

In a Star Chamber case, moreover, begun on the 28 May 1606 Hugh Nanney and Gruffydd Nanney were accused, with others, all Justices of the Peace, in a Bill presented by David Nanney, of misconduct in their office.¹ The first reference we have to any of the Nanneys actually serving in this capacity is the enrolment at the court of Hugh Nanney, Esq., Justice of the Peace, of a release by John Powys to David Lloyd ap Hoel ap Ithel, dated 14 July 1589.² An extant Recognisance Book for 1601-5 depicts Gruffydd Nanney and his father, Hugh Nanney Môn, in their capacity as Justices of the Peace³, taking recognisances, and granting licences to no fewer than thirty three persons who were "allowed to sell ale in Talybont Uwchoregenau and bound to keep good order." It should be noted that twenty seven of

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1. P.R.O. St.Ch. 8/221/24. Vide infra, Ch. 7. P.272... David Nanney was a son of Richard Nanney of Cefndduddwr, Hugh Nanney Môn's uncle - Griffith, P.165.
 2. Nannau MS.921.
 3. c.f. T.H. Lewis, "The Justice of the Peace in Wales", Cymr. Trans. 1943-4, P.128: "In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the presence of both father and son in the Commission was a frequent occurrence."

these alehouses were in Dolgelley and that the phrase "to keep good order" is underlined.¹ In 1601 Gruffydd Nanney was one of three Merionethshire Justices of the Peace who issued an edit at Bala which included regulations for "alehouses and unlawfull games" and the assessment of the rates of pay for artificers and labourers.²

It may be of interest to note here that the first extant Merioneth Quarter Sessions records³ are preserved in the Nannau family papers. On 11 May 1549 an order from the Merioneth Quarter Sessions bound over a certain Maud ferch Evan ap Griffith, late of Llwyngwrl, and William ap John ap Evan ap Rhys, of the same, to appear at the Great Sessions to be held at Dolgelley on the 30 July to answer a charge of forcible entry into a tenement belonging to Gruffydd Nanney, called Tyddyn y Gors in Llwyngwrl.⁴ In the following year

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1. H.L.W. Additional Peniarth 332A - Vide Appendix 111 PP. 348-9.
 2. T.C. Mendenhall, "A Merioneth Wage Assessment for 1601," *Journal Mer.Hist.Rec.Soc.*, 1955, P.208.
 3. Hugh J.Owen, "Merioneth Quarter Sessions Court Rolls and Nomina Ministrorum", *Journal Mer.Hist. Rec.Soc.* Vol.1., 1949-51, P.185.
 4. Nannau MS.61.

a writ was directed to the Sheriff of Merioneth to inquire whether Willian ap John ap Evan ap Rhys, yeoman, and Maud, the wife of Ieuan ap Gruffydd, with others, took forcible possession of Tyddyn Gorsganol in Llwyngwril from Gruffydd Wyn (i.e. Gruffydd Nanney) on the 20 May 4 Edward Edward VI (1550) contrary to the forms of a statute passed in 8 Henry VI.^{1.}

The family produced only one Member of Parliament during this period. Gruffydd Nanney was elected to the Parliament summoned to meet in February 1593, and which was dissolved in the April of the same year.^{2.} This same Gruffydd Nanney was one of the several Merionethshire gentlemen appointed by the Queen's warrant dated the 23 July 1595 to levy three lay subsidies according to an act passed in the Parliament of 1593.^{3.} Finally, on 20 December 1617 William Compton, Earl of Northampton, newly created Lord Lieutenant of Wales, created Hugh Nanney ^{his} Deputy Lieutenant for Merionethshire.^{4.}

1. Nannau MS. 64.

2. W.R. Williams, "The Parliamentary History of the Principality of Wales, 1541 - 1895", P.115.

3. Nannau MS. 191.

4. N.L.W. Peniarth Deeds 1393, 1134A, 1393, 1134B.
His grandson was appointed to the office in 1628 - Nannau MS. 306.

All this, of course, involved the Hanneys, like their fellows, in the great expense of living up to their social position. It appears that the heavy mortgages incurred by the Hanneys with Sir Thomas Myddleton were the result not of "keeping up a style of living beyond their estates"¹, but chiefly of the almost ruinous litigation involved in the family feud with the descendants of Baron Owen. Neither was this a new style of living. We have seen that Nannau had a great reputation among the bards for the lavish hospitality meted out in its hall. This peculiarly Welsh tradition was maintained in the Tudor period - it must, if anything, have been the more sedulously cultivated. Edward Jones, "Bardd y Brenin" (1732 - 1824)², states that "Yn yr hen blas yn Nannau i'r oedd lle wedi weithio ar waith ffenestr yn nur y neuadd oddi fewn lle y byddai'r Brenhinfaidd yn eisto neu'r Cyff Cler."³ This refers presumably to the mansion built by Hugh Hanney Hen, since a new house was built during Edward Jones's lifetime by Sir Robert Williams Vaughan (1768-1843).⁴ Nannau is reputed to

1. A.H. Dodd, op.cit. P.3.

2. "Bywgraffiadur", P.429.

3. H.L.W. Sir John Williams MS.111B. Part 11, 20.

4. "Bywgraffiadur", P.640.

have had the last of the Welsh household bards - John Davies of Penllyn, alias Sion Dafydd Lâs, who died in 1694, having collected the works of the bards who had sung the praises of Nannau and Corsygedel during the past three hundred years.¹ During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries there seems to have been some rivalry between two brothers - Sion Phylip (1543 - 1620) and Richard Phylip - for precedence at Nannau. The controversy, expressed in several "cywyddau yaryson", concerned Sion's attempt to oust his younger brother Richard from his position of "bardd teulu" at Nannau - "Nanna lle glan a'n ein gwlad" (Sion Phylip). Sion's attempt to displace his brother failed, it seems:

"E fynnai Sion f'annos i
 O lanerch yr haeliemi.....
 Er i ddrygan'r ddarogan
 A'i athrod goeth euraid gan
 Af i Nannau fan enwawg
 Ni wna' i'b hynt o Nannau rhawg."

(Richard Phylip)².

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1. "Bywgraffiadur", P.119; E.D.Jones, op.cit. P.5;
 J.C.Morris, "Wales in the Seventeenth Century",
 P.265; N.L.W. Mestyn MS. 165.
 2. William Ll. Davies, "Phylipiadau Ardudwy - A Survey
 and a Summary", PP. 155-269.

The bards were impressed, above all, by the new mansion built at Nannau by Hugh Nanney Môn. That the Tudor period was indeed the Age of the Gentry is proved by the number of Elizabethan mansion houses which are still to be found throughout the country. Merionethshire was no exception - new houses were built during this period at Nannau, at Hengwrt, at Llwyn and at Gaerynwech.^{1.} The poets went into ecstasies over the new house at Nannau, and were astonished that it had been possible to build such a house in view of Hugh Nanney's other commitments, especially the provision for his five daughters and the vast sums expended in law suits. Their views are perhaps best summed up by Richard Cynwal:

"er hwylio llawer helynt,
 ac er y gost yn Lloegr gynt,
 gwellhan y Nannau a waeth
 â didlawd adeiladaeth.^{2.}

The author of an "englyn pan ydoedd yn dechre bldio Twr Nannau" (in the Red Book of Nanney) commented thus on the prosperity signified by the new mansion:

1. T.P. Ellis, *Dolgelley and Llanelltyd*, P.88.

2. E.D. Jones, *op.cit.*, P.11.

"Dechreuad Adeiled ar dir Nannan
 oedd unionnwaed siccir
 drwy ffyniant y Gerffennir
 y benna Gorseddfa'r Sir." 1.

The features of the new house which most impressed the various poets were the height of the house, its chimneys, the angular roofs, the long staircase, its hundred lofts, the sixty doors, the whitewashed clock-tower with three hundred steps, the oak roofs covered with slates and lead, the skilful carving of saddle pommels on the ridges of the roofs, the glass, the hall, the parlours, the chambers and portals, and, of course, the cellars:

"seleri is ei loriau
 ystor gwin is daear gau."

(Sion Phylip)².

This, however, was but the outward show. The substance behind it lay in the effective management of the family estates. It may have been unusual for a

1. N.L.W. Mestyn MS.144, P.71.

2. R.D. Jones, op.cit. P.13.

family's wealth to have been founded mainly on land - but there can be no other explanation in this case.

Only one of the younger sons, as far as is known, was engaged in trade - Robert Nanney, a son of Hugh Nanney Hên, who went to London where he became a grocer.¹

There seems to have been no exploitation of any mineral wealth on the estates. There were deposits of iron ore in the district, and, of course, great quantities of timber for making charcoal. As early as 1391 the monks of Cymer Abbey possessed an iron forge somewhere in the neighbourhood of Trawsfynydd.² The Quaker ironmaster, Darby of Coalbrookdale, was smelting the iron ore of Cader Idris in a little furnace at Dolgun, near Dolgelley, in 1715.³ Much of this charcoal-made iron was sold by the iron masters at their own premises in the form of bars. The bars were eventually made up by the local blacksmiths into the nails, hinges, and latches required by the building trade and into all kinds of agricultural implements and tools.⁴

1. Nannau MSS. 865, 866.

2. P.R.O. Min. Acc. 206/1203/2.

3. A.H. Dodd, "The Industrial Revolution in North Wales," 2nd. edition, P.23.

4. A.S. Davies, "The Charcoal Iron Industry of Powysland", Mont.Coll. 1939. P.31.

The one occasion on which Hugh Hanney Môn sought to enrich himself by exploiting the mineral wealth of the district involved him in both Exchequer and Star Chamber cases, two years in the Fleet prison and a fine of £1,500, which was eventually reduced to £800.¹ It so happened that the lands concerned - Penrhos Common - did not belong to him, but were reputed to belong to the Queen as part of the Forest of Snowdon.

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1. Vide *Infra*, Ch. 7. P.241ff., for an account of this Penrhos Common case. A similar instance, in which the culprit was Hugh Hanney Môn's father, Gruffydd Wyn, is recorded in the proceedings of the Court of Augmentations (undated) when he was accused of the spoil of certain woods lately belonging to the Abbey of Cymer in the parishes of Llanfachreth and Dolgelley, including four hundred oaks, felled and carried away, and timber and wood to the value of £3. 6. 8., in addition to twenty four oaks and woods to the value of £8. and £4. belonging to the Abbey of Conway in the parish of Eglwysfach. The plaintiff, a certain Richard ap Harry, gent., complained that Gruffydd Wyn and two of his brothers cut down good oak timber and sold the bark, and were continuing to cut down other timber tops a little above the "cryddell", and "so continually they do spoil that within a mile or two you shall not find one whole tree top, to the King's loss" - E.A. Lewis and Conway Davies, "Records of the Court of Augmentations", P.124.

The wooded valleys of Wales, with their abundant water power, were suitable spots for iron forges.¹ Penrhos Common was situated in such a position - on the wooded eastern slopes of the Ganolwyd valley, just below the point where the three rivers, Mawddach, Elen and Gamlan join, and bordered to the east by a tributary stream.²

It was at this period, moreover, that the Welsh valleys (especially in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire) were being exploited by men like Richard Hanbury, Anthony Morley and Edward Mathews.³ The reign of Elisabeth saw the passing of several acts against deforestation. By the sixteenth century the enclosures and the demands of industry (particularly of the iron industry) for fuel had brought about a shortage of timber trees that seemed likely to hamper shipbuilding and so threaten national security. A series of acts between 1543 and 1585, by prohibiting the cutting of timber trees for fuel within certain specified limits, sought to arrest the progress of the iron industry in older areas such as the Weald,

1. A.S. Davies, op.cit. P.31.

2. Ordnance Survey, 1" Map of Great Britain, Sheet 116 - Dolgelley Area, 1933.

3. Ben Bowen Thomas, "Braslun o Hanes Economaidd Cymru" PP.83-4.

which was the natural centre of cannon-founding in England.¹ Consequently, "as the hunger for fuel increased ironmasters were forced to migrate into more remote lands; salvation could be found only in solitude, and the industry of smelting and refining was literally fleeing to the wilderness to escape destruction."²

It transpires that between the 1 March 1588 and the 23 March 1594, Hugh Nanney Hen and his son, Gruffydd Nanney, sold ten thousand oak trees to two Englishmen - John Smith and William Dale. They, in turn, converted the trees to charcoal and built an Ironworks nearby. The evidence of a certain Richard Naylor of the parish of Wellington, Salop, a carpenter, is particularly valuable.³ He stated that the woods were sold to John Smith, gent., by Gruffydd Nanney, "together wth certaine other woodes where the tymber for the buyldings of the Iron works was to be had."

1. T.S. Ashton, "Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution", (2nd. edition) PP. 5 - 9.

2. *ibid*, P.15.

3. P.R.O. St. Ch. 8/223/17.

He claims that the use of the trees growing on Penrhos for charcoal was not really an economic proposition. In fact it "became to be verie Chargeable in regard the same trees did growe upon suche hills and Roackie places that it was hard to carie the same to an even grounde Where it might be coaled." Moreover, "he doth knowe of his owne knowledge there went toward the erectinge of the Iron works..... abouts one hundred and fiftie Tunnes of Tymber, whereof there was not founde three Tunnes in all of Tymber in the saide Woode of Benrhos towardes the said worke soe that they were driven to fetch the tymber for the said works from a further place then the saide Benrhos." The information laid by this Richard Naylor is valuable because he "was the cheiffe Carpenter that wrought the saide Iron Workes beinge heyred and brought to that countrey for that purpose by the said John Smith out of Shrobsshire."

John Smith himself corroborates this in his evidence, in which he stated that he, Dale and their workmen squared the trees on Penrhos to see if they were of any use in building the Iron Mill. They discovered they were useless for this purpose, and thereupon took "all or verye neare all the tymber they

employed in the same works upon the other woods or grounds that this Depent had bought wth the sayed Benrhos." It would also appear that the Iron Mill was not built on Penrhos Common itself, but that "the sd Benrhos was the nexte wood adioyning unto the sd Iron Mill."¹.

If skilled labour - like that of Richard Naylor - was brought in from England, local labour was used for cutting the trees². - men like John ap Howel David ap Owen, labourer, of Llanfashreth, who deposed that he "was hired for one day to fell or Cute downe some of the said trees of Benrhose after the rate of half peny the tree upon his owne meate and drinke and saith that wth in that daye he dyd falle and Cutt downe the Number of eight and twenty Oakes," and righteously added: "not cheosing the lesser oaks to be Cutt but takinge them as they hapened to be next to hym."³.

1. P.R.O. St. Ch. 8/223/17.

2. c.f. A.H. Dodd, "Studies in Stuart Wales", P.28. The early industries "created no new classes of capitalists or labourers; for the capitalist was usually..... the owner of the soil.... and the labourer, apart from a few imported skilled men and some forced labour, normally a peasant who gave only part of his time to industry."

3. P.R.O. St.Ch. 8/223/17.

As for the social consequences, many witnesses for the prosecution, themselves simply yeomen, spoke of "the great hinderance of a great number of poore people which dwelled abouts the saied Comens w^{ch} Comens lay very Conveniently for the said Countrey and that the spoyle of the same woods grieved the Countrey next adioyninge very much and murmured at the saide spoile in respect a great number of the said trees was excellent good for latts shoovels ears and other necessities for husbandrie and some of the saide trees are fitt for firewood."¹. One witness claimed to have heard "diverse of the poore neighbours adioyninge to the said Comens oftentimes Curse the said Manneys for cuttinge the said wood downe."².

The Manneys must have been "more gentry"³, that is merely land-owning. Whether it is legitimate to subdivide the gentry into landowners and office-holders is doubtful. The Manneys held county offices but derived their wealth and position mainly from land.

1. P.R.O. St.Ch.8/223/17; Testimony of Hugh ap Edward of Llanelltyd, yeoman.

2. *ibid.* Testimony of Hugh ap Jehn of Dolgelley, yeoman.

3. H.R. Trevor-Roper, "Historical Essays", P.198.

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As such they would, presumably, be in financial difficulties from c.1590 to 1640, for the evidence suggests a general decline during these years among those whose income came solely or largely from land.^{1.} This general statement is equally applicable to Wales, where "with rents uncertain, capital locked up in stones and mortar, and income dribbling away in lawyers' fees, mortgage interest, and lavish housekeeping, the Welsh gentry were often far poorer than their outward showing would suggest."^{2.} That this was as true of the Manneys as of their peers is proved by the fact that in 1630 Hugh Manney the Younger's debts amounted to £1,022. 19. 10.^{3.} - a great burden when the Mannau income was little more than £300 per annum^{4.}. Indeed, the income derived from the estates in 1701 - given in the first extant rent-roll - was but £791. 15. -. ^{5.}

1. Trevor-Roper, op.cit. P.197.

2. A.H. Dodd, "Studies in Stuart Wales", P.22.

3. Mannau MS. 317.

4. Mannau MS. 1168; Vide infra P.170....

5. Mannau MS. 467; Vide Appendix IV, Infra P.357...

These debts seem to have been the legacy of his father's and grandfather's many lawsuits and consequent mortgages. It is significant that the first major lawsuits in which the Nanneys were involved occurred in 1593 and 1594,¹ while the first of the many Nanney mortgages to Thomas Myddleton is dated the 27 January 1595.² The Nanney debts seem to date from this period of intense and expensive litigation. The following letter, written when the Nanneys were involved in the Penrhos Common dispute, from Thomas Myddleton himself to Gruffydd Nanney illustrates the connection:

"Cosin Nanney I can but be sorie for yo^r hardshipp; and now to prevent the extreeme malice of yo^r adversaries I wold be gladd to speak wth you myself and that so soone as possibly you can for I know that others sleep not / And Therefore I pray you hartely that you will conffer wth my Cosin yo^r Father and then come

1. Vide Infra, Ch. 7, PP. 139, 140..

2. Nannau MS. 189. The Myddleton loans and mortgages to the Nanneys during this period are contained in Nannau MSS. 189, 207, 229, 239, 240, 250, 251, 258, 268, 273, 287. The Nanneys were in good company, however. Included among the list of Sir Thomas Myddleton's many Welsh debtors between 1583 and 1603 were men like William Williams of Cechwillan, William Hughes, bishop of St. Asaph, and Robert Salesbury of Rûg. (E.D. Jones, "An Account Book of Sir Thomas Myddleton", N.L.W. Journal, 1939, P.85.)

to me resolved of some course to be taken for the
 payment or sattisfacion boath of yo^r debt and his to
 me./ I have no doubt of yo^r honest care of sattisfying
 yo^r freinds all waies but I desyre to speak wth you or
 wth my Cosin yo^r Father or boath of you, that we may
 take the best course for yo^r owne good and that wth
 speed ells you wilbe Preventyd as this bringer Cosin
 Robt lloid cann tell you / And so wth my kyndest
 Comendacions in great haste take my leave Chirk Castle
 this 1 March 1605

Yo^r Loving Cosin

Thomas Myddelton " 1. .

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1. N.L.W. Peniarth 327, Part 1. The writer's faith in Gruffydd Hannev's "honest care" in paying his debts was, it seems, ill founded, for in the following year a Writ of Attachment was directed from the Chancery to Sir William Maurice of Clonennau, then Sheriff of Merioneth, against Gruffydd Hannev of Maetan (i.e. by Dolgelley, presumably Gruffydd Hannev's residence since his coming of age). Gruffydd had failed to repay a £200 debt which he owed to Sir Thomas Myddelton. A Writ of Sequestration had therefore been directed against him. To this the Sheriff returned that he had held an inquisition of Gruffydd Hannev's possessions but had failed to find Hannev himself. Consequently this Writ of Attachment had been issued. (Nannau MS. 240). We hear no more of it, however, and the family continued to enter into mortgages with Myddelton. In fact "a note of Remembrance to doe business at London", survives, in Hugh Hannev Hen's hand, dated 7 May 1608, which includes a reminder "to deale wth Sir Tomas Mydleton to accept of landes on mortgage of hys money." (Nannau MS. 1183)

Previous to the "litigation period" the Nanneys had entered into very few mortgage transactions - and these had been of comparatively trifling sums. The largest seems to have been that dated the 29 August 1584¹. when Hugh Nanney mortgaged to Francis Albany of Lincoln's Inn, gent., for £240, certain Llanfachreth lands, late of Cymer Abbey, which he had bought on the sixth of the same month from Edward Price of Cynfael.² This was obviously simply a means of raising money to pay for the purchase.

The Nanneys seem to have been very careful and painstaking in the management of their estates. We have noted their industry in amassing lands³; what evidence we have affords a few glimpses of them taking on active interest in their exploitation.

1. Nannau MS. 900.

2. Nannau MS. 899.

3. Vide infra, Ch. VI, P. 177, ff., for an account of their acquisition of monastic property after the Dissolution. In this respect, too, they held up a mirror to the gentry's activities.

There is a reference to Gruffydd Nanney's enclosing land in 1594. On the night of the 4 March in that year John Lewis Owen of Llwyn and others "breke and throwe down the inclosure" of a tenement belonging to Gruffydd Nanney called Tyddyn Bach, containing about forty acres, "beinge a Stone Wall of tw yarden heigh"¹. Another Star Chamber case mentions further enclosures by Gruffydd Nanney. A Bill of Complaint presented by David Nanney, second son of Richard Nanney of Cefndduddwr,² in 1606/7, included the accusation that whereas Gruffydd Nanney "did heretefor make inclosure of Certeine parcells of a Comon called ddevallt scituate and lyinge in the parishe of llanvachreth in the said Countie of Merioneth w^{ch} the Said Griffith Nanney seekinge to increache into his owne hands unlawfully to the wronge and prejudice of divers the inhabitants thereabouts the offences thereof uppon iust cause, were then shortly after cast downe and not suffred there to stande", he had unjustly avenged himself by destroying an innocent man's house,³.

1. P.R.O. St.Ch. 5/N/10/34.

2. Vide Pedigree Chart, infra, P.371.....

3. P.R.O. St. Ch. 8/221/24.

The Nanneys seen also to have been orderly in their book-keeping - as far as estate accounts and land titles were concerned. In 1601 Gruffydd Nanney began an inventory or "a Rolle of all wryttinges scripts and miniments in my custody the xviith day of September and from thenceforth as any wryttinge of mement came into my custody: specifeinge the boxes in my study wher they are kept."¹ From 1599 to 1608 the Nanneys kept an Account Book, which has survived the passage of time and is now in the National Library of Wales.² The accounts were written in a notebook which also includes several notes on English law and matters connected with the work of the Nanneys as Justices of the Peace. The accounts include lists of cattle and horses at Dolychowgrydd and Dolykynavon, lists of debts and of receipts and expenditure. Its value as an example of careful purse management is shown by such entries as "Item to hymself the day after Harlech fayre - xx s." and "Item to his wif upon Whitsunday - xl s."³ The accounts also include payments for digging, walling, ditching and railing - surely sufficient evidence in themselves of the interest taken by the Nanneys in the management and development of their estate. The book is of particular

1. Nannan MS.215.

2. N.L.W. Additional Peniarth 332A. Vide Appendices, *Infra*, PP.343-3, 354-8.

3. *ibid*, P. 22, *dorso*.

interest for the following statement of Nannau annual income and expenditure:^{1.}

	£.	s.	d.
Received	696.	13.	-.
Spent	<u>238.</u>	<u>6.</u>	<u>7.</u>
	<u>£ 358.</u>	<u>6.</u>	<u>5.</u>

This is confirmed by the findings of an official Inquisition (c.1606) into the lands of the Nanneys in the course of the Penrhos Common dispute, when Hugh Nanney Hén's "livinge and his sonnes livinge" were "found to 314 li. per annum."^{2.}

This notebook's contents show, among other things, that the Nanneys had received a certain amount of education. Apart from such elementary facts as their ability to add and subtract figures and even the fact that they could write, the notes on English law contained in the first few pages show that at least one member of the family^{3.} was well equipped as a landowner and a magistrate. The notes, which are illustrated by quotations in Latin, are on

1. N.L.W. Additional Peniarth 332A, P.62., dorso.

2. Nannau MS. 1168; Vide Infra, Ch. 7, P.264....

3. I believe the script to be that of Gruffydd Nanney.

all manner of legal subjects - on such general principles as fealty, for example: "Fealty is incident to all manner of Tenures but Frankalmourne. Littleton Fol.289."¹

It includes notes on such matters as escapes, felony, sorcerers, mayhem, treasure trove, treason and homicide - which might be of use to him in his capacity as a magistrate. Also included are notes on land law, such as: "if a joynt estate be made..... land to a husband and wife shall have but ye one moiety and ye 3^d person shall have ye other moiety, ye reason is because ye husband and wife be but one person in ye law.....and ioyntenants shall have but one Assise if they are disseised Littl. 64 Fol:9".²

During the sixteenth century there was a great educational movement³. which changed the Inns of Court, for a time, from a professional academy for the few into a general finishing school for the landed gentry. This movement had a profound effect in Wales and when it reached its peak in the early seventeenth century there were years when between ten and twenty per cent of the total entries were Welsh.⁴ The Oxford and Cambridge

1. N.L.W. Additional Peniarth 332A.

2. *ibid.*

3. Witness the founding of the various Elizabethan grammar schools in Wales.

4. A.H. Dodd, "The Pattern of Politics in Stuart Wales," *Cymru.Trans.*1948.P.22.

colleges also took in a surprisingly high number of Welsh scholars in proportion to the population.^{1.}

Although Hugh Nanney Hên does not appear to have had any regular schooling, he saw to it that three of his five sons received a good education.^{2.} Gruffydd Nanney, the eldest son, matriculated at Jesus College, Oxford, on the 2 July 1585 at the age of sixteen. He is referred to as "Mr. Case's scholar." The other two brothers both matriculated on the 12 November, 1596, at Jesus College, Edward being eighteen years of age and Richard twenty one.^{3.} Richard went on to take his B.A. in 1600 and his M.A. in 1603, and was appointed to the rectorship of Nettleswell in Essex in 1607.^{4.}

1. A.H. Dedd, "Studies in Stuart Wales", PP. 4 - 5.

2. Their ancestors must also have received some education. Guto'r Glyn tells us that Hugh Nanney Hên's great grandfather, Dafydd ap Meurig Vychan, knew three languages:

"Gŵr mawr ei ragoran naith,
Gŵr dierwag, gŵr deiriaith."
("Gwaith Guto'r Glyn", ed. Ifor Williams, P.228).

3. Foster, "Alumni Oxoniensis", P.1050.

4. Foster, op.cit. P.1050.

On the 7 April 1617 he was made vicar of Llangelynnin,^{1.} and vicar of Towyn in 1623.^{2.} Gruffydd Nanney's son, Hugh Nanney the Younger was admitted to the Inner Temple in November 1607.^{3.}

One aspect of all this education was , of course, the consequent interest they took in affairs outside their native county. They were, indeed, Tudor gentlemen, living in a stirring age; and some of the colour of that age is reflected in a letter written by Edward Nanney in London to his brother Gruffydd at home in the Merionethshire hills.^{4.} The letter bears no date, but as it was sent from Chancery Lane it is possible that Edward was in one of the Inns of Court. In it he recites all the latest gossip from Court and the latest political news. He writes of

1. Foster, op.cit. P.1050. N.L.W. Peniarth Deeds 1939, 1666.

2. Foster, op.cit. P.1050.

3. "Students admitted to the Inner Temple 1547 - 1660" P.182.

4. N.L.W. Peniarth 327; Vide Appendix 11, *Infra* P.339. As it refers to King James's Court and to a lawsuit of Hugh Nanney Môn, it must have been written between 1603 and 1610.

the scandals of King James's court, and especially of the "affaires" of the "fleminge ladies"¹. and touches on the political news of the day, on the prospect of "great love betwixt us and Spaine", of the defeat of the Spaniards at sea by the Dutch, and of the rift between England and France.

It was only natural, indeed, for the gentry of this period to take an interest in the affairs of the English court and in political life generally. The Welsh squires had sought out patrons at Court and had risen, or hoped to rise, with them. The Manneys were no exception to this general rule. We know that Hugh Manney Hen secured a patron at the English court. We are told that he and a certain Owen ap Richard, a Merionethshire coroner, "have been in tymes past felowe servaunts and at once attendinge uppon the right honorable Sr. James Crofte knight deceased late

1. For the distractions of James I's court vide D.H. Willson, "King James VI and I", PP.191-4. . . . During the celebrations of the marriage of the King's favourite, the Earl of Montgomery, for example, "There was no small loss that night of chains and jewels, and many great ladies were made shorter by the skirts." (Sir Dudley Carleton, quoted by Willson, op.cit. P.192.)

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Comptroller of yo^r nat^s howschould."¹.

The Manneys were obviously more than simple backwoodsquires. They were local magnates with a knowledge of law, administration, and farming methods, who were reasonably well informed about current affairs, and who in addition took an interest in the old native culture. They had more than a passing acquaintance with the law. They had experience of it from both angles - both as administrators and as litigants. In this they resembled the rest of their class. Unfortunately for the Manneys, more than mere litigiousness was involved. They became parties to a bitter and prolonged feud with a neighbouring family - the Owens of Llwyn - who challenged the Manney's position in

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1. P.R.O. St.Ch. 5/N/12/21. Testimony delivered the 26 June 44 Elizabeth. (1602). Sir James Croft (d.1591) was Lord Deputy of Ireland and controller of Elizabeth's household. His main connection with Wales, apart from family affinities - his father married as his second wife a daughter of Sir Richard Herbert of Montgomery - was an attempt to raise forces there for Wyatt's rebellion in January 1553 - 4. - D.N.B. Vol. XIII, PP.110-112. c.f. also infra, Ch. 7, P.256..

the locality. This feud , involving several law-suits and vast expense, will be considered elsewhere.^{1.}

We need only add that as both farmers and litigants they would doubtless have appreciated William Vaughan's quip that instead of cattle the country was now breeding two-legged asses good for nothing but braying in the courts.^{2.}

1. Vide Infra, Ch. 7. P.337,ff.

2. William Vaughan, "The Golden Fleece", quoted by A.H. Dodd, "Studies in Stuart Wales", P.4.

CHAPTER SIX

1540 - 1623 (11)

The Develution of the Cymer Abbey Lands

"Fe'u tywysyd hwy i'r perffeydd gwellteg, a gwnaethant eu gwâl yno. Fe'u cawsant eu hunain newn perllanecdd, ac eddi uchod eddi ar frig y canghennau gwelsant ysguyd ffrwythau'r mynachlogydd i'w harffedi."

W. Ambrose Bobb,

"Machlud y Mynachlogydd."

Whatever the official pretext for the suppression of the monasteries, the real reason was mainly financial. The monasteries were surrounded by a laity which resented their wealth. The government, moreover, "realized that it could bind the gentry and the nobility to the new order by bribing them with lands which any reversal of policy would force them to restore."¹ Above all, the Crown itself was in urgent need of money.

In February 1536 a Bill was introduced into parliament which dissolved the smaller houses, those whose annual income did not exceed the sum of £200. In the previous year the monasteries' property had been carefully assessed in the "Valor Ecclesiasticus." Meanwhile another visitation was being conducted to inquire not only into the revenues but also into the morals and religious life of the monasteries and their inmates. The visitation of the Welsh houses took nine months to complete, from August 1535 to April 1536.² The dissolution of the smaller monasteries, those with a revenue below £200, involved all the Welsh houses.³

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1. G.R. Elton, "England under the Tudors," P.142.
 2. D. Williams, "History of Modern Wales", P.55.
 3. *ibid*, P.56.

Cymer Abbey, in Merionethshire, suffered with the others.

Cymer Abbey, the second Cistercian house in Gwynedd¹, was established in the Nannau district, at the confluence of the rivers Waion and Mawddach about two miles from Delgelley, in 1198 by a colony of monks sent from the Abbey of Cwmhir in Radnorshire.² The confirmation charter granted in 1209 by Llewelyn the Great proves that the earliest endowments were the gift of Gruffydd ap Cynan and his brother Maredudd, grandsons of Owain Gwynedd, and Gruffydd's son, Hywel.³ The principal possessions of Cymer lay in the upland valleys near the Abbey in the parishes of Llanelltyd, Llanegryn, Llanfachreth and Trawsfynydd. Nearly one-fifth of its revenues was provided by the grange of Neigwl in the Lleyn Peninsula.⁴

The early years of the thirteenth century saw the erection of the church and the buildings surrounding the cloister.⁵ But the abbey's resources do not seem

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1. C.A. Raleigh Radford, "Cymer Abbey", Official Guide, P.2.
 2. "Brut y Tywysogion (Red Book of Hergest Version)", ed. T. Jones, P.181: "And then the community of Cwm-hir went to reside at Cymer." Dom David Knowles notes that "Janssen favours the beginning of 1199" - "The Religious Houses of England and Wales", P.77, n.11.

to have been sufficient to carry out the work on the scale originally planned - presumably as a result of the English wars of the middle of the century, which ended in the conquest by Edward 1. The abbot of Cymer associated himself with Llywelyn in these wars. He was one of the signatories of the letter from the Welsh Cistercian abbots to the Pope in 1274, when they defended Llywelyn against the censures of Bishop Anian of St. Asaph (possibly, as we have seen, a member of the Nannau family.)¹ Cymer, indeed, suffered damages to the extent of £80. during Edward 1's Welsh wars.²

In the period of readjustment which followed the defeat of Llywelyn, Cymer, in common with other Welsh houses, was repeatedly menaced by the demands of over-zealous English officials. From the Extent of

Cont. from previous page.

3. Keith Williams-Jones, "Llywelyn's Charter to Cymer Abbey in 1209", *Journal Mer. Hist. Rec. Soc.*, 1957, P.45; Dugdale, "Monasticon Anglicanum", Vol.V, P.458 (under Cwm Hir, by mistake); *Cal.Pat. Rolls 1321 - 1324*, P.400(Inspeximus); *Cal.Pat.Rolls, 1330-1334*, P.334 (Inspeximus).

4. Dugdale, *op.cit.* Vol. V. P.743.

5. Official Guide, P.3.

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1. K. Williams-Jones, *op.cit.* P.48. "Bywgraffiadur", P.10.

2. K. Williams-Jones, *op.cit.* P.48.

Merionethshire (c.1284), for example, it appears that Roger L'Estrange had seized some chattels of Prince Llywelyn from Cymer Abbey: "De catallis Principis dicunt quod Rogerus Extranus cepit de Abbathia de Kynn' et de grangia de Aberthyen mobilia Principis."¹ The effect of the wars is further illustrated by a pardon granted by the King to the abbot and convent of Cymer on the 12 February, 1316, for thirty nine shillings unjustly exacted from them annually by the sheriff of Caernarvon. It appears that the abbot and convent held their lands and tenements in Neigwl "of the gift of Mareduc son of Kenan in frank almain", free of any service or secular rent, until Dafydd ap Gruffydd, brother of Llywelyn, Prince of Wales and Lord of Lleyn, unjustly exacted from them an annual rent of thirty nine shillings for these lands and tenements. After the conquest, the sheriff of Caernarvon demanded the rent for the King because he found it contained in the Extent of the county.²

1. Arch. Camb. 1867, P.185; c.f. D.R. Thomas, "Merionethshire Six Hundred Years Ago", Arch. Camb. 1884, P.278.

2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1313 - 1317, PP.394-5.

The abbey was concerned during these troubled times solely with the task of consolidating their position and securing what they claimed to be their rights. They sought a royal patron in place of the dead Prince, and their search was successfully concluded on the 26 March 1323 with the confirmation by Edward 11 of Llywelyn's charter to the abbey.^{1.}

A period of peace may have followed, but by the middle of the next century the abbey was in a most unenviable position. On the 16 February, 1443, the abbey was committed to the keeping of Thomas Stanley, the controller of the royal household. This was the outcome of a petition of the Abbot, Richard Kirkeby, to the effect that "divers persons of North Wales purpose daily to disturb him in his person and in his goods, spiritual and temporal, so that he cannot celebrate divine service."^{2.} Further protection was necessary, however, and on the 4 March, 1453, the abbey "which was endowed to the sum of £60 a year, though now the endowment does not exceed the value of 20 marks a year", was committed to the

1. K. Williams-Jones, op.cit. P.49.

2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441 - 1446, P.164.

keeping of the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Wiltshire and two others.¹ It appears that the abbey, as a result of disputes between certain un-named marcher lords, had "suffered distrainments at the hands of persons on either side and abductions of goods and chattels, so that no ministers thereof dare occupy the lands of old cellated to the abbey."

Yet the position improved, and by the time of the Dissolution the "Valor Ecclesiasticus" noted a gross income of £58. 15. 4 for Cymer and a net income of £51. 13. 4.² In 1540 the value and income accruing to the Crown were reviewed and it was found that its annual value amounted to £57. 9. 2. plus corn rents to the extent of twenty four crannocks and two hops of wheat.³

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452 - 1461, P.65.

2. "Valor Ecclesiasticus", Vol.IV, P.426. If we accept the calculations based on lists of values and incomes for the diocese of Llandaff, Cymer presumably contained three members, as it belonged to the income group of £30 - £60. - J.W. James, "A Church History of Wales", P. 103.

3. T.P. Ellis, "Deigelley and Llanelltyd", P.86.

A study of the "Valor Ecclesiasticus" shows, moreover, that the temporalities of the abbey were almost completely made up of "returns and rents" - the lands held in demesne were valued at a mere 12/8d. annually out of a total of £39. 13. 8. As we will see, there is abundant evidence that the last Abbot of Cymer, Lewis Thomas, frequently leased out abbey lands,¹ and he was but following the policy of his predecessors.² The post-Dissolution pattern of land-holding had therefore already been laid in the early years of the century.

We can see, further, that the abbey's income had increased since the time of the first extant survey - the "Taxatio Ecclesiastica" of 1291 - when the annual revenue was but £11. 4. 11.³ Although there is no

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1. Vide infra, PP.193, ff.; Nannau MSS. 67, 863, 873; H.L.W. Peniarth 208 is an original lease (1530) by the abbot of lands in Llanelltyd; Vide Arch.Camb. 1847, P.327, for another lease by Lewis Thomas, dated the 6 June 1521, - of Pant Cynorth in Rhyderiw; c.f. H.G. Jones, "Exchequer Proceedings Concerning Wales", P.225; Lease by Abbot of Cymer (c.1534) of a tenant called Aberythe in Nannau to a certain Howel ap Gwilym.
 2. Vide infra, P.109; Nannau MS.914; c.f. "Augmentations Records", P.288.
 3. "Taxatio Ecclesiastica", PP.292-3; Browne Willis, "A Survey of the Cathedral Church of Bangor", P.207.

record of any further grant made to the abbey after 1209 (the date of Llywelyn's charter) by either a Welsh prince or an English king, obviously there must have been several additions to the original possessions. Very few of the monastic properties which came into the hands of the Mannes after the Dissolution can be found in the list of the abbey's lands as given in Llywelyn's charter.¹ No lands in Llanfachreth, for example, are included in the list of 1209. Yet in 1584 nine Llanfachreth tenements, formerly in the possession of Cymer Abbey, were sold for £500.²

Little is known of the history of the monastery from the mid-fifteenth century to the time of the Dissolution. A little earlier, in 1527/8, the abbot of Cymer took part in a visitation of the neighbouring abbey of Valle Crucis. Owing to reported "crymys and excessys" there, it was decided that the abbots of Neath, Cymer, Cenway and Cwm-hir should visit the abbey. The abbot of Neath had been requested

1. Vide K. Williams-Jones, *op.cit.*, PP.62-78; Arch. Camb. 1886, PP.112-4.

2. Vide *Infra*, PP.200-207.

by the Duke of Richmond¹. (presumably the "founder" of Valle Crucis) to inquire into conditions at Valle Crucis.² On the 22 June 1527, a certain John Herberry reported to his master William Brereton, steward of Holt castle and Chamberlain of Chester, that he had sent for the abbot of Cymer to discuss with him the question of visiting Valle Crucis.³ A report of the inquiry was sent to Brereton on the 17 February, 1528, accusing the abbot of Valle Crucis - Robert Salesbury - of various crimes. Salesbury latter appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and we know he remained in office for a further two years.⁴

The abbot of Cymer was associated also with the visitation of Valle Crucis by Cromwell's Commissioners in 1535. They found the abbey's finances in a terrible

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1. Henry Fitzroy (1519-36), natural son of Henry VIII by Elisabeth Blount. - D.N.B., Vol. XIX, P. 204.
 2. Edward Owen, "Manuscripts Relating to Wales in the British Museum", P. 141.
 3. G.V. Price, "Valle Crucis Abbey", PP. 174, 262. William Brereton was sheriff of Merionethshire in 1527/8 (c.f. *Infra*, Ch. 7. PP. 24-5, for correspondence between him and his deputy sheriff, John Puleston, in Oct. 1527), and in 1536 (P.R.O. List of Sheriffs, P. 260). He was involved with his cousin Henry Norris in the fall of Anne Boleyn, and was then executed. (D. Mathew, "The Celtic Peoples and Renaissance Europe", P. 42.)
 4. Edward Owen, *op. cit.* P. 141; G.V. Price, *op. cit.*, P. 174. For Robert Salesbury (a far from exemplary character) vide G. Baskerville, "English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries." P. 35.

state and intended depriving the abbot of his office. Meanwhile, Lewis Thomas, the abbot of Cymer, "who is a good husband" was prepared to pay £20 for the vacant abbacy.¹ As it happened, however, both Valle Crucis and Cymer were soon afterwards suppressed, with the rest of the monastic houses. Lewis Thomas was the last abbot of Cymer. He managed to secure some preferment in the Church following the Dissolution. He became the suffragan Bishop of Shrewsbury² and also held the living of Llandwrog in Caernarvonshire from the 26 September, 1537, until his death in the spring of 1561.³

The Crown did not take over the whole of the abbey's wealth⁴ in 1536. The silver chalice and paten were missing - at least, so we must presume from their discovery between some boulders near Cwm Mynach

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1. Letters and Papers, Henry VIII, Vol. IX, No. 244.
 2. Letters and Papers (For. & Dom.) Henry VIII, Vol. XII, Part II, P. 80.
 3. A. Ivor Pryce, "The Diocese of Bangor in the Sixteenth Century", PP. 8 - 17.
 4. Perhaps we should include among the Cymer treasures the abbey's magnificent rood-loft, moved at the time of the Dissolution to the abbey's church at Llanegryn. Vide "Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire", Vol. VI (Merioneth), P. 91, for description and illustration. Communion cups and a wooden font, now in Llanuwchllyn Parish Church, are also reputed to have come from Cymer Abbey - T. I. Ellis, "Crwydre Neiriennydd", P. 23.

(Deigolley) by two workmen, prospecting for gold, on the 13 February, 1890.¹ These had doubtless been deliberately hidden there at the time of the Dissolution, probably by one of the monks - hoping presumably for better days. The suppression of a monastery involved the confiscation of its lands and usually of the church plate. "The Cynor monks probably decided to take no chances and there can be little doubt but that they decided to place certain plate outside the reach of the King's agents, who, the monks were no doubt advised, were on their way to the Abbey."²

We do not know whether the monks had any help from their neighbours in this matter. We do not know, in particular, what was the attitude of the Hanneys, the major landowners of the district, towards religion - of the old or of the reformed kind. We do know that Cynor Abbey must have been their traditional family burial place. In his will, dated 1494, Dafydd ap Meurig Vychan bequeathed his body "ad spellendum in monasterio beate marie virginis de Kynner."³

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1. Hugh J. Owen, "The Romance of the Chalice and Paten of Cynor Abbey", *Journal Mer. Hist. Rec. Soc.*, 1955, P. 181.
 2. Hugh J. Owen, *op. cit.* P. 185.
 3. *Supra* P. 105.; *Arch. Camb.* "Original Documents", Vol. 1., 1877, P. 143.

Gute'r Glyn tells us, moreover, that Dafydd's father Mourig Vychan, and his mother, Angharad, were buried at Cymer.¹ It is possible, of course, that some of the abbots of Cymer may have been relatives of the Nanneys, although we have no evidence of this. The Nanneys were in all probability of the same breed as their fellow squires, those "anglicised gentry" who "might accede to, though even they did not welcome, the change."² In this they in no way differed from their English counterpart, for "Whether he held religious views approximating to the new or to the old learning, made no difference to an investor."³

There may have been a conscious policy of binding the gentry to the new order by the disposing of monastic lands. But the history of the vast majority of the Cymer abbey lands after the Dissolution, in so far as it can be traced in the

1. "Gwaith Gute'r Glyn", ed. I. Williams and J. Ll. Williams, P.156.

2. W. Ll. Williams, "The Making of Modern Wales", PP.200 - 201.

3. G. Baskerville, op.cit. P.288.

Hannau archives, does not suggest that in Merionethshire, as in the rest of Wales, the wealthy neighbours of the monasteries descended immediately on their lands and properties.¹ As will be seen, this was not the history of the great majority of the Cymer Abbey lands. The few direct acquisitions of lands, which can be discovered, are exceptions to the general rule that the lands passed first to English speculators and came into local hands only after a complicated process of buying and selling.

This applies equally to many other parts of England and Wales. Many of those to whom monastic lands were granted, immediately sold them. Under Henry VIII, in particular, "speculation was rife in the last ten years of the reign."² A merchant like Sir Robert Gresham, for example, not only established himself as a Yorkshire landowner but also made a fortune by buying and selling other properties.³ In Devon, when Tavistock Abbey, one of the larger establishments, was suppressed in 1539, "the possessions of the abbey were shared between the Crown and a non-resident grandee,"⁴ - in this case, John,

1. B.B. Thomas, "Braslun o Hanes Economaidd Cymru", P.69.

2. H. Maynard Smith, "Henry VIII and the Reformation," P.100.

3. *ibid.*

4. H.P.R. Finberg, "Tavistock Abbey", P.275.

first baron Russell, the newly appointed president of the Council of the West.¹

If we consider monastic lands in Wales itself, we can discover several cases where they were granted by the Crown to alien courtiers and other speculators after the Dissolution. While certain local magnates - men like Sir Edward Carn, the Earl of Worcester and the Bulkeleys - profited directly from the Dissolution, such was not universally the case. Llanbarnan Abbey in Monmouthshire, for example, went first to a stranger, John Parker, "of the Household", before it came into the hands of the local magnate, William Morgan.² James Gunter of Abergavenny proved to be an unscrupulous speculator and soon obtained most of the possessions of the local priory, as well as all of the possessions of the Friars in Cardiff and some of those of Talley Abbey.³ Most of the lands and properties of Talley went to another "of the Household" by the name of Richard Dauncey.⁴

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1. H.P.R. Finberg, "Tavistock Abbey", P.275.
 2. Letters and Papers (For. & Dom.) XIV, Pt.1, P.605; ^{Parker was} "of the King's Stable" - "Augmentations Records", P.132.
 3. W. Ambrose Bebb, "Machlud y Mynachlogydd", P.103.
 4. Letters and Papers (For. & Dom.) XIII, Pt.1, P.586.

John Bradshaw of Ludlow obtained the lease of St. Dogmael's.¹ Two courtiers - William Sakevyle² and John Dudley were granted most of the nunnery of Llanllŷr in Cardiganshire in Edward VI's reign.³ Strata Marcella was shared between Edward Grey, Lord Powys, and two Englishmen from London.⁴ The Abbey of Valle Crucis, with its dependent properties in Bromfield, were leased by the Crown to Sir William Pickering, Knight, of Oswaldkirk in Yorkshire, in 1537.⁵ Eventually, the properties went by marriage to Sir Edward Wootton, K.B., of Boston Malherbe, the lease being renewed in his name in 1606 and granted to him in 1614.⁶ Following many changes of ownership, the abbey and the monastic lands came into the hands of two local magnates - Henry Wynn, the father of Sir John Wynn of Wynnstay, and John Trevor of Llys Trevor - towards the end of the seventeenth century.⁷ Much the same happened to the Cymer Abbey

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1. Letters and Papers (For & Dem.)XIII,Pt.1.P.580.
"Augmentations - Records", P.484.
 2. "groom of the King's Chamber" - "Augmentations Records", P.181.
 3. W.A.Bebb, op.cit.P.105; Tanner "Notitia Monastica", P.708;
"It afterwards passed into the hands of one of the
Lloyds of Castle Howell" - T.Rees, "South Wales", P.518.
 4. W.A.Bebb, op.cit. P.105.
 5. G.Vernon Price, "Valle Crucis Abbey", P.185. He was also
granted lands in Ampleford and Whenby in Yorkshire, as
well as lands in Marton - Letters and Papers (For & Dem.)
XIV, Pt.1. P.604.
 6. G.V.Price, op.cit., P.189.
 7. ibid, P.191.

lands and properties.

It is possible to examine in some detail the devolution of several of these monastic lands from the early years of the sixteenth century to the time of their accumulation in the hands of the Nanneys. There are five groups of documents preserved in the Nannau family archives which illustrate the various stages in the devolution of five groups of Cymer Abbey lands.

The first group¹ consisted of a tenement called "Y Cae Rhydynon" and "Yr Hafod Newydd" in the township of Nannau. On the 6 September 1524 Lewis, Abbot of Cymer, leased the tenement to Lleuku verch Jowan y nab Lloid and Owen ap Thomas ap Hoell ap Jowan Lloid and their heirs, for the term of ninety nine years at an annual rent of six shillings and eight pence.² By 1597/8, the date of the next extant

1. Nannau MSS. 863 - 866.

2. Nannau MS. 863.

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deed, both the possession and ownership of the tenement have changed. Hugh Nanney is the new owner, and by this document - dated the 20 March 1597/8 - he leases to a certain Howel ap John ap William, yeoman, of Mannau, "all that Messuage Lands or Tenement called kay Rhydynnen and haved Newyth Late the Lands or possessions of Thomas ap Owain Vain (except one Moetie or parcell thereof nowe in the Tenure and occupacon of Thomas ap Lewis)". The lessee is to hold the lands for twenty one years at an annual rent of ten shillings.¹.

There are only two other references to this tenement. By a deed dated the 12 February 1607,². Hugh Nanney "aswell for the fatherlie love seale and affecon w^{ch} he beareth to the said Robert Nanney beinge one of the sennes of hym the said Hugh Nanney as also for diverse other good and lawfull consideracons hym speciallie movinge" conveyed it to his son Robert, who later, on the 10 November, 1610, resold the tenement to his father "for and in consideracon of a certeyne some of lawfull money of England."³. This transaction

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1. Mannau MS.864.
 2. Mannau MS.865.
 3. Mannau MS.866.

was in all probability one of the many pieces of legal chicanery prevalent in sixteenth and seventeenth century conveyancing. The Hanneys were at this time involved in extremely costly litigation concerning the spoil of certain woods on Penrhos Common.¹

The second group² concerns the history of the important tenement called Garth Bleddyn, in Nannau. It appears from an indenture of release dated the 25 April 1548³ that Garth Bleddyn had been leased twelve years previously by the abbot of Cyzer to a certain Howel ap Gruffydd ap Ednyfed, alias "hoel eoff" (Hywel 'ôf' - the smith), that is to say, in 1536, the year of the monastery's suppression. In another document, however, the date of this original lease is stated to have been the 30 April 1534.⁴

Eventually the tenement was divided into two equal portions and a moiety granted by Hywel ap Gruffydd to each of his two sons Edward and Rhys for the remainder

1. Vide Infra, PP. 261-285.

2. Nannau MSS. 872 - 889.

3. Nannau MS. 872.

4. Nannau MS. 884.

of the original ninety nine year lease at an annual rent of three shillings and four pence each. In 1548 "Hoel coff" granted a moiety of Garth Bleddyn to Edward, his son, "yn as ampyll & large maner as the syd Edward hayth dyvyded^{meryd} hedgyd & ys yn possession of at the making of thes present."¹ On the 10 July in the following year Hywel granted to his son "Res ap holl eof to hys heres and syns laufullly begetyn of the body of elen verch ddavydd ap gryff the on halffe of the seyde tenement callyd garth blethyn wyth hys apertynance / a parcel of the seyde lase of the dysselvyd howse of Kynner", the grant to commence "From the howre after the decesse & deth of the seyde holl & hys wyff gwen."²

Up to this point the story is simple but it soon becomes complicated. Obviously various factors are involved which are to us but an unknown quantity

In 1574, by a deed dated the 31 July, Edward ap Howel assigned "for ever" to one John ap Lewis

1. Nannau MS.872.

2. Nannau MS.873.

ap Eignon his right title or term of years to a parcel of land, namely one acre arable and one meadow containing a "math" of hay, called Y Cao Bach yn ymyl 3 Pandy, part of a parcel of land called Garth Bleddyn, in Nannau.¹ We may assume that these two acres were but a small portion of the moiety whose lease Edward had been granted in 1548.

During the following winter a dispute seems to have broken out between the two brothers, Edward and Rhys, over part of Garth Bleddyn - which part, we do not know. We do know that Hugh Nanney is mentioned as one of the arbiters in the dispute in a bond dated the 15 January 1575.²

Then on the 1 March 1575 Edward ap Heel "ove" of Nannau sold the remainder of the lease on a moiety of Garth Bleddyn to Hugh Nanney for £14.³ By an associated deed bearing the same date Hugh Nanney leased the moiety back to Edward ap Heell"ove" for

1. Nannau MS.874. Associated bond: Nannau MS.879.

2. Nannau MS.875.

3. Nannau MS.876.

"threttie yeres fullie to be completed & ended if the said Edward ap Hoell doe lyve so longe", at an annual rent of eight shillings and four pence.^{1.}

Complications begin with the gift of Tyddyn Garth Bleddyn by the Queen to John Duddely^{2.} and John Ayscough by Letters Patent dated the 22 January 1575.^{3.} It would seem that this transaction ignored the original lease by the abbot of Cymer to Howel ap Gruffydd. Transactions seem to have been made simultaneously on two different levels - by Howel ap Gruffydd and his descendants with regard to the tenure of the lease, and by these other parties with regard to the actual ownership of the lands. On the 14 February 1574 John Duddely and John Ayscough sold the lands to John Salesbury and Henry Dyane.^{4.} On the 13. May in the same year Edward ap Howel, in consideration of a certain sum of money

1. Nannau MS.877.

2. He also received part of the nunnery of Llanllŷr - Vide Supra, P.111....

3. Nannau MS. 880.

4. Nannau MS.880; John Salesbury of Rûg, d.1580, M.P. for Merioneth 1553, Sheriff in 1559 and 1578 - "Bywgraffiadur", P.845.

"released assigned & sett over unto" one Lewes ap John Gruffydd all the moiety of Garth Bleddyn except two parcels of land called Y Wern Goch and Gweirgled y Porthllwyd "From the daye of the date herof during thend & terme of yeres conteyned in the said originall leas".^{1.}

Actual ownership of the tenement came into Hugh Nanney's possession by a deed of Bargain and Sale dated the 8 November 1575, when John Salesbury and Henry Dynne sold him the tenement, which they had bought from Duddely and Ayscough, who had in turn received it as a gift from the Queen.^{2.} At about the same time Hugh Nanney obtained the remainder of the lease on the other half of the tenement - the moiety which had gone to Rhys ap Howel. By a deed dated the 19 November 1575 Rhys sold to Hugh Nanney for £20 "all his Estate Right Title use interest and terme of yeaeres wch he the said Rees hath yet to come in the moitie...."^{3.} By a bond dated the following day Rhys promised to pay forty shillings to Hugh Nanney "For the said landes duringe the naturall lief of gwen vch gruf nother to

1. Nannau MS. 878.

2. Nannau MS. 880.

3. Nannau MS. 881.

the said Rees ap hoell off in the mansyon house of the said Hughe Naney called Nanney."¹.

Hugh Nanney, therefore, by 1575 was in possession of the whole of Garth Bleddyn. The rest of the documents in this group relate to the further leasing and sub-leasing, by Hugh Nanney and his tenants, of both moieties. This section is concluded with the mortgage by Hugh Nanney Hôn and his grandson, Hugh Nanney the Younger, to one of their tenants - Eliasa ap David ap Owen of Mannau, yeoman - of Garth Bleddyn and other lands for £300 in 1616,² one of the many mortgages forced on the Nanneys at this period by their disastrous litigation.

The third group of documents³ is of particular interest since it shows clearly the general course of devolution of the abbey lands - from their forfeiture to the Crown, followed by leases or grants by the Crown, through the hands of various speculators, and finally to the local magnate. We have seen this to

1. Mannau MS.882.

2. Mannau MSS.887,888.

3. Mannau MSS. 890-913. A convenient summary of the devolution of these lands is given in Mannau MS.148.