn as jurors in the Court Baron:

Manerium de Comyooy alias Lanthony, Inquisitio ibidem capta septimo die mensis Aprilis anno Regni domini nunc nemini[?] Jacobi dei gratia Angliae, Franciae et Hiberniae Regis fidei defensore et videlicet Angliae, Franciae et Hiberniae decimo et Scotiae quadragesimo septimo. Coram Hugone Johannis Edmundo Morgan et Waltero Rhumsey Armigeri Willielmo Morgan Willielmo Adam et Richardo Morgan gent supervisor ibidem virtute commissionis per nobilis Willielmi Comitis Pembrok dicti supervisors direct; Tam per Inspexionem Indenturarum Scriptorum et aliorum Recordum quam per exactionem tenentium ibidem et per sacridem Rogeri David, Ricardi Butler Roberti Watkin, Risei William, Thomae Prees, Johannis George, Willielmi Watkin, Willielmi Phillip, Thomae Ivani, David Howell, Willeilmi Thomas Phillip, Willelmi Richard Gronow, Phillipi William Gwillim, Willelmi James, Henrici James, David ap John, Rogeri Jenkin, Henrici John Parry, Thomas Walter et David William Gunter qui iurant dicunt at praesentant ut sequitur.

Manor of Cwmyoy alias Llanthony: Enquiry held there on the 7th April of the 10th year of James King of England France and Ireland and the 47th of his reign in Scotland and Defender of the Faith, in the presence of Hugh John Edmund Morgan and Sir Walter Rhumsey with William Morgan, William Adam and Richard Morgan. Gents. supervising there by the noble commission of William Earl of Pembroke. The said supervisors direct as much through indentures, writings and other records as though the examination of the tenants there and through the oaths of Roger David, Richard Butler, Robert Watkin, Rhys William, Thoms Prys, John George, William Watkin, William Phillip, Thomas Ifan, David Howell, William Thomas Phillip, William Richard Gronow, Phillip William Gwilym, William James, Henry James, David ap John, Roger Jenkin, Henry John Parry, Thomas Walter and David William Gunter who swear, say and present as follows: (NLW CLF MS 5/15, f.1r.)

There is evidence in the survey that Morgan was using every device to make it all pay and one very notable one was the permission given for encroachment onto the lord's forest waste on the upland (for a recent study of encroachment at this time in the Black Mountains see Hodges 2014). The tenancy agreements for these holdings were not as restrictive for the lord as the 'ancient tenements' and rents could be set on current rather than historic value. Their main virtue, however, was that land previously used only for grazing for which the customary tenants made no payment at all could now be turned to revenue at no cost, since it was the farmer's responsibility to clear and enclose the land and build. There was also another 'quick hit': encroachments made earlier without the lord's permission could be converted into rent-paying concerns. In all this the customary tenants became alarmed as

the 17th century progressed at the permanent loss of grazing and the strategy they developed was to buy up the copyholds of these forest lands where they were adjacent to their own holdings and let the buildings collapse so that they could not be occupied again. However, they were then liable under the customs of the manor to fine for not fulfilling their obligations to maintain buildings on their land.

This harvesting of the upland was only one of the tactics used by Morgan. Such was the depredation wrought that, very soon after he attained his majority, Nicholas Arnold was forced to borrow money and mortgage some of this land. He himself probably also attempted to exact more out of the tenants who, in 1630, took their lord to court under the leadership of William George who held the copyhold of Llwyn Celyn at the time (see below). They claimed that Arnold was subjecting them to rack rents and that he should desist under the customs of the manor. They also sought to institute a new custom that the land should be deemed held by inheritance and should pass automatically to an inheritor on the completion of the copyhold's term, but they lost their cause (Harley MS **, f.4r.).

His need for money had undoubtedly been compounded by his purchase, in 1623, of the magnificent Llanvihangel Court in Llanvihangel Crucorney, and he defaulted on several loans. To escape these creditors, the Parliamentary historian Lloyd Bowen suggests, he took the seat for Monmouthshire in both 1626 and 1628. He made little impression there and by 1640 was litigating against the family of his wife, Lettice Moore, in Drogheda to obtain money due to him perhaps as her dowry. By 1642, however, he was petitioning Parliament about a verdict against him for debt, but despite this he was imprisoned in the King's Bench in Southwark and stayed there for over 20 years, 'dying there to defeat his creditors'. Lloyd Bowen believes that, when he died c. 1665, he had made no will as part of his effort, seemingly successful, to ensure that his goods and lands should not be taken to repay his debts (Bowen 2010). This meant that for the whole period of the Civil War and Cromwell's government, the lord of the manor was in prison in London and thus taking no direct hand in the estate's administration. It may be that this was the opportunity many 'adjustments' to copies made by the local clerk to the court about which John's grandson complained in 1703 when he was defendant in another action taken by his tenants. He added also that he

Believeth the now plaintiffs are encouraged to this suit on account of the advantage they have by the loss or imbezement of divers court roles, surveys, writings and evidences of the ancient services and customs of the said manor taken away in the time of the Civill Wars.. (Harley MS **, f.4r.)

Whatever the severe financial problems of his father that kept them both in Southwark, there is no hint in the record that his son and heir John Arnold was troubled by inherited debt. His career as a Member of Parliament was long first entering the House in 1680 as M.P. for Monmouth and much taken with a fanatical opposition to Catholics and the Popish Plot which he contrived to find everywhere. His career in this respect is well documented (Cruikshanks 1983) and the 'highlight' is his prominent role in the martyrdom of David Lewis in Usk in 1679. However, he finally overstepped the mark in his pursuit of heretics by making accusations, in 1683, against the Marquess of Worcester that 'he is a Papist' and

that he was involved in the Popish Plot. For this £10,000 was awarded against Arnold in an action of '*scandalum magnatum*'. For non-payment of this he returned to the prison in Southwark where he grew up with his father, and remained there until 1686. In 1689 he returned to Parliament being elected for both Monmouth and Southwark. He served until his death in 1702 (Cruickshanks 1983). There are clear signs in the Court Rolls for Cwmyoy that John's officials were exceptionally thorough in attempting to reconstruct the proper administration of the estate. From 1665 to 1775 dated emendations are made to the entries for copyhold in the 1612 survey, updating them and identifying the descent of the copies. It is clear that this was the only substantive document to survive the loss of court records during the Civil War. Another systematic process was the marking of all the entries about which there was doubt with the letter 'Q', and in a few cases they were rejected as forgeries. Then in 1675 the Steward, Martin Scudamore, required all the tenants to bring their copies and evidences of title to court to be entered into the back of the 1612 survey while they were cross-checked with the earlier entries and the up-dates (NLW CFL MS 5/15 `ff.66r.-84r.). By this means the estate managers had a base-point for the resumption of a proper record and from 1665 a new Court Book was begun and an account kept of every court meeting (NLW MS 1184). However, as the entries get closer and closer to 1700 so they become more infrequent and sketchy as if the management was again slipping away.

John was succeeded by his son Nicholas Arnold, about whom, since he did not serve in Parliament, we currently know less than his forebears. However, it is possible to conjecture that he may have taken over the running of the estate a couple of years before his father died, and that he clearly took a fully hands-on approach. Suddenly from about 1700 the revived Court Books are full of activity: there are increased fines and more of them. Exactions are made for misdemeanours which had previously gone unchallenged, such as failure to maintain houses and buildings, for non-maintenance of roads and river banks and for taking trees from the lord's woodland which were over 20 years old. In some cases the punishment was summary eviction of even some of the oldest-established tenant families on the estate. The tactics must have been to make the tenantry more compliant so that radical changes could be introduced, particularly the charging of more economic rents rather than those fixed in the Cwmyoy copyhold system. If so, they failed and the reaction was swift: once again the tenants litigated in the manorial court, beginning in 1703.

A copy was made of the depositions of the plaintiffs, the response of the lord and the collection of evidence from the Court Book (Harley MS **). The arguments are intense and real anger comes out of the pages, especially the frustration of Nicholas Arnold himself. The next we hear it is being put to a court of local gentry drawn from just outside the manor and there is evidence in the form of affidavits written onto the court documents that they examined the material very closely and carefully. The case seems to have gone against Nicholas Arnold and the next event is another survey, on the same scale as 1612 and 1675, taken in 1711, in which those previously evicted are shown still to be tenants of their previous holdings (NLW CLF MS 4/63). If this was an attempt to improve matters for the lord, then it failed, and by 1717 the case was referred to the Court of Chancery via a Bill of Complaint entered by Nicholas Arnold (NLW MS 2745). Even as late as 1721 the case was

still under Chancery scrutiny as we can tell from an affidavit on the front of the 1711 survey attesting that it too had been shown to officials of the court as evidence. The final judgement is, as yet, unclear, but it is not long before the Arnolds give up the struggle to make the estate pay at what should have been its full market value. In 1726, it was all sold to Edward Harley second son of Sir Edward Harley, M.P. of Brampton Bryan (Bradney 1906, I, 234; Evans 1953).

i) The Harley and later estate

Only a few items of evidence survive from the Harley tenure, but they seem to indicate that the managers of the estate were efficient in bringing its management up to date and making a reasonable return from their point of view. They were able to convert the old-fashioned copyholds into normal tenancies as they lapsed and on one occasion at least (see below, James Watkins of Llwyn Celyn) they were able to buy the tenant out on reasonable terms because of debt. The Court Book too, which showed the court still functioning during the Arnold era, in the Harley period became only intermittently used until its final entry in 1773. As an act indicating the completion of this process of conversion a list was made, in 1775, at the end of the Court Book of all the tenants then holding leases of the manor together with acreages and rents. In nearly all cases modern, economic rents were being paid. The Middle Ages were finally over on the lands of the Vale of Ewyas.

In 1799 the estate was sold to Col. Sir Mark Wood of Gatton in Surrey who then sold on to the poet Walter Savage Landor in 1807 whose grandiose and romantic schemes for the land soon fell apart. Having lost great sums of money, the estate passed to other members of the Landor family who owned until its final sale in 1958.

5. Descent of Llwyn Celyn

At first sight it would seem that in documents prior to the Restoration of the later 17th century, Llwyn Celyn appears to have been called Tir y Kellin (in various spellings). The tenure of the property called Lloyn Kelin in the early 18th century can also be tied back to a will of 1655 where it is still called Tir y Kelin (NA PROB 11/261/154). This appears to be confirmed by a document of 1740 (Harley MS 86/10/3) relating to a copyhold property called Y Pante which is said to be adjacent to another copyholding 'late of the tenure of Thomas Watkins called Tûr Lloyncelin'. This then seems to be confirmed by the simple fact that, at the moment Tir y Kelin disappears from the record in the years following the Civil War, Llwyn Celyn appears as a name. The reasons for such a shift in name are unclear, although it is to be noted that lands labelled 'Tir' in these Black Mountain communities tend, from the 16th century onwards, to be associated with cottage holdings taken by encroachment into the lord's forest waste on the mountain. The re-naming may be a move towards making a social distinction between this poorer, more marginal class of dwelling (Hodges 2014) and the ancient and more substantial farms on the valley sides and floors where the terms gentleman and yeoman start to be applied to their tenants from the later 17th century onwards.

As we shall see, it has turned out to be not as straightforward as this.

The earliest reference to Tyr y Kellyn found so far is as an entry into an extent or survey of the Manor of Cwmyoy (alias Llanthony) dated 1624 (CFL MS 4.61 f.12r., #16). The entry (originally in Latin) is translated as follows:

Thomas Prosser ap Howell by copy dated the 20th day of March after the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel in the sixth year of King Henry VIII after the Conquest [i.e. 1515] received from the lord a tenement with certain lands belonging to the same, lying in breadth between Irish Brooke on the one side and the land called Tyr y Kellyn on the other side, in length from the river called Hothney on one head and abutting on the common mountain on the other head. To be held granted to him and his three assignees. For a rent from it of four shillings and eight pence, for suit of court and for heriot of the best animal

[Added below in a later hand] The aforesaid Thomas assigned the premises to a certain Thomas Prees ap Gwilym et idem Thomas ap Prees ap Gwilym assigned the premises to a certain William Thomas ap Prees still holding.

Thus Tyr y Kellyn lay adjacent to a property which was probably on its north and which was acquired, a little later, by the same Thomas ap Price ap Gwillim who already held Tyr y Kellyn itself in 1515. It is probably important to note that, at this date, the lands of the Manor of Cwmyoy or Llanthony, also called Hothneyslade, were still under the administration of the Augustinian Priory of Llanthony by Gloucester (*alias* Llanthony Secunda). This monastic context and the role of its local officials in managing the leasehold properties of the estate in its last years is discussed further in section 6 on the status of the original Llwyn Celyn house.

This short entry and its later addition already tell us also that Thomas ap Price ap Gwilym was consolidating lands at the southern end of the former Llanthony estate in the years on either side of the Dissolution, perhaps by purchase or other cash transactions which were technically not allowed without the lord's permission under the customs of manor and, therefore, not recorded as such in the documents of the Court Baron which survive to us. This consolidation as we shall see later was substantial.

Indeed we next find Tyr Kelling recorded in a manorial extent of 1612 which notes its granting by a Copy of the Court Baron, dated September 22nd 1567 (CFL MS 5.15, f.14, #17). This is repeated in other and later versions or transcriptions of the survey (e.g. in 1624: CFL MS 4.61 f.12r. #17). The text, again in Latin, is translated as follows:

Thomas ap Price ap Gwilym by copy dated the 22nd day of September in the ninth year of the Lady Elizabeth once Queen of England received from the lord one messuage with appurtenances called Tyer Kelling to be held by grant to him and his three assignees. Rent thence annually two shillings and two pence at the usual feasts, for suit of court and for the heriot of the best animal

(Appended) The aforesaid Thomas assigned the grant to William Thomas Price holding in the same way.

(Appended in a later hand) And the aforesaid William died and assigned the grant to a certain William Nicholas. June 1671

This copy or lease appears also to have been the subject of specific scrutiny by the Court Baron later, in June 1675. At this court, under the authority of John Arnold's Steward, Martin Scudamore, all the tenants had to produce, and have transcribed into the 1612 survey, the details of their of their leasehold documents (or 'Coppies'). This suggests that the manorial officials had lost track of who held what and by what legal instrument at this time in the aftermath of the Civil War. The original Copy (CFL MS 5.15, f.69v. #34) was transcribed as follows:

Thomas ap Rice ap Gwilym on the 22nd day of September in the 9th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth who was holding of the lord by copy a messuage with appurtenances called Teer Kelyn lying within the manor aforesaid [*i.e.* *Cwmyoy*] and in open court surrendered [it] into the hands of the lord [who] in turn granted it back. To be held to himself and to three of his assignees. For a rent annually of two shillings and two pence and for heriot of the best animal and for suit of court. Thomas ap Rice ap Gwilym assigned it to William Thomas ap Price his son and William Thomas ap Price assigned it to William Nicholas son of Nicholas William to himself and to one assignee of his.

Interestingly we also find the same copy specifically mentioned in a marriage settlement of 1676 where it is again cited as proof of tenure (Harley MS 17.21.f.1). From all this we can infer that this 1567 Copy was regarded, for several generations, as the foundation stone of an important tenant right which could be passed down by inheritance, or by other means of transfer for which we shall find evidence in the 17th century. Indeed on that September day in 1567, before the Arnold steward and his fellow tenants sitting as witnesses in the Court Baron held perhaps in Llanvihangel Court, Thomas ap Price ap Gwillim must have surrendered his old lease which he held from at least 1515. The intention was probably to start the clock ticking again on his and his successors' tenure of the property and in a way that placed it securely within the new order of things after the Dissolution. At this time Thomas must already have been at least in his 60's, if not very much older, and feeling near his death with a pressing need to ensure the succession to his son.

To understand the significance of all this we must try to understand the circumstances of copyhold (*alias* 'leasehold') tenure in the later manorial management of the Llanthony monastic estates. After these lands were plundered during the Glyndŵr wars at the beginning of the 15th century (*Cal. Pat.* 1405-8, 53) Llanthony in Wales (*alias* Llanthony Prima) came *de facto* under the administration of Llanthony by Gloucester and in 1481 this was given legal right by the formal merger of the two priories by royal writ (*Monasticon*, vi, 139). It is likely that it was during this century, if not before, that the manorial custom of tenure by leasehold or, in legal terms 'by Copy of the Manor Court Roll of *Cwmyoy*' came into existence. This was a conversion (or 'commutation') of the essentially unfree tenure of people bound to the manor and liable to give services and renders in kind to their lord in return for title to their land. These material renders were converted or commuted into

money rents, although some of the obligations and services, due by 'custom of the manor', survived intact such as payment of a 'heriot' of the best animal at the death of a tenant and the obligation to attend the lord's Courts, both Leet and Baron. In effect the lease was a re-expression of the tenurial status of what in an English manorial context would be regarded as the high medieval 'bondsman'. This would be in contrast to the higher status freeholder, a category which seems not to have existed in the Manor of Cwmyoy, but can be found in adjacent manors and communities. All of the Cwmyoy tenancies (184 of them in 1612) were customary. That the social meaning of this was actually more complex in these ambiguous border lands between England and Wales will be discussed in more detail later (see §7).

These leases in the later years of the Middle Ages were administered by manorial officials, notably the Cellarer of the Priory in whose name more local officers would have acted on the ground through the meetings of manorial courts, such as the Steward, the Understeward and the Bailiff. The names of some of these have survived to us in the Llanthony-by-Gloucester Registers: prior to the merger of 1481, for example, David ap Gwilym ap Morgan, lord of Llanddewi Skirrid manor (Rhodes 2002, 108, n.5), was Steward of the Llanthony holdings in the Honddu valley and remained in that post until 1524, at which time it passed to William Vaughan until the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535, the crown inquisition into the value of monastic holdings made as a prelude to the Acts of Dissolution in 1537 and 1539 (*Valor Eccl.*, ii, 430). In 1535, the Understeward was Arthur Porter (*L & P Hen VIII*, xiv(1), 60, 248) and the Bailiff was James Nichols (*Valor Eccles.*, ii, 431). When, in 1546, the Priory holdings in Hothneyslade were finally sold to Nicholas Arnold (*L & P Hen VIII*, xiv(1), 607), new officials were appointed. At that time the copyhold farms of Cwmyoy Manor in Hothneyslade would have been held by leases issued by the Llanthony Priory officers and these differed little in content and form from those issued by the Arnold courts. Even as late as the early 17th century these pre-Dissolution leases were still legally giving title to land and buildings, as seen in the 1515 reference above. The form of these leases, both pre- and post-Dissolution is interesting and has a close bearing on what happened in 1567.

Normally leases were issued for 'three lives' and would follow the inheritance line of the first lessee. In Cwmyoy, however, rather unusually, a lease, when first granted, was given to the lessee for his life and then to three unspecified 'assignees' there following; in other words, effectively four lives. Even more unusually, these assignees were not limited to inheritors, but could be purchasers and others outside the normal succession. This suggests that a very active market for properties was already in place by the 15th century and from evidence we shall see later these leases could also be subject to mortgage. All of this seems to have been legal under the manorial customs of Cwmyoy, whose courts had powers of scrutiny but not intervention. Certainly during the later 16th century, if not before, the value of the rents paid to the manorial lord, which were fixed by custom, became increasingly detached from the real value and the returns which were being made by the lessees. We find in some of the sources, as we shall see, that by the 17th century the rents were just a few shillings and pence while the leases could be sub-let for payment of sub-rents to the legal lessees in the tens of pounds and mortgaged at the same rate. All this meant that a man like Thomas ap Price ap Gwilym and his assigns for four generations could pay out very

little each year as rent and get an increasingly large annual income, either by farming it themselves or sub-letting. The critical moment for the lessee would have come when the 'term' of the lease was coming to an end, in other words when the fourth assignment was about to terminate. At this point the lease had to be surrendered to the lord who would then issue a new lease or copy and it would not have to be to the outgoing lessee. In 1567, then, Thomas goes through such a surrender, not on his death, but voluntarily, and he is then re-granted the lease for a fresh four-generation term. Either this was a risky thing to do, or, much more probably, it was fixed by an otherwise unrecorded payment to the presiding local officials and/or the manorial lord, probably something much above the usual 'entry fine'.

This insight allows two further relevant inferences. First, Thomas, as we have noted, was at this stage in advanced old age and knowingly close to his death. In acquiring a new lease he was in effect sacrificing one of its 'four lives' in return for the ability to pass it on to his son William Thomas ap Price as noted in the 1612 survey entries, cited above. He was not to know that it would pass out of the family in the following generation. Thomas was, thus, in the business of creating a dynastic hold on the increasingly profitable Tir y Kellin property. The second inference stretches us back beyond 1515, the date at which we first encounter Tir y Kellin, then already in Thomas' hands. If we assume, as we have already, that Thomas' motivation was to re-invigorate a lease which was on its last legs, then the lease that he held in 1515 for Tir y Kellin was actually in its fourth generation. In other words, his tenure in 1515 was by a lease issued at some point in the 15th century, perhaps, but not necessarily, to his father, Rhys ap Gwilym or to his grandfather Gwilym himself. If it were three normal generations, then we are back another 90 years before 1515.

Such inferences, at the moment at least, lie beyond proof since there are, as far as we know, no documents of this character surviving from the years of the monastic administration itself. We might be able in due course to find a Rhys ap Gwilym or a Gwilym who might be our men. For the moment, however, we can be confident that the first occupiers of Tir y Kellin may have come from a lineage, if Thomas himself is anything to go by, which was restlessly consolidating land holdings, as we shall see more of later (section 6), and ruthlessly exploiting an archaic legal framework which, in the circumstance of growing markets and inflation in the late 15th to early 17th centuries, made men like them increasingly wealthy and keen to express their new status in aspirant architecture (see §7 below).

So, what happened after this? Probably not long after 1567 Thomas died and his son, William Thomas ap Price succeeded as the next assignee, although we can only, at present, be sure that William was in possession by 1612. He was clearly, however, operating in his own right in adjacent properties by 1591 at the latest (C.F.L MS 5.15, f.14v., #18). At some point after 1612 William died and Tyr y Kellin was assigned to William Nicholas, son of Nicholas William C.F.L MS 5.15, f.14v., #17; and f.69r., #34). This appears to be the situation in 1675 when the Court Baron in open session reviewed all the leases by which tenants at that date held their tenements and lands (C.F.L MS 5.15, f.69r., #34). At this point the trail becomes complex and there exist some apparent contradictions.

There are two documents which do not form part of the Court proceedings on which we have been relying on so far. These two documents, however, began to throw up a problem.

The first of these documents is the will, dated April 1655 and executed in February 1656, of William George of Cwmyoy, Gent (NA PROB 11/261/154). The will, *inter alia*, disposes of three copyhold properties, two to his eldest son William who was still in his minority, and one to William Watkin, as follows:

Item I doe assigne another messuage or tenement together with all outhouses, barnes, buildings, gardens, orchards, lands, meadows, pastures, woods and underwoods with their appurtenances thereunto belonging commonly called Tyr y Kelin situate in Cwmyoy aforesaid which I hold by Coppy of Court Roll unto William Watkin and his assignes. To have and to hold the said messuage, lands and premisses with their appurtenances unto the said William Watkin and his assignes from and after the decease of Margaret my nowe wife according to the custom of the manor aforesaid. Upon consideration that John Thomas Price after the decease of the said Margaret my nowe wife shall quietly and peacefully have hold and enjoy the aforesaid messuage, lands and premisses with their appurtenances durenge the terme of his natural life paying unto the said William Watkin, his executors, administrators or assignes the summe of tenne pounds yearely at or upon every the feast daye of the Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady the Virgin and every the feast day of St Michael the Archangel by even and equal portions.

At first sight this appears to contradict directly the record of the Court Baron and the assignment of the property to William Nicholas, by the lease of 1567 seen by the court in 1675 and endorsed with William Nicholas named as current tenant.

The second document is a marriage settlement made in 1676 (Harley MS 17/21). In return for a dowry of £65 from Steven Brace, Gent. of Glasbury for his daughter Mary Brace, William Nicholas Gunter, Gent. undertook to give her intended husband, Philip Nicholas Gunter, his son, title to three properties, the first of which was Tire Kelin. The relevant part of the agreement is as follows:

Articles of agreement indented, covenanted, condescended concluded and fully agreed upon the five and twentieth day of October in the eight and twentieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord Charles the Second by the Grace of God of England, Scotland, France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith and in the year of our Lord God according to the computation of the Church of England one thousand six hundred seventie and six Between William Nicholas Gunter of the parish of Cwmyoy in the County of Monmouth Gent of the first parte and of Philip Nicholas Gunter of the aforesaid parish and Countie eldest son of the aforesaid William Nicholas Gunter of the second parte and Steven Brace of the parish of Glasbury on the Countye of Radnor Gent of the third parte, Witnesseth as followeth.

Whereas a marriage is intended by the Grace and Permission of God to be had and solemnized between the aforesaid William Nicholas Gunter and Mary the daughter of the aforesaid Steven Brace, Imprimis therefore the aforesaid William Nicholas Gunter for and in consideration of the said marriage so be had and solemnized as aforesaid and also for and in consideration of the summe of sixty five pounds of lawfull money of England to him the said William Nicholas Gunter in hand paid and well and sufficiently [] to be paid by the said Steven Brace before the ensealing and delivery hereof as a marriage portion with the said Mary his daughter whereof and of every parte and parcel thereof doth hereby acquit, exonerate and discharge him the said Steven Brace his heyres executors and assignes for ever by these presents doth covenant, promise, grant and agree to and with the said Phillip Nicholas Gunter and Steven Brace and to and with every and either of them jointly and severally in manner and forme following. That is to say that the aforesaid William Nicholas Gunter shall and will at any time hereafter att the reasonable request of the said Phillip Nicholas Gunter and Steven Brace or either of them hereafter to be made assigne or surrender according to the custom of the Mannor or Lordship of Cwmyoy alias Lantony unto the said Phillip or his heyre upon the body of the said Mary lawfully begotten or to be begotten by him the said Phillip All his the said William Nicholas Gunter his copy hold messuages, lands and tenements with the appurtenances in the Parish of Cwmyoy County of Monmouth and within the Mannor of Cwmyoy alias Lantony aforesaid whereof he the said William Nicholas Gunter is now seized by virtue of three severall coppies of Court roll heretofore thereupon granted (viz) by virtue of one Coppy of Court roll bearing the date the two and twentieth day of September in the ninth yeare of Queen Elizabeth graunted by Sir Nicholas Arnold Kt to one Thomas ap Rees ap Gwilym and his three assignes successively one after another according to the Custome of the Mannor aforesaid of and upon one messuage with its appurtenances called Tire Kelin sett, lyeing and beinge in the Parish of Cwmyoy County of Monmouth and within the Mannor or Lordship aforesaid by meares and markes there manifestly used and known whereof the said William Nicholas Gunter is now present tenant for terme of his owne life and one assignee after him....

At first sight all these documents appear to suggest three separate claimants to the Tir y Kelin lease: William Nicholas; William Nicholas Gunter with his son Phillip Nicholas Gunter; and William George with his assignee William Watkin. There is no recorded dispute about this in the manorial records and it is certain that by the 1711 survey William Watkin held the property. How can we explain this?

One way may be to dig deep again into the complexities of tenure which the unusual leases of Cwmyoy seem to have permitted. In the left margin of the 1612 entry for Tyer Kelling, there is, in a later hand, the simple entry, 'Ph. Gunter. Ent. 34. 1671'. This almost certainly identifies the transmission of the Phillip Nicholas tenure by marriage agreement with the William Nicholas succession validated by the lease seen as item 34 in 1675 by the Court Baron. It can only be assumed that the William Nicholas of the Court records is actually the same as William Nicholas Gunter of the marriage settlement. Name changes, especially the

fixing of surnames instead of the old Welsh practice of shifting patronymic from generation to generation, was still happening at this time and we shall meet it again shortly. However, the addition of a name other than one derived from a patronymic is usually either associated with a location or a profession. In some instances of lateral inheritance heirs might adopt the surname of the deceased benefactor as a condition of the inheritance. It may be any of these although location and profession can probably be ruled out. Gunter was a name common among the later medieval tenantry of the southern March and scholars tend to derive it from a Germanic military etymology associated with the early Norman conquests (Rowlands *et al* 2013, 144). There are also Gunters elsewhere in the Cwmyoy records, a potential piece of research which the scope of this report does not permit.

This may resolve one of the issues, but the tenure of William George in 1656 is harder to explain, since clearly it was also valid and under the scrutiny of the Court Baron. One way to explain this may be that William George could have had a sanctioned hold over the lease which is not visible in the surviving record. As we shall see in a later 18th transaction which is fully documented (Harley MS 86/10/2), the lease could be transferred to another person by simple endorsement of the tenant's original copy. Thus if the lease were used as collateral for a debt or loan it could actually be transferred, without being formally assigned, to the person holding the debt or providing the loan. Such an endorsement could be, as seen in the 18th-century document, ratified by the Court Baron and thus given legal status. In the case of William George, however, we do not have an original for the copy or lease, presumably the 1567 document, on which such an endorsement would have been written.

This explanation, however, as we move further on in time, quickly becomes increasingly tenuous. In a lease dated 1669 (Harley MS 86/10/3) seen by the Court Baron in 1740, the property in question, Y Pante, was said to be adjacent to lands 'late of the tenure of Thomas Watkins called Tûr Lloyncelin'. This suggests that Thomas Watkins, father of William and grandfather of James who produced the 1669 lease in the 1740 courtroom, was living in Llwyn Kelin at that date. Then in 1711 there was another survey in the Court Baron, with the officials making a fresh inquest into the actual tenure of holdings on the Arnold estate (CFL MS 4.63). For a hundred years prior to that the record of tenures was made, as we have seen, by codicils and notes added to the first survey of 1612, as well as by endorsements on the actual copies themselves. The 1711 survey does not refer to the previous holdings and instead appears to identify a whole series of new leases with increased rents, albeit still nowhere near the true value, although clearly they do relate to the same land in ways which are sometimes hard to identify specifically, as with the Watkins holdings.

This is almost certainly related to a complex dispute which Nicholas Arnold lord of the manor of Cwmyoy, was having with his copyhold tenants and which surfaced in 1703 (see above, p. 26). The seeds of it clearly go back to 1630 when William George and other tenants tried to set aside the old customs and have succession of estates by simple inheritance (Harley MS ***, f.4). On the same folio of this manuscript there is also the clear declaration by Nicholas Arnold that a lot of the relevant court records were lost 'in the late

Civil Warrs'. After 1703, the action seems to have been referred by the complainants to judicial review by others outside the manor, with a copy of the 1612 survey, made in 1624, being handed to the four men charged with reaching a judgement in 1706, as a note on the front of the survey (NLW CLF MS 4.61, unnumbered preface) tells us:

17th September 1706

John Jacob George pro eidem Quor.) In
Nicholas Arnold Esq pro eidem Defens.) Causa

Memorandum that this book marked H was produced to John Thomas at the hand of his [?] in this cause before us

William Morgan, William Willett, Benjamin De La Hay, Thomas Davies

The case, at some time after 1717, eventually found its way into the Court of the Exchequer in London heard before Lord Parker Baron of Macclesfield where a judgement was given (NLW MS 2745). The abuses of tenure claimed by both sides were extensive and it is clear that the lord of the manor was being denied the full value of his land by a long-term collusion between tenants and various officers of the court, but all done by practices, established over many centuries and centring on the peculiarities of Cwmyoy tenure. In the course of the dispute the then Steward, John Ffloyd, made extensive enquiries and searches of documents including the surviving Court Book of 1665-1775 (NLW 1184) as well as the 1624 survey. The Steward's notes are meticulous, and focus on four named tenant farms, Nant Y Gwithel, Y Wirral, Pen y Wern and Llywgy as well as some unnamed cottages on the forest waste. It is clear that the 1703 action by the tenants against their lord was a result of evictions made and other actions taken because of various breaches of the copyhold conditions, including the decay of buildings and the felling of timber trees. This included William George pulling down part of his 'mansion' at Pen y Wern without permission (f.8). The 1703 action was being taken by these tenants seeking restitution and the re-establishment of what they felt to be their rights by customary practice. These evictions happened shortly after Nicholas Arnold succeeded to the estate in 1700 and it is clear that previous stewards such as Martin Scudamore and Henry Prichard and understewards such as John Thomas (f.11) had turned a blind eye to these practices with the collusion of at least one court recorder tampering with the copy documents. Nicholas Arnold was a new broom anxious to get the proper revenue from the estate which his father had let slip, something which is clear from an examination of an original Court Book for the years 1665-1775 (NLW MS 1184). From 1700, for a few short years, there was a sudden and dramatic increase in action in the court with fines, for example, for not keeping roads, bridges and buildings in good condition and for non-attendance at court. All these documents would repay careful examination to reveal a period of great change in the social landscape of Cwmyoy.

In 1711 both William Watkins and Thomas Watkins were said to be 'of Llwyn Kelyn' and they presented some old and some new leases issued between 1693 and 1700 which related to their holdings. Although not explicitly stated it is probable that Thomas was the son of William who must have been of advanced years by 1711. Thomas, in that case, by 1711 was operating in his own right and name in acquiring property while still living with his father.

Although William and Thomas Watkins were **of** Llwyn Kelin, none of their holdings surveyed in 1711 was actually named as Llwyn Celyn.

However, by analysis of three separate entries in the survey of 1711 which is presented in full in the next section (§), it is actually possible to identify which of the three properties held by Thomas Watkin at that date was Llwyn Celyn because the other two were adjacent and named Llwyn Celyn ('Llwyn Kelin' and 'Tir Llwyn Kelin') as a boundary neighbour. This 1711 entry (CFL MS 4.63, p.56) is as follows:

Thomas Watkins holdeth for the term of his own life only by a copy bearing date the 20th day of October in the 39th year of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, one messuage or tenement in Cwmyoy within the jurisdiction of this court with certain land arable, meadow flooding and pasture to the same messuage or tenement belonging [p.57] and appertaining lying in length between the way leading from Stainton towards Lanthony on the one end, and to the lands formerly surrendered by William John Richard to one Thomas William Jenkin called Cae Bach, Cae'r Rees, Cae Kenol, Wilod-Newith, Croft Pen-yr-Hewl, Cae'r Ffynnon and Cae'r Purcas, now in the tenure of the said Thomas Watkins on the other end, and in breadth between the lands formerly in the tenure of Thomas ap Thomas now in the said Thomas Watkins possession. And the lands formerly in the tenure of William Baker Esquire on the one side, and the way leading from Pont-Rice-Powell, towards Pen-Cae-Robert, on the other side. Granted by John Arnold Esquire to the said William John Richard and his 3 assignees, Paying yearly 8d. and for an heriot when it shall happen the best beast, with all suites services and Priviledges usually due and granted he paye for a ffine £00

This tells us that the copyhold was first granted in 1597 with a full four terms as a new lease by the then manorial lord, John Arnold, to William John Richard. He was the same William John Richard who had once passed another of the three properties itemised in 1711 to Thomas William Jenkin and then to Thomas Watkins. That this may not be exactly the same descent as for Llwyn Celyn itself is suggested that it was for three lives: in 1711 Thomas Watkins was holding the last or fourth of the copyhold lives. It should also be noted that one of the locators on the boundary of the Llwyn Celyn property was the bridge known as Pont-Rice-Powell which is still there today (figure **).

In 1740, James Watkins appeared before a Cwmyoy manor court to present a lease (Harley MS 86/10/3), dated 1669 and originally issued to 'Thomas Watkins his [i.e. James'] grandfather' for 56 acres of land and Forest waste tenement known as Y Pante next to it. One of the adjacent properties was land 'late in the tenure of Thomas Watkins called Tier Lloyncelin'; late here referring to 1740 rather than 1669.

In 1744 a lease for the farm called Blaenyoy identified a John Watkins with a one-third share, who is at that time said to be aged 17 and he too is said to be 'of Lloyn Kellin' (Harley MS 72/40). It is uncertain what his relationship to the Watkins family of Llwyn Celyn was exactly, but his age suggests he might have been James' brother or uncle. As far as we know he is not mentioned elsewhere and so may have died or moved away not long after 1744. It is likely from what follows that James twenty or so years later had also acquired a

block of tenements in Blaenyoy which had belonged to William Watkins as described in the next section.

So now we can trace the Watkins acquisition of the Llwyn Celyn holding clearly from 1665 when William Watkins was assigned it in the will of William George, perhaps as the result of a prior transaction. At that date William was still relatively young and by 1711, he must have been in his seventies at least and he was probably the father of Thomas who was also living at Llwyn Celyn at the same time. Between the two, they also held a significant farm complex at Blaenyoy (see §6 below). Thomas died, in or very soon after 1733 and in his will (NA PROB 11/701/332) he left his holdings, almost certainly including William's land as well, to his 'beloved son' Job who was probably James' father. Job too must have died before 1740 when James made his presentment of the lease to the Cwmyoy court (Harley MS 86/10/3). The 1733 will also reveals that Thomas had holdings in the manor and parish of Llanbeder (Breconshire) to the west and that James received all of these too. James' married sisters, Phoebe Croft and Mary Price only got £5 each, although the will also refers to debts to be paid back from the estate, a simple statement that might have masked the true state of affairs.

This may, in part, explain why, soon afterwards, the going seemed to be getting tough for James. In an indenture of January 13th 1762 (Harley MSS 86/10/1 and 86/10/2r.), James, in the Court Baron, surrendered Llwyn Celyn and Y Pante to the lord despite the fact that the term of the lease was not complete. In consideration of this surrender, the Earl of Oxford agreed to pay James Watkins the sum of £20. In return also Edward Harley granted him several parcels of land in Blaenyoy called, and once held by, Dinah Arthur, and two other cottages. As a final statement in the indenture the Earl appointed James Sherburn of Tiley in Herefordshire, attorney to take full possession of Llwyn Celyn and Y Pante, at the same time overseeing James Watkins' possession of Dinah Arthur and the two cottages. Four months later, on May 19th, James Watkins, on the back of his own copy of this indenture (Harley MS 86/10/2v.), signed over this Blaenyoy lease to Walter Prosser in re-payment of a debt of £95. James Watkins had originally incurred this debt with the same John Sherburn of Tiley in Herefordshire in order to pay rents due and Walter Prosser had bought it up. The price was the surrender of the two holdings amounting to some 56 acres. That this might have been the last of his losses is suggested by the phrase in the endorsement describing James as 'late of Loynkelling now, of the Town of Monmouth'.

So, in 1762, Llwyn Celyn was in the hands of the lord and there is no record of how he disposed of it to another tenant. By 1775, however, the lessee was David Price as shown in a list of copyhold tenants said to be 'particulars of the estate with present rents' which can be found at the back of a Court Book of the Manor of Cwmyoy (NLW 1184, unnumbered page). This is at the end of an interesting account of the history of Llanthony Priory and the estate of the Arnolds including the sale to Edward Harley in 1726. This comes at the point where the entries in the court records, having been fitful for many years, finally stopped: the last one was 1773 (NLW MS 1184). The rent for Loyn Kellin farm at that date was £50, and we can be sure that the old system of leases and small rents was being abandoned. That it was a process and not a total change is suggested by the fact that some of the

holdings in the list were said to have leases and some not. Llwyn Celyn did not have leases and this further suggests that when the lord acquired it in 1762, he fundamentally altered the terms of the tenancy. Others almost certainly followed suit when the lease terms ended. Finally there is an interesting final short list of four holdings with the rubric: 'N.B. These estates were formerly copyhold. Mr. N. Arnold enfranchised them before he sold the manor to Mr Harley'. This strongly suggests that copyhold was not regarded as free tenure in any way. This will be discussed further in the section on status below.

The next date we can definitely find Llwyn Celyn is 1799, when again there was a new tenant. This is recorded in the detailed particulars to be found in the sale catalogue of the estate when the trustees of Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford sold it to Col. Sir Mark Wood who then sold on very quickly to Walter Savage Landor (Bradney, I, pt 2a, 234). Llwyn Celyn was then a tenant farm of some 148 acres, let to Thomas Williams for a rent of £70 per annum. It is clear that by this date, the disputes had been resolved and the tenants were paying full-value rents by normal conditions of tenure. This must have meant that less profit was being made by the farmers with consequently less to put into buildings. The size, 148 acres, also strongly suggests that other adjacent holdings which had previously been held by Llwyn Celyn through separate leases had been consolidated into one property. All of this suggests a radical reform and modernisation of the Cwmyoy manor during the Harley ownership, by which the tenants become the occupiers.

This lineage of Llwyn Celyn, also known as Tir Lloyn Kelin as well as Tir y Kellin, can now be described from the will of William George in 1656 to 1799. It must be seen now, despite the apparent sameness of the name, that Tir Llwyn Kellin was actually a different holding, distinct and separate to the Tir y Kellin which we first identified in 1515 and tracked through to Phillip Gunter in 1671 at which its name disappeared from the record. The similarity of name may have led perhaps to a confusion which fooled the clerk writing the will of William George in 1656 who seems to have left out the word Lloyn in the name of the holding granted to William Watkin. So what happened to the real Tir y Kellin after 1671 and where was it?

There was a clue in the 1515 Tir y Kellin reference in the naming of one boundary as Irish Brooke, the English form of Nant y Gwythel, the name of a stream and house still to be found on modern maps (fig. **). They both lie together on the west side of the River Honddu and immediately opposite the site of the former Priory of Llanthony. As with Llwyn Kellin, the true locators lie with adjacent properties which appear to have formed part of a large Gunter holding in the later 17th and 18th centuries (see §6 below). One of them (NLW CFL MS 4.63, p.90) is the following:

William Gunter holdeth to himself only by Copy bearing date the 22nd of September in the 9th year of Queen Elizabeth one messuage called Tiere y Kelin with the appurtenances, granted by Nicholas Arnold, knight to Thomas ap Rice ap Gwilim and his 3 assignees, at the yearly rent of 2s 2d, heriot, best beast, Fine 4s.

This is precisely the same piece of land as mentioned in the marriage settlement which appears to have been assigned to Philip Gunter as the last assignee. Not only is it held by a

William Gunter, but it is also by the same Copy and as the last Assignee. This contravened the customs of the Court and may have been a device by which the need to surrender at the end of the term was being circumvented. All of this might be explained by the fact that in 1703 we find that Phillip Gunter was one of those taking action against his lord and the cause is clearly set out in Nicholas Arnold's own deposition in defence in 1703 (Harley MS *** f. 8) where he states that he..

Hath delivered ejectment to Phillip Gunter tenant in possession of a certain copyhold called Nant y Gwthell and other lands adjoining for that he or William Gunter or Joseph Phillip Gunter have committed severall wasts on the said copyhold estates by suffering one house to continue ruinous and by felling and selling great quantities of wood above the growth of twenty years as the said Phillip Gunter hath confessed to the said Defendant whereby he or they have forfeited their copyhold to the Defendant

Doth not know now nor can set forth the particular times when the said forfeitures were committed but believes the said forfeitures accrued since he became Lord of the Mannor on the death of his father about 3 years agoe

By the time of the 1711 survey, however, Philip and William Gunter were back in possession with William holding Tir y Kelin and Phillip back in Nant y Gwythell. After this, however, there is no specific reference to Tir y Kelin we have yet found, but in 1775, in the Harley sale catalogue, Nant y Gwythell was part of the large Abbey [sic] farm of William Jones which held *inter alia* the former Priory demesne. Nant y Gwithel was then held by 3 leases, probably those attributed to the Gunters in 1711 and paid just £2 rent. One of the Gunter leases, as we have seen, was that of Tir y Kelin which is not mentioned in the 1775 overview of all tenancies. In 1799 Nant y Gwyddel, of 66 acres, was still in the hands of William Jones, but sub-let to John Trumper for £24, although the lord was still only receiving £2. A James Trumper also held a smallholding of 15 acres, direct of the lord, called Cae Howel and Gunter's for £9..6s. rent. Today there is a ruin still bearing the name Gunter's Farm less than 500 metres south-east of today's Nant y Gwyddel (Figs. 7 & 8) and it is tempting to think that this might have been the holding of Philip Gunter in 1671 and of William Gunter in 1711, called Tir y Kelin.

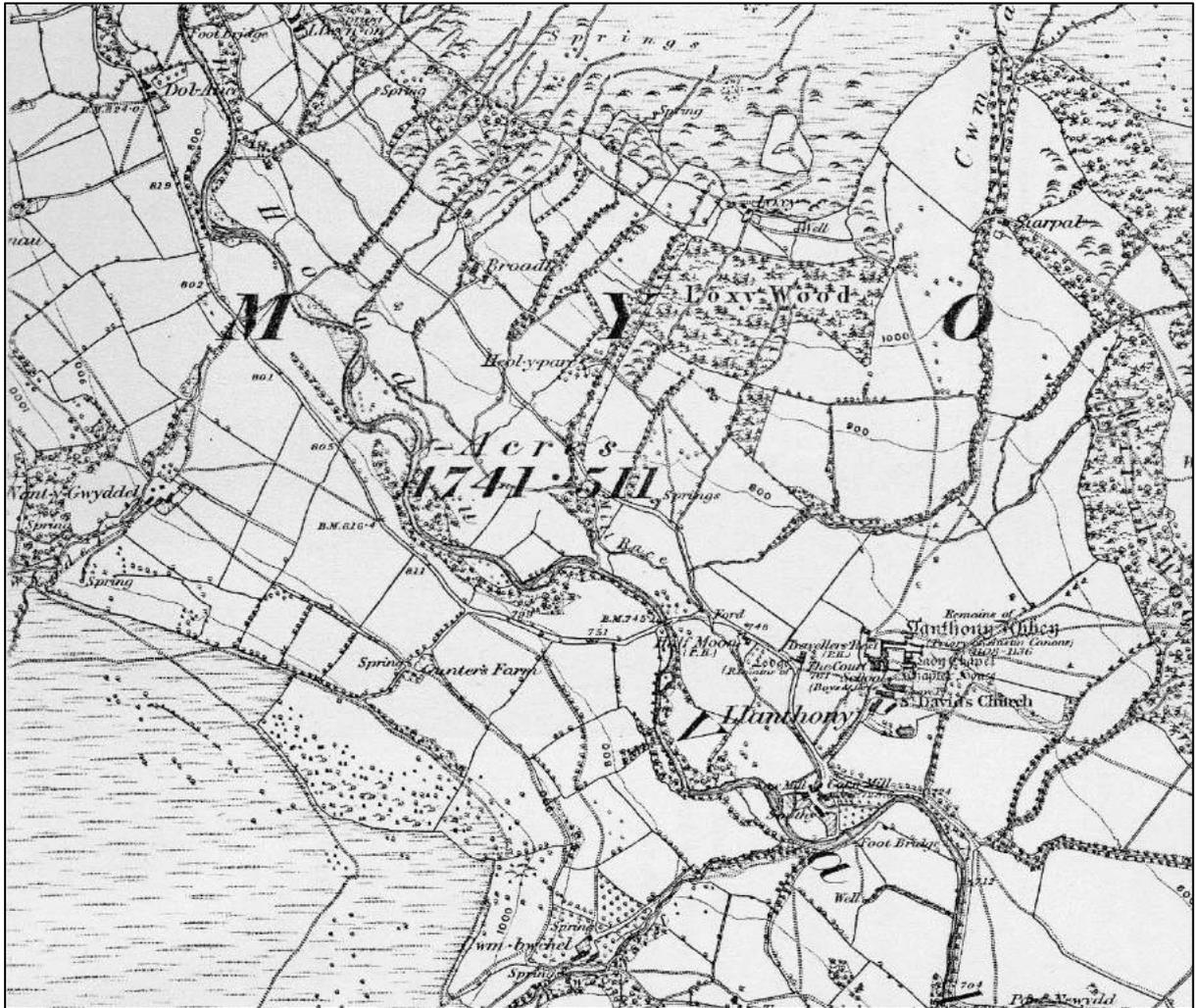


Figure 7: Nant y Gwyddell and Gunter's Farm in 1886 on the OS first edition six-inch-to-the-mile map Sheet Monmouthshire I SE. (Reproduced by kind permission of the NLW)



Figure 8: the site of Gunter's Farm, perhaps Tir y Kelin, in 2013 (Photograph copyright of Dr Chris Hodges)

This completes the Tyr y Kellin story as far as we have it at the moment, but what of Llwyn Celyn before the William George will of 1656? Now that we can identify a named tenant at that time we can return to the Manorial survey of 1612 (NLW CFL MS 5.15, f. 25v. #91) where we find:

William John Richard on the 20th day of October in the 39th year of the reign of Elizabeth received from the lord one messuage with certain lands, arable, meadows, floodlands and pastures with their appurtenances lying in Cwmyoy in length between the road leading from Stanton to Llanthony on the one head and the land surrendered by the aforesaid William to a certain Thomas William Jenkin called Cae Bach, Cae'r Piece, Cae Canol, Gwrlod Newydd, Croft Pen yr Hewl, Cae'r Fryndy and Cae'r Purchase on the other head and in breadth between the land of Thomas ap Thomas and Sir William Baker on the one head and the road leading from Pont Rhys Powell towards Pen Cae Robert on the other head. To hold to himself and his three assignees. For aren't of 8d. at the Feasts of the Annunciation and St Michael in equal portions. For suit of Court and Heriot of the best animal.

The aforesaid William assigned to William George David as he says still holding.

[Later hand] And William George David assigned the premises to William Watkin still holding for himself and one assignee. In the year 1665

Without doubt this is Llwyn Celyn, because the copy of court roll cited above for 39 Elizabeth (1597) above is the one referred to in the 1711 Thomas Watkin entry (CFL MS 4.63, p.56) which we have already identified above. Confirmation appears to come from the long and highly detailed statement of the manorial boundary which forms the preamble to the 1612 survey. The boundary follows a course running anti-clockwise around the Manor of Cwmyoy and we pick it up as it drops off the Ffwthog ridge and down through Coed y Cerrig to Nant Ddu (NLW CFL MS 5.15, 8v.):

...And from the stone wall to a meer stone that is there put upon the top of a banke, and from that stone directly to Nant ddy to a great stone lying by Nant thye with a hole in the head thereof. And afterward the said spring called Nant ddy meereth all along between Stanton and the Lordship of Cwmyoy between the customary lands of William George David, the freehold of William Baker Gent. lying in the manor of Stanton to the river of Hotheny....

This seems to confirm that the land of Llwyn Celyn on the southern boundary of Cwmyoy, where it marched with the lands of Stanton manor, was already in the hands of William George David by 1612.

One issue here is the name 'William George David'. The succession is so strong and supported by other evidence that William George of the 1656 will and William George David must have been one and the same person. This seems also to be supported by an entry in the only Court Roll to survive today and is for the period 1665-1775 when the manorial court seems to have been getting going again after the disruptions of the Civil War. In the initial court of 1665, there is a long list of people who had died in the intervening period and one of them was William George ap David (NLW 1184, f.3v.). He seems to have dropped his Welsh patronymic. This adjustment of surname, albeit in this case by addition, we have seen before in the case of William Nicholas Gunter and occurring at about the same time in the mid-17th century.

This is as far back as we can take Llwyn Celyn for the time being, but we can note that at this date it was a tenant farm held by copy of the manorial court roll and as such was one of the customary holdings. In 1597 it was given by the lord of the manor as a new lease for four lives and this is likely to have been a renewal following surrender, although we cannot be certain. William John Richard, therefore, received Llwyn Celyn in 1597 and assigned it to William George (ap David) probably not many years after that. On his death in 1656, he passed it to William Watkin, as far as we know outside the family succession. We can then follow the descent through William, Thomas, Job and James to 1762 when it is bought back by the lord presumably to enable him to start charging an economic rent. It is then held by David Price in 1775 for £50 and by Thomas Williams in 1799 for £70.

Next, in the parish registers we find William and Mary Morgan identified as farmers at Llwyn Celyn in 1823, 1825, 1827 and 1829 when their four children, Edwin, Anne, Frederick and

Alfred were born, although Anne died when she was only one. In the 1841 census the tenant was 35-year old Benjamin Davies with his wife Mary, three years his junior and their four children, all under nine. By the next census, however, the tenant was Thomas Griffiths, aged 58, farming 140 acres. He lived at Llwyn Celyn with his mother Mary, then 83 years old, his wife Blanch, 59 and their four children, William (21), Thomas (19), Charlotte (16) and Mary (14). This tenancy is confirmed by the Tithe Apportionment records of the following year, although the extent of the farm, accurately measured in the Schedule, was actually just over 150 acres.

Shortly afterwards the tenancy was taken on by Michael Jasper, who had been farming 30 acres at nearby Little Llwygy farm in 1851. His wife died in 1858 and by 1871 Michael was living at *LlwnCELLIN*, farming 120 acres; his recently married eldest son, William, his wife Ann and their young daughter Mary lived with him, along with a younger son, John (22) and a young female servant.

By the 1881 census, William was also a widower, his wife having recently died of cancer; the two men shared the house with William and Ann's four young children – Mary (11), James (8), Sarah Ann (6) and Margaret (4) – but were helped by Elizabeth Parry (45), their housekeeper and Mary Walker (15) a general servant. Another member of the household was Arthur Rew (17), listed as a 'general servant' but probably working on the farm.

In 1884 Michael Jasper died and William took over the tenancy of the farm; in the same year he also remarried. He and his new wife, Elizabeth, had seven children – William, Adeline, Elizabeth, Herbert, Maud, John and Henry Leslie. According to family researches, he seems to have been a prosperous farmer, an expert ploughman and a local councillor; he is said to have doled out poor relief to the 'deserving poor' in the parlour of Llwyn Celyn, sitting at a rather fine table. This 13 foot long oak high table, dated 1690, was still in the house in 1906 and is now at the Llanthony Abbey Hotel; it appears that it was taken in lieu of rent.

William died in 1923 but the Jasper family retained the tenancy of Llwyn-celyn until 1944 when Jack Jasper gave it up, apparently being in dispute with the estate about his long-term plans for the development of the farm. It was rented and then bought from the Llanthony Estate by his brother-in-law, James Abraham Thomas Powell and his wife Olive Sarah Powell. In 1958 The Powells bought the freehold of what was by then a holding of 176 acres. In 2014 their children, Trefor and Lyndon Powell, sold the house to the Landmark Trust.

6. The 'Llwyn Celyn Farm' and the resources provided by tenant right

As we have seen, from the earliest records in the 16th century, the copyhold system created during the later Middle Ages permitted an active and complex process of exchange, purchase, mortgage and succession. This allowed powerful and entrepreneurial members of the tenant community to accumulate tenements, sometimes with established buildings on them and sometimes as single fields, meadows or intakes from the common pastures of the lord's 'Forest waste' on the tops of the Haterall and Ffwyddog ridges. This permitted the acquisition and accumulation of estates which must have been immensely valuable in real terms and could run into hundreds of acres. We can trace some attempts to acquire properties lying adjacent to the tenements which formed the principal sites occupied by these estate creators. By the later 17th century during the period of landlord laxity and tenant pressure we can detect a practice of allowing houses on these adjacent properties to go into ruin or even be pulled down so that their lands could *de facto*, if not *de iure*, be annexed semi-permanently to the home farm. In this way the relatively small copyholds of the late medieval tenants could become the estates of new gentry and yeomanry, 'of the middling sort' as they were known elsewhere in Britain.

Both Llwyn Celyn and Tir y Kelin seem to have been parts of farms created by such accumulations, although it is very hard to be certain exactly which elements were added or removed, or when, since we are very dependent on the surviving records of the formal leases written into the surveys. These are not very good, as we have seen, at providing the names of holdings, and the boundary clauses, which they sometimes contain, refer only rarely to identifiable topographical features and usually just to the names of the adjacent tenants. Because of this uncertainty the identification of the estate accumulating around both can only be tentative at this stage.

Llwyn Celyn

This copyhold first appears in the record in 1597 by the grant of a new full-term lease, but there is no direct indication of its extent. As far as we can tell at the moment, the first copyholder, William John Richard had acquired only one adjacent holding, but William George who probably had it soon after was a man of a different ilk. He was a community leader to judge from his role in the 1630 dispute with his manorial lord and had at least three major holdings in Cwmyoy. The Watkins too were similarly accumulative and dynastic.

First, William John Richard and in 1612 we can trace another holding he had (NLW CFL 5.15, f.25v. #91), but which he had already assigned, before 1612, to a Thomas William Jenkin:

Thomas William Jenkin on the twentieth day of October in the thirty-ninth year of Elizabeth in the presence of William Watkin Gent. received from the lord on the surrender of William John Richard a meadow called Gwerlod Newydd containing six acres, and nine parcels of arable land and pasture together being parcels of the lord's waste there formerly conceded to the aforesaid William and the aforesaid parcels of land are called Cae Canol, Cae Piece, Cae Bach, Cae [Dikunt] Ty'r Defaid, Cae [Dwyth]

Ty'r Defaid, Cae'r Ffynnon, Cae'r Purchase Newydd and Croft Pen yr Hewl containing in all fifty acres of land lying in the aforesaid Cwmyoy in length and breadth on all parts within the land now in the tenure of William John Richard, the road leading from Pont Rees Powell towards Pontyspig, the land of Morgan Thomas [Ruederwen], the land of Madoc John, the land of Thomas ap Thomas and the land of the aforesaid William called the Wern. To be held for himself and three of his assignees, at the rent for it of one shilling and four pence at the usual dates, for suit of court, and the heriot of the best animal.

[Margin] Thomas Watkins and 2 (assignees) [Added entry] The aforesaid Thomas is still holding [later hand] and died and he assigned the aforesaid premises to a certain Robert ap Owen still holding

[Another hand] And the aforesaid Robert ap Owen assigned the premises to Margaret wife of Charles Williams and Margaret assigned it to a certain Hugh Price

Memorandum a new copy of this is granted to William Watking Guntar [in margin]
Anno 1669

[Margin] Entry 93

This descent added at the end is problematical and we know nothing as yet of the people holding the land until 1669. If we can take the entries at face value then the 56 acres do not return to the Llwyn Celyn farm unit until William Watkin takes it with a new four-life copy. This by chance or intent, we can see, because 'entry 93' recorded as the copy entered in 1675 at the end of the 1612 survey is actually not the original lease but the new one (NLW CLF MS 5.15 f.75v. #93):

William Watkin on the fifth day of May in the 21st year of Charles the second [1669-70] received from the lord one messuage together with a meadow called Gwerlod Newydd containing 6 acres of land and nine parcels of arable land and pasture called by their separate names Cae Canol, Cae Pyse, Cae Bach, Cae [dehunt] Ty'r Defaid, Cae [duwth] Ty'r Defaid, Cae yr Ffynnon, Cae yr Purchas Newydd and Croft wrth Pen yr Hewle containing in all 50 acres of land together with a parcel of waste land of the lord called Y Pant and lying in length and breadth between the land of William Watkin called Tir Loyn Kelin, the land of John Thomas, the land once of John William and Pen Rhiw'r Meirch on all parts. To hold to himself and his three assignees. For a rent annually of 16d. For suit of court and for heriot when it will happen of the best animal.

Curiously William Watkin is also called William Watking Guntar which is hard to explain unless it is yet another example of surname migration or it is a clerical error. In the margin of the survey record there is also the note 'Thomas Watkin and 2 [assignees]' which shows the descent we know from Llwyn Celyn itself, something confirmed by the following entry in the 1711 survey (NLW, CFL, MS 4.63, 56):

Thomas Watkins holdeth to him and two assignees by a copy bearing date the 5th day of May in the [blank] year of King Charles the Second's reign and in the year of

our Lord 1669. One messuage together with one meadow called Gwrlod Newydd containing 6 acres of land and nine parcells of lands arrable and pasture known by the severall names of Cae-Kenol - Cae Rys, Cae-Bach, Cae Ditusut[?]-Tu-Defaid, Cae Park Tir Defaid, Cae yr Ffennon, Cae-yr Purcas, Cae yr-Purcaswenith and Croft with Pen-yr-Hewl, containing in whole 50 acres of lands be the same more or less, And also together with one Parcell of fforest waste of the Lord called Y-Pante lying in length and breadth between the lands now in the tenure of the said Thomas Watkins called Tir Llwyn Kelin to the lands formerly in the tenure of John Thomas now in Richard Morgans tenure to the lands lately in the tenure of John William now in the tenure of Joan Roberts and Pen-Reiw-yr-Meirch on all parts which said messuage with the lands thereunto belonging to the said fforest wast are situate and being in Cwmyoy within the jurisdiction of this court. Granted by John Arnold Esquire to William Watkins and his 3 assignees, Paying yearly 1s. 4d. for an herriott when it shall happen the best beast, with all suites, services and Priviledges usually due Payd for a ffyne £40

Clearly this block of land had acquired another adjacent piece taken as encroachment from the mountain pastures. The building complex today known as Y Pante lies nearly two kilometres to the west of Llwyn Celyn and, indeed, to the west of the boundary of the former Llanthony estate and the detached Ewyas Lacy manor of Ffwthog, for a while left after the Act of Union in 1526 in the County of Herefordshire and thus not in the manor of Cwmyoy. For this reason it may be that the Y Pante of the Cwmyoy manorial record was actually another holding with the same name, now lost (see fig. ***). In 1799 the 1711 Y Pante was not named in the sale catalogue as a separate property and must still have been incorporated in the 148-acre holding of Llwyn Celyn, as was probably the 50 acres of the above entry, which lay between them both. This would explain the boundary indicators which must refer to the whole of this single leasehold, because we can identify Pen-Reiw-yr-Meirch as the present-day Pen Rhiw on the hill to the north-west of Llwyn Celyn and the Joan Roberts holding as one of today's Gaer Farms, perhaps the easternmost.

Thomas Watkins also held a third property in 1711 (NLW, CFL, MS 4/63, pp. 55):

Thomas Watkins of Llwyn Kelin upon the surrender of John Thomas, holdeth by copy dates the 13th day of April 1692 for the term of his own life only one tenement and 5 parcells of land, meadow, fflooding and pasture, with the appurtenances, commonly called by these severall names Gwilod Yssa, Cae-yr Darren, Y Gwrlod Vach. Cae teer Calch and Cae Pengam lying in Cwmyoy within the jurisdiction of this court and abutting on the one side, to the customary lands of James Morgan of Llantillio Pertholey Esquire now in the tenure of Mrs[?] Cook of Llwyn ffrank and on the other side to the lands of the said Thomas Watkin of Llwyn Kelin and to the lands of the said John Thomas, now in the tenure of Richard Morgan, Granted by John Arnold Esquire upon the surrender of the said John Thomas to the said Thomas Watkin for the term of his own naturall life only paying yearly 1s. 8d. and an herriott when it shall happen with all suites, services, priviledges usually due etc

Locators for this property include 'the customary lands of James Morgan of Llantilio Pertholey Esq.' who was probably the James Morgan who owned Ty Mawr in Llantilio Pertholey (once part of the manor of Trilley) and Llwyn Frank in Llanfihangel Crucorney. He died in 1704 and the estate then passed, first to his widow Elinor, and then to two heiresses (Bradney, i, 2a, 202-3). Ty Mawr and Llwyn Frank at this time held the farm and lands of Upper Stanton, formerly part of, and the manor-house of, the former Llanthony manor of Stanton. Elinor had married, after 1704, Henry Lussan whose surname was sometimes spelt 'Lux' (Bradney, i, 2a, 202n.), perhaps misspelt in the 1711 survey as 'Cook'. This all suggests strongly that the property lay on the north side of the stream, Nant Ddu, which formed the boundary between the parishes of Llanfihangel Crucorney and Cwmyoy as well as the two manors. Thomas as part of the continuing Watkin accumulation of land acquired it at some point before 1711, but was it only part of a property which was held by Richard Morgan from whom he obtained it. The other part is included in the boundary clause of the Watkins property on p. 56 above of the 1711 survey (see above).

There may also be a fourth property held by Thomas Watkins which is mentioned in the boundary description for Llwyn Celyn itself (NLW CLF MS 4.63, p.57) as follows:

...and in breadth between the lands formerly in the tenure of Thomas ap Thomas now in the said Thomas Watkins possession and the lands formerly of William Baker Esquire...

There is no entry for such a property elsewhere in the 1711 survey and this may be because it was in Ffwthog and hence part, not of Cwmyoy, but of Lord Abergavenny's estates. This will need pursuing, but the reference to William Baker Esq. may be helpful. The only gentry Baker family to which reference can be found as yet are the holders about this time of Tredilion in the south of the adjacent parish of Llantilio Pertholey (Bradney, i, 2a, 205), This suggests land which is the vicinity of the modern Pant and, indeed, the problem with identifying the 17thc. YPant may be due to the elision of the two Watkins copyholds and the ultimate shift of the name. This too will need pursuing in the Abergavenny records.

All of this allows the Llwyn Celyn property accumulated in the hands of the Watkins family to be mapped in a tentative way (fig. 9). For the purposes of clarity on the map the Llwyn Celyn holding of 1711 is labelled 1, while the p. 56 property is 2, with the 56-acre holding as 2a and Y Pant as 2b (with its two possible locations), and the p. 55 property is 3. The fourth property embedded in the p. 56 entry is labelled 4.

What must be remembered is that once the complexities of tenure had been sorted out in the 18th century, Llwyn Celyn emerged as a single consolidated farm of 148 acres. All the units in earlier documents which have their acreages identified are less than 50 acres and this rather suggests that as the Harley managers sorted out the terms and conditions of tenure of Llwyn Celyn after it had been bought back in 1762, they confirmed the Watkins accumulation as a single farm

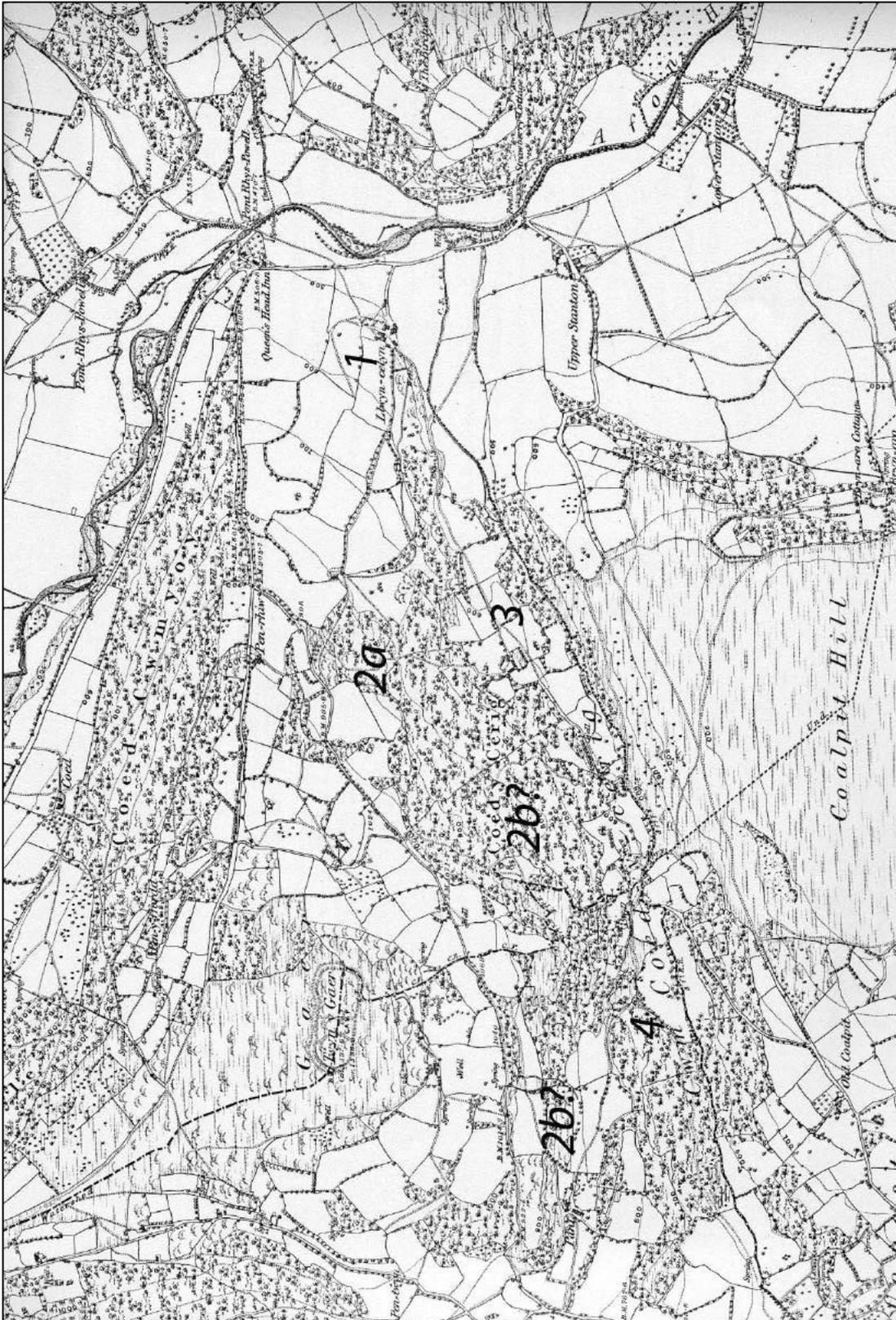


Figure 9: The Thomas Watkins holding in 1711 (base map: OS 1st ed. 6-inch-to-the-mile Monmouthshire III, 1887. See text for key to numbers)

Blaenyoy

In 1711 William Watkins also held three properties by copyhold (NLW CFL MS 4.63, pp.51-4):

[1] William Watkins upon the surrender of Jane William David holdeth to him and two assignees, by a copy bearing date the 11th day of May in the 5th year of the reign of King William and Queen Mary, and in the year of our lord 1693 one messuage or tenement with certain lands arable, meadow, flooding and pasture thereunto belonging and appertaining in Cwmyoy, within the jurisdiction of this court lying in length between the lands surrendered by George Grono[w] to one David William Thomas on the one end, and to the lands of John-ap-Harry formerly taken out of the fforest of the lord, on the other end, and in breadth to a brook called Nant-goy on the one side, and there abutting to land formerly of William Thomas now in the tenure of the said William Watkins on the other side, - Granted by John Arnold Esquire to the said Jane William David to her 9 assignees paying yearly 5s. 2d. and for an heriot [of] the best beast, with all suites, services and priviledges usually before due paid for a fine £30.

[2] William Watkins of Llwyn Kelin upon the surrender of Jane William David holdeth to him and three assignees, by a copy bearing the date the 17th day of April in the 7th year of King William 3rd and in the year of our Lord 1695 four closes or parcells of land arable and pasture commonly called and known by the severall or separate names following (that is to say) Cae Mawr Ycha, Cae Mawr Yssa, Saeth Cofer and fallow Cae Hir with their appurtanences, containing by estimation 26 acres of land, be the same more or less, in Cwmyoy, within the jurisdiction of this court, extending and joyning to the lands of Blanch George widow called Dole on the one end and to the meadow formerly in the tenure of George Gronow now in the tenure of Mary Reynold and to the other close called Cae Hir thence to the tree there growing there growing [*repetition* sic] called Llwyfen-ddu on the other end, and in length abutting to the lands of Richard Gronow now in the tenure of the said Mary Reynold and to the lands of William Price now in the tenure of Thomas David on the one side and thence leading to the other lands of the said Blanch George now in the tenure of William Watkins on the other side. Granted by John Arnold Esquire to the said William Watkins and his three assignees, Paying yearly five shillings and four pence. And for an heriot the best beast with all suites, services and priviledges usually due Payd for a ffyne £30.

[3] William Watkins of Llwyn Kelin holdeth to him and 3 assignees, by a copy bearing date the 17th day of April in the 12th year of the Reign of King William the third, and in the year of our Lord 1700 one messuage and certain lands arable, meadow, flooding and pasture to the same messuage belonging and appertaining whereof one parcel called Jackfield Meadow and half an acre of land to the same meadow belonging all which the said premises are lying and abutting to the lands of Dinah Prichard, To the

lands of William George Gould called Pen-y-Werne to the lands of Thomas Grundy called Tu Kenol now in the tenure of Joan Grundy to the lands of Mary Grundy called Tir-y-cha. To other lands of the said William Watkins called Blaen-goy, to the lands of Richard Probert called Blaen-goy, and to the forest lands of the lord on all parts and sides thereof excepting out of the said premises 4 closes or parcels of land called by the several names of Cae-y-Dderwen, Pedwar Cyfer, Tir Skyin* and Eriu which said 4 closes or parcels of land containing by estimation 20 acres be the same more or less, and also the said Williams holdeth to him and 3 assignees one parcel of the fforest waste of the lord containing 30 acres lying by the lands formerly in the tenure of William Thomas alias Charles now in the tenure of William Watkins being in length between the lands of the said Nicholas Probert taken out of the forest of the lord on the one end and thence leading towards Pen-y-Bulch on the other end, and in breadth between the lands of the said William George on the one [p.54] side and the pathway leading from Lliobyr-y-Tiolk on the other side, the said messuage and forest lands aforesaid being entirely in Cwmyoy within the jurisdiction of this court, granted by John Arnold Esquire to the said William Watkins and his 3 assignees except before excepted Paying yearly for the said messuage 19s. 6d. And for the said forest lands 01 s. and for an herriott for both the premises two of the best beasts with all suites, services and priviledges usually paid as a ffyne for the said messuage £70 0s. and for the forest lands £7 10s.

Broadly speaking these accord with the three holdings, north of Cwmyoy, still to be found on the 1st edition OS six-inch-to-the-mile map of 1887 (Fig. 10), called Ty Trwnt ir Bwlch (1) and Ty Charles (2) and Old Blaenyoy (3).

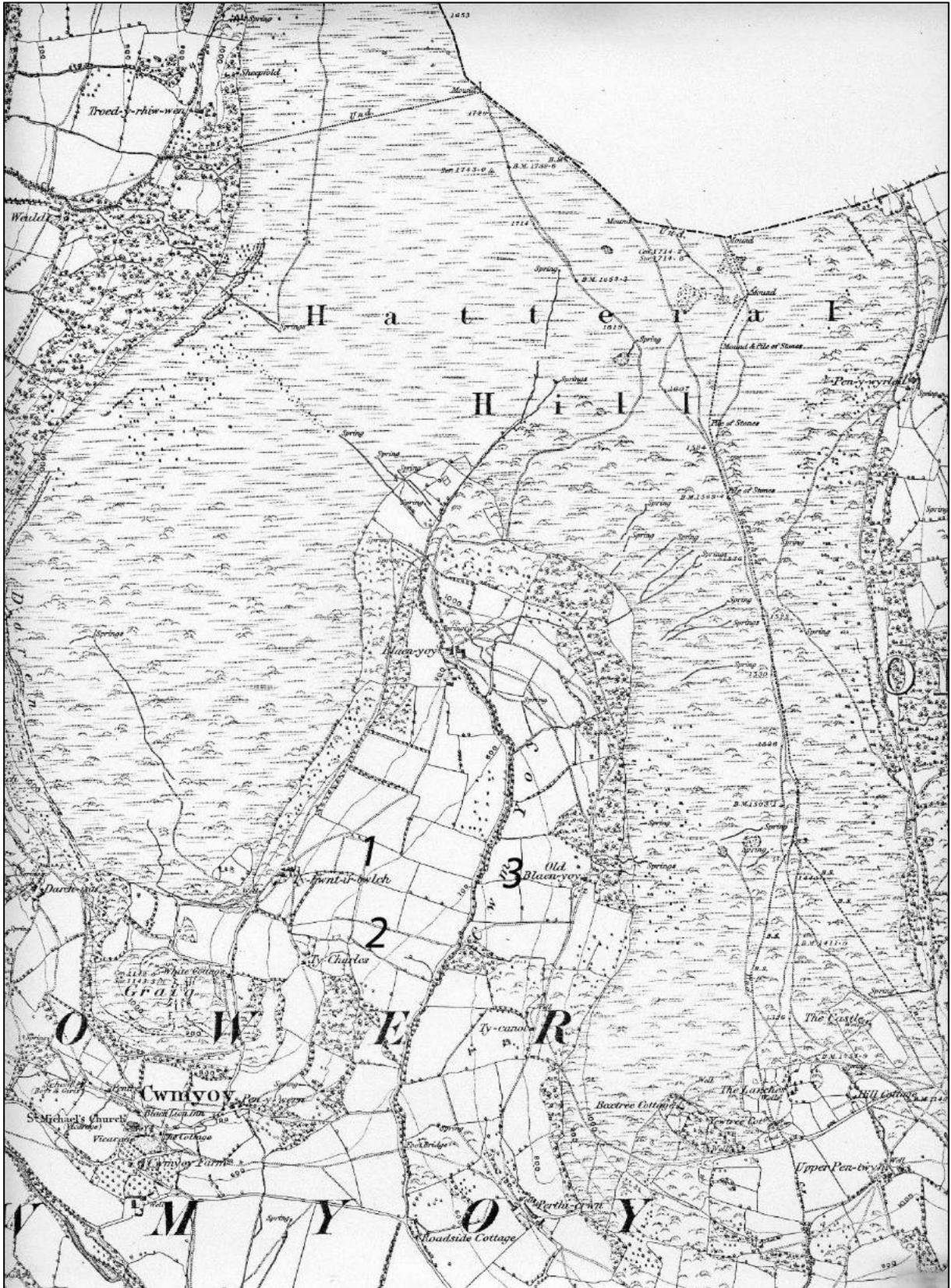


Figure 10: The William Watkins holding in Blaenyoy 1711 (base map: OS 1st ed. 6-inch-to-the-mile Monmouthshire III, 1887. See text for key to numbers)

Tir y Kelin

Thomas ap Price (*recte* Rhys) ap Gwilym is the first recorded member of a family which was and, perhaps had been, in the business of accumulation. In this case it involved four separate properties: (1) a copyhold first assigned in 1515 which he acquired at some point after that date and which we have examined in the previous section (NLW CFL MS 5.15 f.14r. #16); (2) was Tyer Kelling itself as we have seen (NLW CFL MS 5.15 f.14r. #17); (3) was a substantial piece of land of 20 acres which had been taken in from the Forest waste (NLW CFL, MS 4.63, f.14v. #18):

William Thomas ap Price on the 28th day of October 34 Elizabeth I (1596) came and received from the lord one parcel of forest waste land of the lord, the same containing twenty acres of land lying in length between the land once in the tenure of John David deceased on one head and the land of Thomas ap Gwilym ap Price on the other head and in breadth between the land once demised from the forest of the lord to a certain John ap Prichard on the one side and Nant y Gwythell on the other. To be held by himself and his three assignees for a rent of 17d. at the usual feasts and for suit of court and for heriot of the best animal.

The aforesaid William is still holding

and the said William assigned to a certain Nicholas William still holding

1671 And the aforesaid Nicholas assigned to ~~David~~ Nicholas Gunter to himself and one assignee

and (4) was a messuage, land and a small forest encroachment amounting in all to 44 acres, (NLW CFL 4.63, f.14v. #19):

(4) William Thomas ap Price on the 10th of October 35 Elizabeth (1597) came and received from the lord one messuage with certain lands, arable, meadow, floodland and pasture containing 40 acres of land in length between the land called Cae Madock and the stone wall there on the one part and the land of Thomas ap Price and a small track there leading from the high road towards the commons(?) there on the other part and in breadth between the road leading from Llanthony to Stanton [apparent disjunction here – scribal error?] one other parcel of forest land of the lord containing 4 acres of land lying at the aforesaid premises in length from Rhyd Fferen [or Ffecen?] towards two apple trees there and in breadth leading from the land once of Watkin Thomas from the house of William Price on the mountain there holding for himself and his three assigns for a rent of 2s. 2d. at the usual feasts, for suit of court and heriot of the best animal (C.F.L MS 5.15 Proceedings of the Court Baron of Cwmyoy 1612-1675, f.14, #19).

[Added below] The aforesaid William is still holding [later hand] and the said William died and assigned it to a certain William Harry Philip still holding [in left margin opposite this entry] Anno 1671

[Later hand] This Copy is now granted to Thomas Prees for him and assigns

[Left margin later hand same as Ph Gunter # 17] James

This key topographical locator in the first three is Nant y Gwythell or Irish Brook and they all formed one contiguous unit. For the fourth holding there is no evidence to locate it as adjacent to the other three and the reference to Cae Madock seems, from an entry in the 1711 survey, to relate to a holding further down valley and closer to Cwmyoy itself. The first three holdings can be placed on a map (Fig. 11)

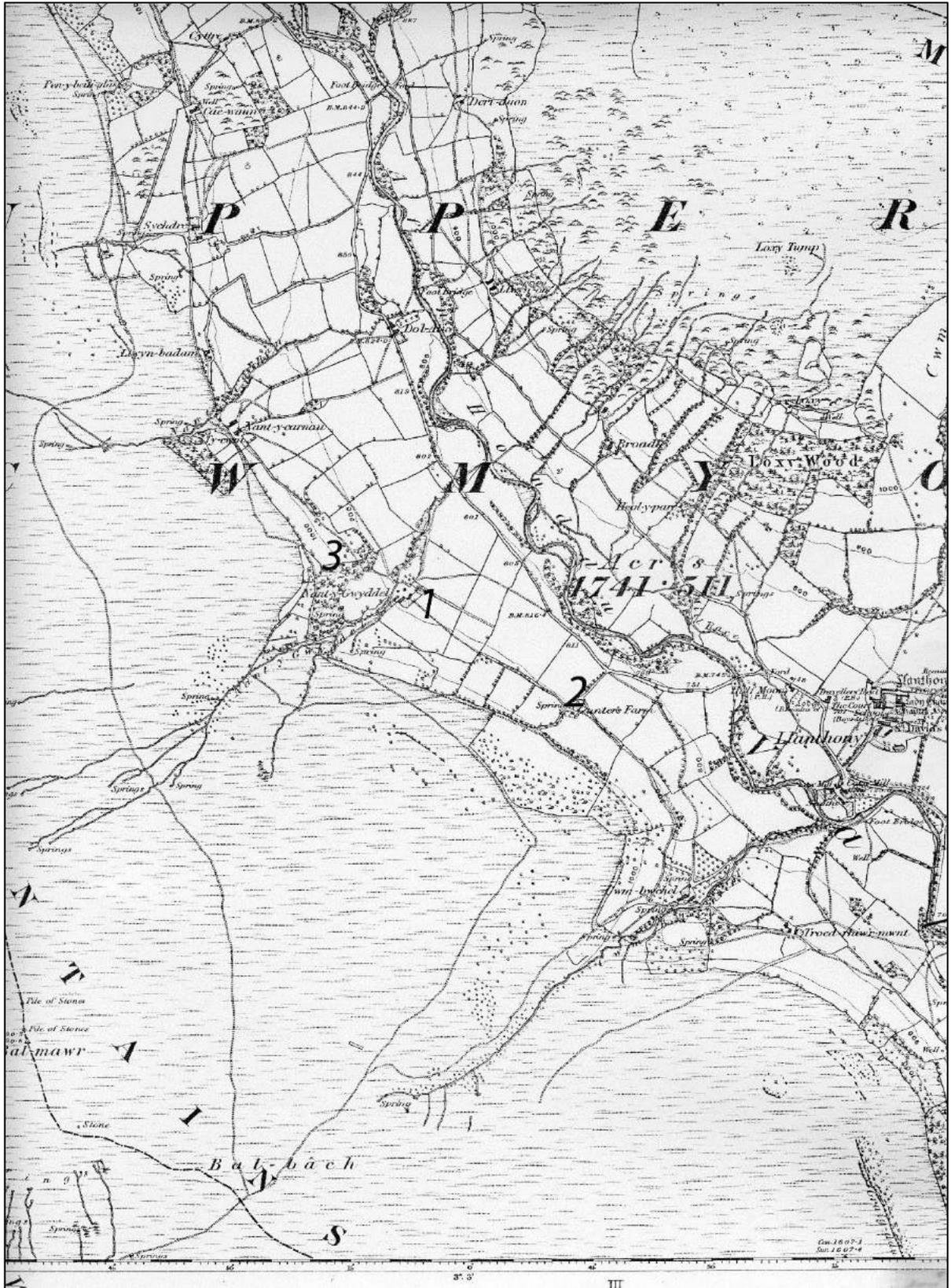


Figure 11: The Thomas ap Price ap Gwilyn holding at Tir Kelin and n y Gwythell 1612 (base map: OS 1st ed. 6-inch-to-the-mile Monmouthshire I, 1886. See text for key to numbers). It is also worth noting that Cwm Bwchel, the nest farm to the south of Gunter's farm had/has a medieval cruck-trussed structure in it (Fox & Raglan, 1951, 78)

In 1711 holding (1) was in the hands of Phillip Gunter as we have tracked and the entry contain some interesting additional details (NLW, CFL, MS 4.63, p.88-9):

Phillip Gunter holdeth to him and his assignee by a copy dated the 14th of February in the 18th of King James the first, one messuage or tenement, one bakehouse, one barn, 2 orchards, 2 gardens and certain parcels of lands, arable, meadow, flooding pasture and wood adjoining to the said messuage containing by estimation 45 acres of land more or less, formerly granted to one Thomas Prosser ap Howell which said premisses lye together between the River called Hothny on the one end and Gwar-y Cae Garn abutting on the lord's forest formerly of William Thomas Prees now of [blank] to Nant y Gwithill of the other end and in breadth between the customary lands in the tenure of the said William Thomas Prees [blank] called Tyr Kelynin John Hugh and to the lands formerly of David Prosser now of [blank] of the one side and the River or Brook [89] aforesaid called Nant y Gwithill on the other side, granted by Nicholas Arnold Esq to Nicholas William Gunter and his 3 assignees, Paying yearly 5s. 2d. Suite of Court. Heriott of the best beast, with all Services and Priviledges usually granted, the said Nicholas William Gunter to plant and sett 12 apple trees in or upon the said premises and the said trees to keep and preserve well and commodious for the bearing of fruit. Paid for a fine 20s.

The meares whereof being so uncertain we refer our selves to the said copy and records

We can by now be fairly sure that this property was the farm we know today as Nant-y-Gwyddel. Holding (3), in 1711, was also in the hands of Phillip Gunter and similarly given more detail including the acreage and names of the fields (NLW, CFL, MS 4.63, p.89):

Phillip Gunter holds to himself only by a copy bearing date 4th of Aprill in the 19th year of King James the first certain parcels of land arable, meadow, flooding, and wood with the appurtenances containing 26 acres of land more or less, known by the name of Llynebach, Llyne maw, Gwyrlod ty'nyant, Gwerlod Gwenlian and Y Wern lying between the River called Nanty Gwithill to the lord's forest in the tenure of David ap John now in the tenure of [blank] toward Llanerth Lase the other part or half of the Le Werne aforesaid formerly granted to the said David ap John as it is by a ditch there being it is divided on all parts thereof, Granted by Nicholas Arnold Esq. to one William Nicholas of Nant y Gwithill and his one assignee, Paying yearly 4s. 1d. and 2 capons, Heriott of the best beast, Paid for a fine 22s.

The reference to the capons here is delightful and suggests that the Nant y Gwithill birds were especially fine and fit for the Llanvihangel table. Holding (2), Tir y Kellin itself, was held by another Gunter, William, but we have yet to establish his relationship to Phillip.

7. The historic landscape of Llwyn Celyn and the pattern of land use in a constrained environment.

The reconstruction of historic landscapes and the past land use that they demonstrate proceeds by two methods: map regression and observation of field phenomena. IN Britain the one sure base mapping point for regression is the Tithe Map created in the first half of the 19th century to assist in the process of commuting tithe renders in kind into money returns. This included estimating not only the extent of fields, but also their normal or expected cropping regime. In the case of Cwmyoy parish (Upper and Lower Divisions) the tithe agreement was reached in 1850. The mapping of this return onto the first edition 25-inch-to-the-mile OS map shows both the extent and mid-19th century land use (Fig 12)

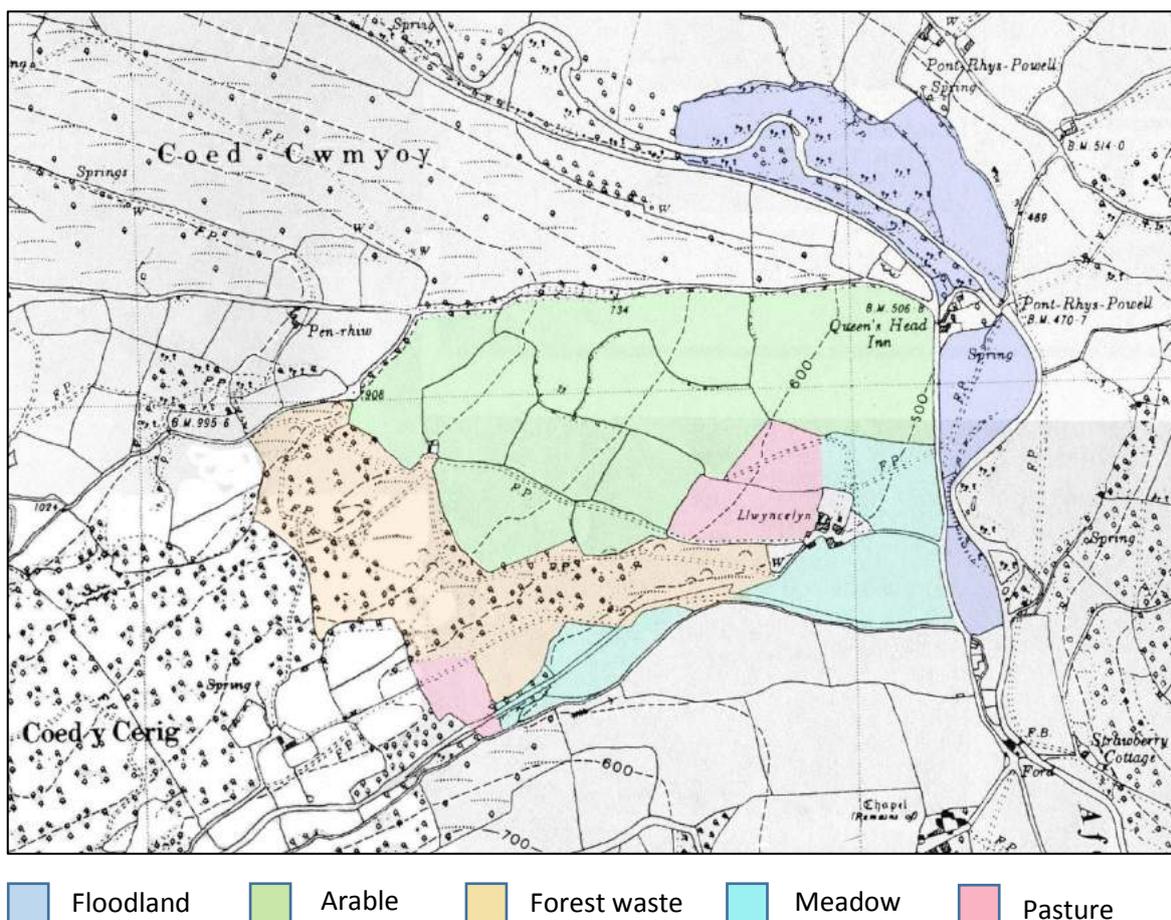


Figure 12: Map of the Tithe calculations transcribed onto the first edition of the 25-inch-to-the-mile OS map shows the extent and land use of Llwyn Celyn in 1850

The next step is to regress the map further back in time by field observation and related documentary research. One of the important historic characteristics of the mixed farms of this area are the large and impressive down-slope lynchets created by long-term ploughing. They are easily identified by the sharp break of slope on an existing or former field boundary created by the constant movement of soil downslope by the plough and its coming to rest against a hedge or other barrier or simply where the plough turned at the bottom of the field area. This also created a bench or broad terrace upslope from the lynchet which provided the best growing surface. From the documents we can also identify that the Llwyn

Celyn farm unit was formed by the combination of three component elements: the ancient tenement itself with a range of land types and associated ancient rights, together with a homestead or messuage; intakes from the steep, 'allt' woodland again with or without buildings; diverse other fields, but mostly meadow and floodland, always without buildings; and intakes or encroachments from the upland forest waste or commons, with or without buildings.

It is possible to map: the ploughlands (terra) from the lynchets and artificial benches behind them; the 'allt' intakes by the steepness of slope, soil and modern vegetation; the meadows from Tithe field names; and the floodlands by the proximity to watercourses and the way in which roads and tracks avoid intruding into them. Finally we can also identify the earliest 'penclawdd' or boundary between the ancient upland grazing or commons (designated 'forest waste' in the documents) by a continuous line along the contour above which there are documented encroachments (see Hodges 2014 for an exhaustive study of these holdings which date from the 16th and 17th centuries). In the case of Llwyn Celyn, this boundary is provided by the track or lane at the top of the property as shown on the Tithe Map with Pen-rhiw as a known encroachment farm. This track was originally one of the main routes east-west through Cwm Coed y Cerrig and it branches off one of the main access roads to the commons still today as it was in the past, running to the north of the farm and separating it from the steeply wooded slopes of Coed Cwmyoy. This is all mapped on Fig. 13

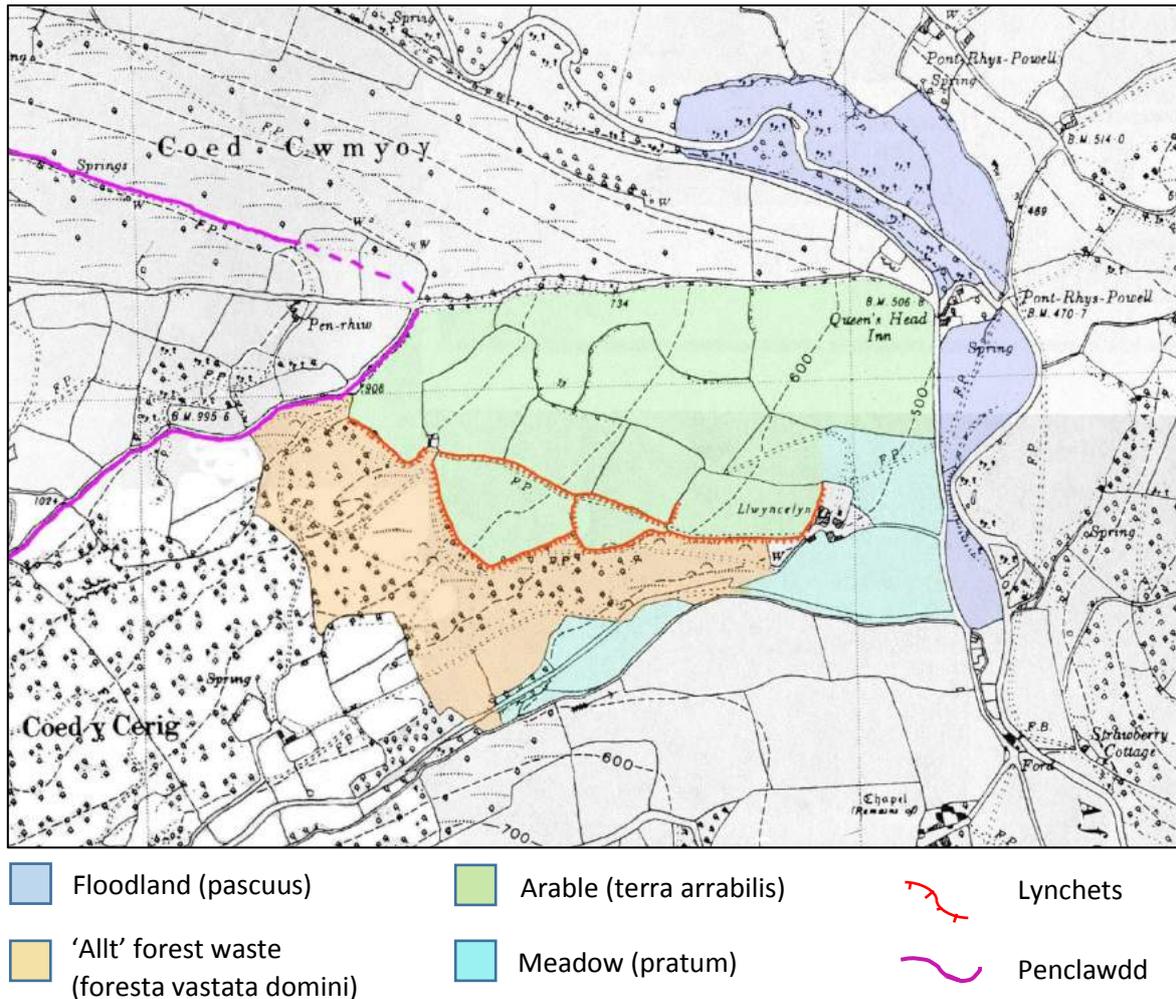


Figure 13: Historic landscape of the medieval Llwyn Celyn

Once mapped it is possible to consider what the 'ancient tenement' of Llwyn Celyn might be and what implications this might have for the wider landscape of the Llanthony estate. In the early copyholds the ancient tenements, as Nicholas Arnold called them in 1703 (Harley MS ** f.4r.), are readily identifiable by certain key words which catalogue their assets and obligations. The assets are: *messuagium*, the main complex of buildings at the heart of the farm; *terra arrabilis*, the ploughland for grain and other crops; *pratium*, the meadows for hay crops and grazing; *pascuus*, floodland which can be used for hay and grazing when the weather conditions are right; *common grazing* on the lord's upland forest grounds, usually from the Feast of the Annunciation to Michaelmas; *underwood*, the right to take wood from the lord's woodland (mostly 'allt' on the steep slopes) provided that it is under 20 years of age when it becomes classified as timber. The obligations are: *rent*; *heriot of the best beast* usually a money payment made on the death of the tenant; *entry fines*, money paid to permit entry into a holding on copyhold renewal or transmission to a new assignee; *suit of court*, the necessity to attend the Courts Baron and Leet when required by the lord or his steward; *houseboot*, the requirement to build and maintain buildings on the tenement; *hayboot*, an allowance of wood to a tenant for repairing his hedges or fences; *fireboot*, the definition of which is obscure; and *bridgeboot*, the necessity to maintain roads and bridges.

One final thing is worth observing. The ancient farm and tenements, like Llwyn Celyn, in upland landscapes such as the Vale of Ewyas were usually laid out at right angles to the lie of the land. That is, in the terminology of the documents when describing their bounds, they were *in longitudine* (in length) up and down the slope, from valley floor (often the River Honddu) to mountain edge (the *penclawdd*) and *in latitudine* (in breadth) along the slope from side to side. This meant that the ancient farms would have access to a variety of land types up and down the slope, as set out in their rights and assets, so that their tenants could operate a mixed farming regime of crops and stock with access to supplies of energy, sufficient to sustain life and provide opportunities for profit.

8. Status of Llwyn Celyn and the architectural sequence

The house has been studied by a number of the very best scholars in the field of vernacular architecture, beginning with the first volume of the classic work on Monmouthshire Houses by Sir Cyril Fox and Lord Raglan and they dated it to c. 1500. They also noted, on the basis of the surviving decoration, that

‘the owner of Llwyn-celyn had more money to spend [than that of Blaengavenny in Llantilio Pertholey], but he did not build a *bigger* house...In the social order of this medieval farming community the size of the hall was indeed constant..’ (Fox and Raglan 1951, 84).

Peter Smith gave no specific opinion on the date of the original house and only generically attributed it with other examples to the later Middle Ages as a hall-house at the end of his sequence of such structures (Smith 1988, 41-2) with aisle-trusses (Smith 1988, 422-3) and wind-braces (Smith 1988, 412-3). Elsewhere he was clear that these sequences spilt over into the 16th century (Smith 1967, 776). It is interesting to note that Smith specifically attributed high status to Llwyn Celyn, which he also called a ‘middle-sized hall’, only because of what he first thought was an original fireplace (Smith 1988, 68, fig. 31 caption). In a corrigendum with a fine reconstruction drawing (Smith 1988, 619) he recognised that the fireplace had been inserted. This would probably have put Llwyn Celyn among his middling status buildings, since he attributed the social context of these hall-houses of varying types to a complete range from the peasantry to the gentry (pp. 38-9). Smith, however, was very specific about this class of building in terms of social status:

‘...most of them are to be found in the borderland. It is here that can most easily be detected in terms of building the emergence of a rich farming class – suggested by the social and topographical changes described, but also held by economic historians to have been characteristic of the fifteenth century generally, when land was plentiful and labour scarce.’ (Smith 1988, 38)

Morriss (2014) has dated the original house somewhere towards the end of the fifteenth century, c. 1480. A range of 1480 to c.1520 would seem to be the conservative target for such a building on architectural grounds prior to dendrochronological dating.

The historical work done so far has taken the specific date of Llwyn Celyn back only as far as 1597 with any confidence and this, of course, dates not the building but the tenure of the

property. It is then granted, by a new copy of the manor court roll with four lives, as a leasehold property by the Lord of the Manor, John Arnold Esq., to a man called William John Richard, of whom we have yet to discover more. William was given the lease as the first holder of that copy for an annual rent of 8d. (NLW CLF MS 5.15, f.25v. #91). It is almost certain from analysis of other tenancies in the record that this was a grant made after the surrender of a previous copy, one which would have been issued in the time of the monastery before the Dissolution. The record of these monastic leases did not survive unless they were still extant in 1612 when the first surviving court roll in the form of a survey comes down to us. I think it is also possible that his name has a hidden patronymic sequence, i.e. William ap John ap Richard, despite the English forms of the names. Thus it is also possible that he was next in a lineage who needed a new lease because the four lives of the previous one had run out. We can see this happening elsewhere. However, this is probably a speculation too far although, as we have seen, we have been able to track the Nant y Gwythell copyhold as far back 1515 and there are copies of other pre-Dissolution leases in the 1612 survey book. The nature of these copyholds is important to understand.

From 1612 to 1719 during the Arnold era, the tenants of the manor were in a state of running dispute with their manorial lord. As a consequence there is an astonishing array of documents which reveal not only who held the land, where it was and sometimes its extent, but also the complex and conflicting interpretations that were put on tenurial customs as they had been practiced time out of mind. The dispute ended up in front of the Lord Chancellor for adjudication in 1719. Because of this we can say with a great deal of certainty who held Llwyn Celyn from 1597 to the present day and at the heart of it was a form of land tenure that is a little unusual. This was tenure by copy of the Court Roll. It was 'customary' and unfree. In an inquiry held under the authority of William Herbert Earl of Pembroke in April 1612, a number of key statements were made before a jury of the tenants and local gentry. Two are worth quoting in this summary:

'And finally they say that they find no Freeholder that holdeth his lands of the same manor [Cwmyoy] or that doe belong to the same except the said John Parry John Ychan whom they conceive to be a Freeholder belonging thereunto and for more certaintie thereof they refer themselves to the said records' (NLW CFL MS f.5v. §3)

and

'Fourthly they say that they find not any customarie holder of Inheritance within or belonging to this manor' (NLW CFL MS f.5v. §4)

They continue by saying that transmission of any property from one individual to another must be by formal assignment through indenture and copy entered on the Court Roll. These 'Coppies' as they were called were granted by the lord to the first tenant who had the right to 'assign' the copy to the next tenant as long as this was recorded on the Court Roll and there could be three such assignments before the copy and the tenure had to be surrendered to the lord for re-granting. There was no inheritance, but a father could assign to a son as the next assignee either in his lifetime or by will. It is also clear that an assignment could happen as a result of sale or as fulfilment of a debtor mortgage. This is all

complex, but essentially nearly all the land in Cwmyoy was copyhold, and this included Llwyn Celyn. Exactly when this practice began is very uncertain. We do have one statement made in a defence made by a later Nicholas Arnold to a case brought against him by some of his customary tenants in 1703:

‘And all the several persons were by the Steward of the said manor at the said Court duely sworn and admitted Tenants and saith the same is according to the Customs of the said manor in the several reignes of King Henry the 8th, Queen Elizabeth, James 1st Charles 1st as by the Court Rolls and evidences may appear’ (Harley MS **, f.4, dated 1703)

It is clear that these reigns are mentioned because it is only from as far back as Henry VIII’s reign that manorial records had survived to be scrutinised by 1703, although the earliest copy seen in 1612 was dated to 1501 (NLW CFL MS 5.15 f. 38r. #153). Only those monastic copies that continued to be current after the Dissolution were available for scrutiny in 1612 when the court records began. The customs were probably much older in origin and I suspect arose out of earlier, oral practices and codified in the years when Llanthony by Gloucester slowly acquired its control following the Glyndŵr rising (see above pp. 21-22). In the very first reference in the 1612 survey, entering a copyholding in a format they immediately abandoned, the scribe records this:

Thomas ap Watkin ap Powell per copiam datam decimo quarto die Julii Anno regni Dominae Elizabethae nuper Reginae Angliae quinto cepit de domino unum messuagium cum terris et tenementis eidem messuagio spectante quondam Jevan David ap John ap Sesile iacentem infra Comyoy et ut Gwenlliana Perrot prius tenuit et occupavit habendum predicta premissa sibi et tribus assignatis suis Reddendum inde annuatim sex solidos annuatim et heriot optimi animalis etc

Thomas ap Watkin ap Powell by copy date 14th July in the 5th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth [1563] held from the lord a messuage withlands and tenements belonging to the same messuage once of Jevan david ap John ap Cecil lying within Cwmyoy and as Gwenllian Perrot formerly held and occupied To hold the afrosaid premises to himself and three assignees Returning 6s. per annum and heriot of the best animal etc.

In other words, in 1563 a new copy was issued for four lives and there were at least two named holders of a previous lease for the same property, strongly suggesting that there was indeed a previous cycle of tenures probably stretching well back into the 15th century.

This is all important for the eventual interpretation of the status of the Llwyn Celyn house. As early as we can record the property on which it sits, it was held by a customary tenant. Under the customs of the manor it was the tenant who had the responsibility to construct and maintain any buildings which lay on that property. The tenants could farm their land, sub-let it, mortgage it, even sell it as long as it was recorded in the court records: they could use the upland commons for grazing in an unlimited way, freely take any stone they needed for building and harvest any wood that was under 20 years of growth. In return they had to pay what was called a ‘Chief Rent’; they had to serve on the lord’s manorial court, pay a

heriot or fine when the land was reassigned and undertake a series of duties maintaining roads and bridges and doing various tasks at the behest of the lord and his officials when required.

These terms, particularly when lords were lax and their local officials prepared to turn a blind eye, were favourable. The low chief rents, established in the economic circumstances of the fifteenth century usually at a few shillings and pence, were fixed for the lifetime of the copyholders and their assignees, a time period that could be as long as 120 years. In the circumstances of late medieval and early modern inflation and the growth of the early capitalist economy, this meant that the real value and return on the land was increasingly in the hands of the tenants. By the 17th century when we have records, a farm could be rented from the lord for 2 shillings a year and sub-let for £20 or £30. Thus the legal status of tenant could be given the lie by the real income and disposable wealth of the farmer. Although technically not belonging to the gentry, they could still, especially from the 17th century onwards, aspire to be called 'gentleman' or 'yeoman'. This was particularly true for the local families who held authority in their communities and for those who were able to deploy disposable wealth to acquire leases and to consolidate farm holdings. These are the people who became minor officials of the manor and churchwardens, who arranged good dynastic marriages, who appeared in court to contest with their lords and who probably, unrecorded, brokered social power at the local level for generations. They were not gentry, but could aspire to be.

One other aspect of all this is worth mentioning. Although the terminology of tenure is entirely derived from English and Anglo-Norman feudal and later law it is clear that the bulk of the tenantry were of Welsh descent, tracing their lineages in patronymics and Celtic names. There is no hint in the surviving documents, however, of Welsh legal practice as there is in the next valley westwards, the Grwynne Fawr, where there were Welshry and Englishry living under different manorial customs within the Lordship of Crickhowell. Nevertheless in the secluded valley of the Honddu the Anglo-Norman monastery had tenants who, for the most part, would have had knowledge and social memory of their ancestry and former social distinctions. They may have been registered in the books under the same legal status, 'tenant', but, to borrow Orwell, 'some were more tenant than others'. In the circumstance of their liberal leases and the changing world of Tudor Britain it may well be that an ancient social class of freeman, suppressed by Anglo-Norman management, re-surfaced in new forms.

This chimes in well with the contemporary two-bay hall-houses that Richard Suggett studied so splendidly in Radnorshire (Suggett 2005). In a neat summary of his views about the hall-houses of that part of the March, Richard says this on page 27:

These houses with halls of two bays belonged to an emerging gentry class who might dominate a particular parish or township. The examples dated have a long chronology extending from 1430-1555/6. Llanshay, near Knighton, tree-ring dated 1432/3, is the oldest known standing hall-house, but it is characteristically constructed and planned. It is cruck-framed with an open hall of two bays set within inner and outer end bays.

Halls like Llanshay belonged to relatively wealthy families, influential at a local level but also fully part of a national Welsh-language culture. These families claimed descent from the Welsh lords of their regions, and the itinerant bards composed numerous praise-poems in their honour and preserved their genealogies. A gentry hall is instantly recognizable by its ornate central truss, the pride and joy of the owner of the house, which usually survives smoke-blackened and embedded in an inserted seventeenth-century chimney and is usually visible now only at loft level.

In his report Morriss (2014) carefully avoids identifying the early building as a hall-house, although this was the term used by Fox and Raglan and Peter Smith. His survey clearly identifies the hall as having three bays at roof level and, therefore, technically in Richard Suggett's category of 'great halls':

The term ['great halls'] designates large hall-houses that were of significance within a lordship or belonged to an important religious house. A crucial defining feature is that the hall has three bays or . (Suggett 2005, 26-7)

The hall bays at Llwyn Celyn, however, are relatively narrow and the length of the hall (as far as I can make out on the copy of the report I have) is just a little over 21 feet or 6 metres. Richard Morriss is clear, however about its significance:

Without further historical research it is unclear if the house was built for one of the Priory's more important tenants or for the use of the priory itself. The quality and size of the property suggest a high status property and thus, it was tenanted, the tenant must have been a wealthy landowner.

Alternatively, its position could be significant. It lies at the entrance to the long and isolated valley in which the priory was located, close to the more densely populated and prosperous flatter area between Abergavenny and Hereford. The main border route naturally passed along this easier terrain. Llwyn-celyn also sits at one end of the route westwards from the Vale of Ewyas through Cwm Coed-y-Cerrig to Crickhowell.

The position of Llewyn-celyn could have been a deliberate one to provide a staging point in the journey to and from the isolated priory. It is also tempting, given its probable date, to suggest the possibility that the construction of the building was in some way related to the continuing decline of the Priory's fortunes and its effective take-over by Llanthony Secunda in 1481. (Morriss 2014, 30)

That the architecture is high status seems reasonably clear, although dimensions and the final reconstruction drawings might show that it actually hovers uneasily between the two types of hall-house described by Suggett. A final judgement is best left until the restoration work reveals, as it may, more features. As to a relationship with the acquisition by Llanthony by Gloucester, this looks like a coincidence. From entries in the Prior's registers of Llanthony by Gloucester it is clear that the priory officials from the Cellarer down to the understewards, when visiting their estates stayed in their manor-houses or the rectories of their appropriated churches, even when leased out to others (Rhodes 2002, xxx). At Llanthony Prima they had the choice of staying at the priory itself or Stanton manor-house

which was one of their sub-manors. Their route would have been up the valley, although the east-west route, to which Morriss refers, was certainly an important one in the Middle Ages. However, map regression shows that the modern road south of the house is relatively new and that the original course of this routeway was through Stanton itself.

In all this consideration of status, however, we must maintain a strict distinction between the building and the property it sits on, although they are closely related. The work of historical research so far strongly suggests that the land on which it was constructed was held by copy. That this copyhold goes back further than 1597 is as yet speculation. However, there is a powerful amount of circumstantial evidence to suggest that this form of tenure and its existence uniformly in the manor of Cwmyoy goes back at least to the beginning of Henry VIII's reign and probably much further. It is worth reflecting that the wealth required for the construction of Llwyn-Celyn could only have arisen from a sustained period of accumulation by men and women working hard and building blocks of adjacent copyholds, characteristically of 50 acres and less, into larger holdings.

In all, therefore, the original house built at Llwyn Celyn c.1480 was not a manor-house nor the gentry house of a freeman, but it certainly had the rhetoric of an aspirant Welsh tenant. The manor of Cwmyoy had no freeholds, as we have seen, and thus it cannot be of this status and all the recorded officials of the monastic manor so far identified lived in other parishes in the region and not in the Honddu valley. Freeholds elsewhere in the area tended, like Stanton or Bwlch Tre-wyn, to be regarded as their own small sub-manors and can be set in a separate class socially and architecturally. The holding we can firmly identify as Llwyn Celyn emerges into the written record in the late 16th century as a tenant property, but clearly one at the centre of a reasonably substantial holding. It is at this point that the architectural history tells us the floor was added in the parlour, probably as an act of modernisation, but no change in status. The holding, which we can estimate as over 100 acres and perhaps a bit more, may or may not fluctuate a little in the early 17th century. Once, however, it is firmly in the hands of the Watkins it is, until the mid-18th century, the centre of an important local farming dynasty and a consolidated farm of 150 acres or more, although debt may have been bearing down on it for a couple of decades before its loss in 1762. The major remodelling of the house identified in the architectural history as occurring in the later 17th century happened while occupied by three, if not more, of the Watkins family at a time when they clearly had extensive holdings in Cwmyoy and elsewhere and very large incomes with extremely low rents. The remodelling, in effect a modernisation of an archaic house, the addition of a chimney stack, the flooring over of the hall, a new kitchen and one if not two barns all seem to fit this narrative; at this point Llwyn Celyn was at its highest point with no change in status and lots of spare cash. From 1762 or thereabouts it becomes an ordinary tenant farm, albeit a fairly large one, but now having the burden of economic rents, moving in a moment from a rent to the Harleys of 3s. 8d. a year to one of £50 and then £70 per annum: an increased burden initially of some 270%. There would have been little to spare for keeping this large building in good repair let alone embellishing it any further. Indeed the burden of repair, under the reformed and normal tenancy arrangements of the later 18th century would have put the onus of repair on the

landlord, perhaps the social context for the tale of benign neglect that takes us through the harsh rural economy of the late 19th and 20th centuries.

9. Potential projects for development within the community

1. Mapping of farms using the first OS and Tithe maps and the full list in the Arnold sale catalogue of 1799 as well as archaeological evidence for otherwise unrecorded houses and farm buildings.
2. Transcription and closely examination of the 1703 dispute to determine both the corruption of tenant right and the nature of the ancient tenant right, on the basis that this provides, first, a clear insight into the social and economic fabric of the community in the later 17th century and, second, a revelation of the core ancient tenant rights which probably extended back into the later Middle Ages at least. The relationship of the tenant right to English manorial and Welsh customary tenure can then be explored, perhaps looking east to the Ewyas Lacy practices and west to those so well documented in the contemporary Crickhowell estates. I suspect an interesting hybrid. This could also go hand-in-hand with a transcription and detailed analysis of the whole 1711 survey – it is in English in a clear hand.
3. Similar close analysis of the 1612 survey with item 1 as a base for mapping. This is more difficult; although it is in a very clear hand it is in court Latin with lots of abbreviations. This might require a trained eye or close early mentoring. 2 and 3, however, would provide for a basic regressive analysis of the whole manor of Cwmyoy.
4. Examination of other local farms, especially those with some architectural antiquity, using the methodologies demonstrated in this report.
5. Creation of genealogies for local families as has been done for the Jaspers. Some may have been around for a very long time and could, perhaps, be traced back.
6. Economic and social history of Tudor and Stuart periods for the area.

Bibliography

Abbreviations for unpublished primary sources@

CFL: Cardiff Free Library. All relevant records from here were examined in the National Library of Wales

HL: the Harley Archives at Brampton Bryan

NA: The National Archive at Kew.

NLW: the National Library of Wales

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