

MEYSYDD BRWYDRO HANESYDDOL YNG NGHYMRU

Mae'r adroddiad canlynol, a gomisiynwyd gan Grŵp Llywio Meysydd Brwydro Cymru ac a ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru, yn ffurfio rhan o raglen archwilio fesul cam i daflu goleuni ar yr ystyriaeth o Gofrestr neu Restr o Feysydd Brwydro Hanesyddol yng Nghymru. Dechreuwyd gweithio ar hyn ym mis Rhagfyr 2007 dan gyfarwyddyd Cadw, gwasanaeth amgylchedd hanesyddol Llywodraeth Cymru, ac yr oedd yn dilyn cwblhau prosiect gan Gomisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru (RCAHMW) i bennu pa feysydd brwydro yng Nghymru a allai fod yn addas i'w nodi ar fapiau'r Arolwg Ordnans. Sefydlwyd y Grŵp Llywio Meysydd Brwydro, yn cynnwys aelodau o Cadw, Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru ac Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru, a rhwng 2009 a 2014 comisiynwyd ymchwil ar 47 o frwydrau a gwarchaeau. Mae hyn yn bennaf yn cynnwys ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol, ac mewn 10 achos, gwaith maes heb fod yn ymyrryd a gwaith a oedd yn ymyrryd.

O ganlyniad i'r gwaith hwn mae **Rhestr o Feysydd Brwydro Hanesyddol yng Nghymru** (<http://meysyddbrwydro.cbhc.gov.uk/>) yn cael ei datblygu, dan arweiniad Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru ar ran Cadw. Bydd yn adnodd deongliadol, addysgol ac ymchwil ar-lein, yn anelu at gynyddu gwybodaeth a chodi ymwybyddiaeth o feysydd brwydro yng Nghymru, yn ogystal ag ysgogi ymchwil bellach. Gobeithir ei lansio yn ystod gwanwyn 2017.

HISTORIC BATTLEFIELDS IN WALES

The following report, commissioned by the Welsh Battlefields Steering Group and funded by Welsh Government, forms part of a phased programme of investigation undertaken to inform the consideration of a Register or Inventory of Historic Battlefields in Wales. Work on this began in December 2007 under the direction of the Welsh Government's Historic Environment Service (Cadw), and followed the completion of a Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) project to determine which battlefields in Wales might be suitable for depiction on Ordnance Survey mapping. The Battlefields Steering Group was established, drawing its membership from Cadw, RCAHMW and National Museum Wales, and between 2009 and 2014 research on 47 battles and sieges was commissioned. This principally comprised documentary and historical research, and in 10 cases both non-invasive and invasive fieldwork.

As a result of this work **The Inventory of Historic Battlefields in Wales** (<http://battlefields.rcahmw.gov.uk/>) is in development, led by the RCAHMW on behalf of Cadw. This will be an online interpretative, educational and research resource aimed at increasing knowledge and raising awareness of battlefields in Wales, as well as a prompt for further research. It is due to be launched in spring 2017.

Mae'r tabl isod yn rhestru'r brwydrau a'r gwarchaeau a ymchwiliwyd. Bydd adroddiadau ar gael i'w llwytho i lawr o'r Rhestr ar-ein yn ogystal ag o Coflein (<http://www.coflein.gov.uk/>), y gronfa ddata ar-lein ar gyfer Cofnod Henebion Cenedlaethol Cymru (NMRW).

The table below lists the battles and sieges researched. Reports will be available to download from the online Inventory as well as from Coflein (<http://www.coflein.gov.uk/>), the online database for the National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW).

ENW/NAME	DYDDIAD /DATE	SIR HANESYDDOL/ HISTORIC COUNTY	NPRN	YMCHWIL/RESEARCH
Aberllech	1096	Sir Frycheiniog Brecknockshire	404446	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
Pont Cychod (Menai ac Ynys Môn) Bridge of Boats (Menai and Anglesey)	1282	Ynys Môn Anglesey	404319	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
Bryn Derwin	1255	Sir Gaernarfon Caernarfonshire	402322	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd ac a oedd yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2014) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013) Non-invasive and invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2014)
Bryn Glas (Pillth)	1402	Sir Faesyfed Radnorshire	306352	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009) Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd ac a oedd yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2012)

				<p>Cloddfa (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2013)</p> <p>Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd ac a oedd yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2014)</p> <p>Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009)</p> <p>Non-invasive and invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2012)</p> <p>Excavation (Archaeology Wales, 2013)</p> <p>Non-invasive and invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2014)</p>
Campston Hill	1404	Sir Fynwy Monmouthshire	402328	<p>Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009)</p> <p>Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009)</p>
Cilgerran	1258	Sir Benfro Pembrokeshire	405201	<p>Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013)</p> <p>Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)</p>
Coed Llathan	1257	Sir Gaerfyrddin Carmarthenshire	403587	<p>Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)</p> <p>Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd ac a oedd yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2014)</p> <p>Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)</p> <p>Non-invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2014)</p>
Castell Coety (gwarchae) /Coity	1404-05	Morgannwg	545701	<p>Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)</p>

Castle (siege)		Glamorgan		Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
Coleshill	1157	Sir y Fflint Flintshire	402325	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (2009) Documentary and historical research (2009)
Craig y Dorth	1404	Sir Fynwy Monmouthshire	402327	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009) Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd ac a oedd yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2014) Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009) Non-invasive and invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2014)
Crug Mawr	1136	Sir Aberteifi Cardiganshire	402323	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009) Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009)
Castell Cymaron (gwarchaeau) / Cymaron Castle (sieges)	1144 1179 1195 1215	Sir Faesyfed Radnorshire	545328	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
Cymerau	1257	Sir Gaerfyrddin Carmarthenshire	404717	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2014) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)

				Non-invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2014)
Castell Dinbych (gwarchae)/ Denbigh Castle (siege)	1282	Sir Ddinbych Denbighshire	545687	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
Castell Dinbych (gwarchae)/ Denbigh Castle (siege)	1294-5	Sir Ddinbych Denbighshire	545613	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
Castell Dinbych (gwarchae)/ Denbigh Castle (siege)	1460	Sir Ddinbych Denbighshire	545718	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
Castell Dinbych (gwarchae)/ Denbigh Castle (siege)	1468	Sir Ddinbych Denbighshire	545720	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
Castell Dinbych (gwarchae)/ Denbigh Castle (siege)	1646	Sir Ddinbych Denbighshire	545789	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
Castell Dryslwyn (gwarchae) / Dryslwyn Castle (siege)	1287	Sir Gaerfyrddin Carmarthenshire	545605	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
Carregwastad - Abergwaun (ymosodiad) / Carregwastad Point - Fishguard (invasion)	1797	Sir Benfro Pembrokeshire	308824	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009) Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009)

Gŵyr/ Gower	1136	Morgannwg Glamorgan	404856	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
Grosmont	1405	Sir Fynwy Monmouthshire	402333	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009) Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd ac a oedd yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2012) Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009) Non-invasive and invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2012)
Hyddgen	1401	Sir Drefaldwyn Montgomeryshire	402310	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
Pont Irfon (Llanganten) / Irfon Bridge /	1282	Sir Frycheiniog Brecknockshire	403411	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
Cydweli / Kidwelly	1258	Sir Gaerfyrddin Carmarthenshire	404729	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
Castell Talacharn (gwarchae) / Laugharne Castle (sieges)	1189 1215 1257-8 1644	Sir Gaerfyrddin	545245 545341 545436 545746	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)

Maes Gwenllian	1136	Sir Gaerfyrddin Carmarthenshire	402324	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009) Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd ac a oedd yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2012) Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009) Non-invasive and invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2012)
Maes Moydog	1295	Sir Drefaldwyn Montgomeryshire	403416	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd ac a oedd yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2014) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013) Non-invasive and invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2014)
Trefaldwyn / Montgomery	1644	Sir Drefaldwyn Montgomeryshire	405168	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
Mynydd Carn	1081	Sir Benfro Pembrokeshire	300319	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009) Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009)
Castell Newydd Emlyn (gwarchae) / Newcastle Emlyn (siege)	1287-8	Sir Gaerfyrddin Carmarthenshire	545606	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Documentary and historical

				research (Chapman, 2013)
Castell Newydd Emlyn (gwarchae) / Newcastle Emlyn	1645	Sir Gaerfyrddin Carmarthenshire	545768	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
Gwrthryfel y Siartwyr, Casnewydd / Newport Chartist Uprising	1839	Sir Fynwy Monmouthshire	405003	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009) Documentary and historical research (Border Achaeology, 2009)
Painscastle	1198	Sir Faesyfed Radnorshire	402326	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009) Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd ac a oedd yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2012) Cloddfa (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009) Non-invasive and invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2012) Excavation (Archaeology Wales, 2013)
Pennal	1472/4	Meirionnydd Merioneth	403495	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
Pentraeth	1170	Ynys Môn Anglesey	404315	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
Pwllgwdig	1078	Sir Benfro	405188	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol

		Pembrokeshire		(Gildas Research, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
Pwll Melyn	1405	Sir Fynwy Monmouthshire	402320	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009) Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2014) Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009) Non-invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2014)
Castell Rhaglan (gwarchae) / Raglan Castle (siege)	1646	Sir Fynwy Monmouthshire	545797	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
Sain Ffagan / St Fagans	1648	Morgannwg Glamorgan	307776	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009) Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd ac a oedd yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2012) Gwaith ymchwil heb fod yn ymyrryd ac a oedd yn ymyrryd (Archaeoleg Cymru, 2013) Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009) Non-invasive and invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2012) Non-invasive and invasive fieldwork (Archaeology Wales, 2013)
Twthill	1461	Sir Gaernarfon	403421	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009)

		Caernarfonshire		Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009)
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Grŵp Llywio Meysydd Brwydro, Hydref 2016

Battlefields Steering Group, October 2016

WELSH BATTLEFIELDS HISTORICAL AND DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

Siege of Coity – 1404-5



County: Glamorgan (Unitary [local] authority: Bridgend)

Community: Coity

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Llywodraeth Cymru
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Siege of Coity Castle (1404-5)

Summary

The sieges of Coity Castle in 1404 and 1405 were one of the most celebrated episodes of the revolt of Owain Glyndŵr. They are among the few actions against a 'private' castle that are known in any detail and were deemed important enough to be raised in parliament and to trigger two royal expeditions in attempts to relieve the castle and its defenders with the full support of the English parliament and funded by royal taxation and loans extracted from among the most powerful in the land.

In common with several other castles across southern Wales, Coity appears to have been subject to substantial refurbishment in the latter years of the fourteenth century. It was therefore in good condition and regularly inhabited by its lord when the rebellion broke in September 1400. The evidence for the sieges in the remaining buildings and earthworks associated with the castle give strong indications that gunpowder artillery, a technology very much in its infancy, was employed. Even if gunpowder weapons were not used, significant repairs to the north curtain walls of both wards of the castle suggest the use of large and powerful siege engines and this, together with the point in time that the siege began suggests the involvement of Glyndŵr's French allies. The sieges are also of interest in the wider context of the rebellion as a whole:

- They were the most sustained sieges to be conducted by the rebels in southern Wales. In Wales as a whole, only the successful sieges of Harlech and Aberystwyth and the unsuccessful attempts on the town and castle of Caernarfon were longer.
- It is probable that all the principal protagonists in the conflict were present at Coity at one time or another; Henry IV, Henry of Monmouth, the Prince of Wales, and Owain Glyndŵr himself.
- It is evident that both 'English' and 'Welsh' residents of the locality were involved on both sides.

The sieges, therefore, were sophisticated and prolonged with effects far beyond their immediate locality and should be considered significant indicators of the ability and strength of the rebels and the strain on the resources of the English crown that these created.

Context

The two sieges of Coity castle should be viewed in the context of the peak years (1402-5) of the rebellion led by Owain Glyndŵr at the point where it assumed a truly 'national' scale and when English rule throughout the royal shires and March of Wales was at its most tenuous. The expansion and intensification of the rebellion began with the capture of one of Glyndŵr's principal antagonists, the Marcher baron Reginald Grey, lord of Ruthin, in the first half of April 1402. Grey was ransomed for a substantial sum, in part raised from royal revenues. The response of the Crown to Grey's capture and the intensification of the uprising thereafter stands in contrast to the years 1401-2 which were characterised by sporadic punitive expeditions that only achieved limited successes.

The second key success which spread the rebellion further into southern Wales was the victory at the battle of Bryn Glas, Pilleth, on 2 June 1402. Here Edmund Mortimer, uncle to the young Earl of March and guardian of his Welsh estates, was captured. The unwillingness of the crown to intervene on Mortimer's behalf may have been one of the factors which persuaded Mortimer to join forces with his captor. His allegiance was sealed by marriage to one of Glyndŵr's daughters. 1403 witnessed the first serious attempt by Owain to link his revolt with disaffection in England: The Percies joined forces with Glyndŵr against Henry IV and, despite the defeat of Hotspur, the son of the earl of Northumberland at the Battle of Shrewsbury (21 July 1403), a channel had been opened between the rebellious Welsh and the disaffected Percies. In the same year, Owain received the first tangible and practical help from the French, themselves eager to extract advantage from discontent in the English realm. In October, forces from France and Brittany assisted at the siege of Kidwelly while a French fleet assaulted the town and castle of Caernarfon. While both assaults were unsuccessful, the influence of French forces was another factor in the increasing seriousness with which the revolt was taken in England.

The first siege of Coity occurred during Owain's *Annus Mirabilis*, 1404. During the course of that year, Aberystwyth and Harlech were taken as, in all probability, was Cardiff which was burnt. Both the castles of Coity and Abergavenny were besieged: Owain's revolt could threaten the lowlands of the south eastern March. The Welsh in Glamorgan are said to have risen in sympathy with Owain's success in the south east and Coity was besieged by the autumn. At Machynlleth, a parliament was held and on 10 May, an embassy to the French court was despatched from Dolgellau requesting military support. This was successful: a formal alliance was solemnly agreed on 14 July.

The lordship of Coity was one of a number of small lordships within Glamorgan, itself the largest and wealthiest of the medieval Marcher lordships. In 1400, the lord of Coity was Sir Lawrence Berkerolles (d. 1411, see below), who had used the castle as his main residence since 1384. The castle formed part of his inheritance from his mother Katherine Turbeville, together with Newcastle overlooking Bridgend, together with Llanharry and Newland. Under Sir Lawrence, the small castle had been extensively refurbished, including new domestic buildings, the completion of walls and towers of the two wards of the castle and a remarkable three-storey latrine tower as part of the keep. By the time of the siege, therefore, this compact castle was occupied and in good repair.

Glamorgan, with its long coastline and comparatively large urban populations with widespread connections across the 'Severn Sea' to Bristol, the south west of England and beyond was relatively wealthy and well-populated. Strategically, control of Glamorgan was vital since routes, notably the Roman 'Portway' which ran east to west through Glamorgan remained in use by 1400. Glamorgan also surrounded the small coastal lordship of Ogmore, part of the duchy of Lancaster and thus the personal property of Henry IV. Its caput, Ogmore Castle, lay approximately eight miles (5km) to the south from Coity on the banks of the river Ewenny with direct access to the sea. The king's interest in the security of Coity was twofold: personal, for the threat its loss would pose to his property and pragmatic in the logistical difficulties the loss of either castle to the rebels might cause.

Although Owain's English allies suffered severe reversals in 1405, the impact of his French alliance bore fruit. Had Constance Despenser, widow of Thomas Despenser, who was executed in 1400 for his involvement in the attempted rebellion against Henry IV, succeeded in her flight to Glamorgan, having abducted the young Edmund Mortimer, earl of March, and his brother, in February of that year proved successful, this military success might have been matched with a political and dynastic coup. Edmund Mortimer (d. 1425), the minor Earl of March, arguably had a better claim to the throne than Henry IV and his uncle Edmund was allied to Glyndŵr following his capture at Pilleth in 1402.

The impact of French alliance was also at its greatest in 1405. Though the suggestion that they numbered as many as 10,000 is probably a gross exaggeration, it was a large and well-equipped force that landed at Pembroke in early August. Lloyd, basing his judgment on French accounts, suggests that the French actually supplied 2,600 men. French ships had been active on the coast of west Wales earlier in the year, attacking both Tenby and Haverfordwest. They were successful in capturing the town – but not the castle – at Haverfordwest. Carmarthen fell shortly afterwards and,

by the end of the month they had advanced to within eight miles of Worcester.¹ The siege of Coity, briefly relieved in November 1404, had been renewed requiring intervention from an army led by the king in person in September. The rebellion in Glamorgan, however, was nearing its end and, by the close of 1405, the rebels of Glamorgan are reported to have submitted, 'except a few who went to Gwynedd to their master.'²

Review of Primary Sources

Our sources for the conduct of the siege are decidedly limited though rather greater than for most other sieges of the period. The siege makes appearances in royal commissions and orders and, owing to the cost of providing two relieving armies and supplies, the financial records of the crown, notably among the warrants for issue series (E 404) in the National Archives. That these armies were sent at all was the result of a petition before the Coventry Parliament of 1404. None of these sources offer a narrative of events around Coity although the receiver's financial accounts for the neighbouring lordship of Ogmore and the enquiries into the possessions of Sir Lawrence Berkerolles (d. 1411) and the details of their subsequent partition following his death, give some insights into the damage inflicted upon each lordship in the course of the rebellion.³ These are employed to reconstruct some of the detail of the narrative of the period.⁴

Review of Secondary Sources

The majority of the secondary work concerns the castle itself. The castle has been extensively recorded and surveyed archaeologically though no excavations have been carried out. G.T. Clark published a study of the castle and its associated lordship in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* in 1877 and this study has been supplemented by C.A. Raleigh Radford in 1946 and more recently by the RCAHMW in 1991.⁵ These have given a comprehensive view of the development of the castle from its initiation through five building phases: c. 1100; the late 12th century; the 14th century; the 15th

¹ Lloyd, *Owen Glendower*, 101-4.

² Lloyd, *Owen Glendower*, 152 (from the so-called 'Annals of Owain Glyndŵr').

³ A full analysis and summary of the effects and the original documents in the DL 29 (Duchy of Lancaster Accounts) and DL 42 (Duchy of Lancaster Cartularies, Enrolments, Surveys and other Miscellaneous Books) can be found in R.R. Davies, 'The Lordship of Ogmore' in *Glamorgan County History* III, 300-302. The account of the partition gives details of the lordship of Coity and its post-rebellion valuation: TNA C 47/9/32.

⁴ This report draws upon R.A. Griffiths, 'The Siege of Coity Castle', *Morgannwg* (2001).

⁵ G.T. Clark, 'Coity castle and Lordship', *Arch. Camb.* 1877, 1-22, C.A. Raleigh Radford, 'Coity Castle, Glamorgan' *Official Guide Leaflet*, HMSO, 1946 and *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan III, Part 1 a Medieval Secular Monuments, The Early Castles from the Norman Conquest to 1217*, HMSO, 1991.

century; the Tudor period. It is the third and fourth periods which are most relevant here. The castle underwent significant remodelling in the later fourteenth century. This was relatively common among privately owned castles in the Welsh March; new standards of comfort were expected and the lordships of the March were sufficiently stable and prosperous to fund such developments. At Coity, this process is illustrated by new domestic structures in the outer ward and new domestic quarters, notably a three storey latrine tower associated with the keep in the inner ward. The fourth phase, previously ascribed to the fourteenth century, is now believed to be associated with the siege of 1404-5. The northern curtain wall of both wards was renewed and a well-defended gatehouse added on the north eastern corner. These developments had parallels elsewhere in the Welsh March in the same period, but these developments, like those of the fourteenth century building phase cannot be precisely dated or associated with a particular lord of Coity.

Narrative of the Siege

In the absence of detailed narrative information, the siege shall be treated as a single event in the context of the Glyndŵr rebellion in Glamorgan. Lloyd states that the revolt among the Welsh community in Glamorgan began in response to Owain's success in making inroads in the south and east of the March in the summer of 1404.⁶ On 10 June, an attack was reported on the Hundred of Archenfield, Herefordshire and William Beauchamp was besieged at Abergavenny.⁷ Although not all went in favour of Owain, the rising spread to Glamorgan with its capital, Cardiff falling to his forces and being burnt before they withdrew; possibly towards Coity.

Seemingly, the siege of Coity began in the course of the summer. It was probably at around this time that Sir Lawrence, through one of his esquires, commissioned the Bristol merchant, Robert Duddebrook, to provide foodstuffs for the sustenance of the castle to the value of £26 19. 8. The cost of these was eventually met by the crown in a grant to Duddebrook from the revenues of the port of Bristol in 1408.⁸ In 1414-5, William Rye, one of Henry IV's esquires and yeomen of the bakery, belatedly received reimbursement to the value of £26. 13. 4. for the provision of grain to Coity Castle (*castrum de Cortiff*), a cost which can only have been incurred in the period in question.⁹ Sir

⁶ Lloyd, Owen Glendower, 87-9.

⁷ *Proceedings of The Privy Council*, i. 223-5, 229-31, 231-2.

⁸ TNA E 404/23/544.

⁹ G.T. Clark, *Arch. Camb.* 1877, 9.

Lawrence led the defenders in person, clearly at great personal risk and cost. The siege of Coity was not an isolated military action in the area.

The petition highlighting Coity's plight presented to the Parliament held at Coventry in October 1404 may have owed much to the presence in parliament of MPs from the border counties of Gloucestershire and Herefordshire; Wales was not represented in the Commons until the sixteenth century. The key figure is likely to have been Sir John Greyndor (d. 1416) of Abenhall in Herefordshire. He had been active in the defence of the Monmouth area in the summer of 1404 and was, significantly, sheriff of the lordship of Glamorgan. He was also a member of the household of Henry of Monmouth, Prince of Wales.¹⁰

The petition for 'the rescue' of Coity resulted in a relief expedition of 2,500 men being raised from the shires of the west Midlands as assembled at Hereford on 13 November 1404. The cost was substantial and required substantial borrowing by the royal government. The city of London provided a loan of £733 while many other important figures from the king's household including its steward, Sir Thomas Erpingham, the king's secretary Master John Prophete. These loans, each to the value of £20, and of which there were a significant number, remained outstanding in 1405-6.¹¹ This army enjoyed only limited success. It seems that Cardiff was retaken, but not before it had been burnt. If the army succeeded in reaching Coity, which is doubtful, it was unsuccessful in lifting the siege.

The second attempt to relieve Coity appears to have been more successful, albeit not without difficulty. The army on this occasion was led by the king in person and departed from Hereford on 10 September, returning there by 19 September. As much consideration was given to resupplying the castle as lifting the military threat: on 9 September, John Drois, Thomas Saundres and John Stevens were commissioned to organise 'wine and other victuals' for both the army and the castle of Coity.¹² Clearly royal forces reached Ogmores since the distribution of provisions from ships brought there by Bristol merchants was disrupted by heavy rain and flooding. Some of these provisions were lost in transshipment at Ogmores for a Bristol merchant, John Russell was pardoned for the loss of two weys (a wey being equivalent to 40 bushels) of beans and one wey and three quarters of malt owing to

¹⁰ <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/greyndore-sir-john-1356-1416>

¹¹ TNA E 404/20/186, 220, 268, 270, 290 (May-June 1405); E 404/21/265 (June 1406).

¹² *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1405-8, 63.

bad weather.¹³ The same inclement weather disrupted the withdrawal from the area and as a consequence, the king's baggage train of some forty or fifty carts was captured and plundered: even Henry's crown was lost.¹⁴

Aftermath

The rebellion in Glamorgan reached its end towards the close of 1405 and thereafter, nothing is heard of Coity until the death of Sir Lawrence Berkerolles in October 1411.¹⁵ It is apparent that any damage sustained to the castle had been restored by this time since a dispute between William Gamage, the grandson of Sarah Turbeville and Joan, widow of Richard Vernon and heiress of Sarah's sister, Margaret Turbeville, escalated from litigation to a second siege led by Gamage and Sir Gilbert Denys on Joan.¹⁶ Once again, this situation was resolved by royal intervention, albeit of a more subtle – and less costly – variety. On 12 September 1412, Sir William Newport and five others were instructed ‘... to go as quietly as they can to the castle and raise the siege...’.¹⁷ On 16 Sept. the King dispatched commissioners to raise the siege and to make proclamation that any claims to right or title in the castle should be made according to due process of law, but those sent dared not venture near Coity in the face of the entrenched might of Denys and his supporters. Eventually, the attack was beaten off by forces raised by the sheriffs of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, and Sir John Greyndore arrested Denys and Gamage. This siege therefore was an action of some importance in its own right. Denys and Gamage were committed to the Tower on 19 November, there to remain until 3 June 1413, after the death of Henry IV.¹⁸ Gamage eventually won the legal fight however, and the castle had passed to him by his death in 1419.¹⁹

Troops and casualties

¹³ The pardon was granted 12 March 1406; *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1405-8, 163.

¹⁴ Griffiths, ‘The Siege of Coity Castle’, 20.

¹⁵ He died either 15 or 18 October 1411 (both dates are given): *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem* XIX, nos. 989-90. *Early Castles*, 228 conflates the death of Berkerolles and Gamage in 1419.

¹⁶ Sir Gilbert Denys was steward of the lordship of Newport and probably came from Ogmores himself.

¹⁷ *Calendar of Close Rolls*, Hen IV, iv, 407, *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1408-13, 433. For Joan Vernon's claim see Clark, *Cartae*, IV (mcvi), 1488.

¹⁸ <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/denys-sir-gilbert-1422> ; *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1408-13, 476

¹⁹ For a full account of the dispute, Griffiths, ‘The Siege of Coity Castle’, 24-5

Almost nothing is known with any certainty regarding the besieging forces. Owain Glyndŵr himself may have been present most plausibly in the later summer of 1404 when he is supposed to have ventured as far as Cardiff. Given that Owain's brother, Tudur, died at Pwll Melyn in May 1405 where his eldest son, Gruffudd was captured, it is likely that they too would have been present at some stage in the course of the siege. There were some notable rebels drawn from the English community in the lordship of Glamorgan – some of them Berkerolles' own tenants – and it is all but certain that they played a part in the siege. Tenants of the neighbouring lordship of Ogmore must also have been involved: they were granted a pardon – for a price – in 1407.²⁰ Two of the most interesting examples of the effects of the rebellion on the marcher gentry were Sir Laurence Berkerolles, lord of Coity in Glamorgan and East Orchard, Merthyr Mawr and Lampha in the lordship of Ogmore and John Fleming of Cowbridge who was deputy steward of the king's lordship of Ogmore by 1400. As men from established families in south Wales, Berkerolles had served with his lord, Edward Despenser in 1372, as did Fleming. This is the only evidence of Berkerolles having perused a military career prior to the rebellion. Fleming, however, also served as a man-at-arms in Ireland between 1389 and 1392.²¹ In their civilian life both men were typical of their contemporaries, men such as the Stradlings of St Donats and the de la Beres of Weobley Castle in Gower. All had interests in south west England as well as southern Wales. The rebellion marked a parting of the ways: Berkerolles, whose primary residence had been Coity Castle since 1384, was besieged by Glyndŵr between 1404 and 1405. Fleming, for unknown reasons of his own, joined the rebels and may even have been among the besiegers.²² Others known to have joined the rebellion in the area and, in all likelihood, the siege itself, included John Merlawe of Sutton and Isabel Lanfey who owned land in Coity and Colwinston. Isabel clearly survived the rebellion and still held a messuage and 10 acres in Coity in 1412.²³

Similarly, it is difficult to discern who was with Sir Lawrence Berkerolles among the defenders or for that matter, how many defenders were present at any one time. It may not have been a large number: evidence from very much larger castles in North Wales suggests that castles could be held with exceptionally small forces.²⁴ A more direct comparison would be the small castle at Kidwelly in

²⁰ *Glamorgan County History* III, 300-2.

²¹ TNA E 101/41/18, m. 4.

²² R. A. Griffiths, 'Owain Glyndŵr and the Siege of Coity Castle, 1404-1405' *Morgannwg*, xlv (2001), pp. 19-23. A William Fleming was among those whose lands were confiscated in the lordship of Newport though he may have been unrelated. TNA SC 6/924/21.

²³ *Glamorgan County History* III, 635, n. 119; TNA C 47/9/32.

²⁴ Caernarfon Castle, 29 September 1404; 1 man at arms and 12 archers (Caernarfon Town had a separate garrison of 2 men-at-arms and 24 archers). TNA E 101/43/35 m. 1.

south west Wales which in 1403-4 contained a garrison of no more than seven or eight soldiers and managed to resist a sustained siege.²⁵

The two relieving armies are rather better documented, but the available detail is limited. The first army gathered at Hereford on 13 November 1404 under the command of Prince Henry and his younger brother, Thomas of Lancaster. It is interesting to note in light of Henry's later reputation that Parliament regarded Thomas as the more able of the two: on 26 November, Parliament asked that Thomas should be made a duke in view of his abilities. Beyond the fact that it was primarily recruited from the counties of the west midlands and numbered around 2,500 men little is known about its composition. Among its leaders, however, appear to have been John ap Harry and Sir John Oldcastle – the later Lollard rebel – both of Herefordshire: A letter of protection was granted to one John Trelosscan on 3 November 1404 for three months service in their retinue in Wales. It is unlikely, from the available evidence that this force succeeded in reaching Coity, though it is evident that supplies were delivered to the castle from Bristol merchants at various times.

The second attempt to relieve Coity came early in September 1405 under Henry IV himself. That this expedition reached Coity can be determined from the fact that Bristol merchants supplied both king and castle during the course of Henry's short campaign which lasted only from 10 to 29 September.²⁶ In any event nothing is known of casualties on either side.

Archaeological Evidence

Two surviving archaeological features have been taken as relating to the siege in 1404-5. The most obvious archaeological evidence of siege activity relates to a breaches made in the northern curtain walls of the inner and outer wards which were rebuilt, apparently in the early fifteenth century, slightly to the rear of the earlier, faceted Norman wall. This rebuilding of the northern curtain walls can be associated with earthworks – situated to the north of the castle (RCAHMW 224-5) – which have been interpreted as siege works. These have been heavily disturbed by twentieth century farming activity and interspersed with quarry holes though their form, identified in the early editions of OS mapping is clearly identifiable in post-WW2 aerial photography. These earthworks faced the

²⁵ Duchy of Lancaster receiver's accounts for Kidwelly: TNA DL 29/584/9844, 2.

²⁶ TNA E 404/23/544, Wylie, *Henry IV* II, 304-6

northern curtain of the outer ward of on higher ground overlooking this outer ward at a distance of approximately 25-35 metres from the wall.²⁷

It is likely that these features are related. The north curtain wall of the inner ward seems to have been severely damaged, being rebuilt on a withdrawn line. The damage to the north curtain was therefore extensive and the question of what action caused the breach must be addressed. There were three basic techniques available to the besiegers: undermining – which the scale of the damage and the apparent ease with which rebuilding was accomplished can be discounted; mechanical siege engines such as catapults and mangonels; gunpowder artillery. Mechanical siege engines are less likely than gunpowder weapons because of the proximity of the probable siegeworks. That they are level with the damage to the walls suggests that the use of gunpowder artillery must be considered possible. Equally, the simplest solution: that a two-hundred year old, north facing wall might have required substantial replacement, should not be discounted.

The 1899 Ordnance Survey 25-inch survey (below) shows a strong ditch and counter scarp facing the northern flank of the castle with a right-angled bank and ditch with a projection south west from the corner toward the northern wall of the outer ward. Although not visible in Commission LiDAR data or RAF vertical APs (CPE/UK/2081 3021-3), the presence of these earthworks is confirmed by oblique *Aerofilms* pictures from 26 October 1971. These pictures confirm that what appears on the 1899 survey is an accurate representation, although the earthworks are sufficiently damaged by quarrying holes for them not to be evident on the ground.

A220426, taken from the north east shows the front edge paralleling the north curtain wall and another, probably unrelated trapezoid feature to the north of this bank

A212997, taken from the west, shows the line of the earthwork and the promontory very clearly owing the shadow cast along its eastern edge.

A220427 gives perhaps the best overall impression showing the regularity of the feature.

AI39133 (18/8/51) suggests something of the construction of this feature: a ditch cut into the slope with the spoil being taken to form banks on either side.

²⁷ Clark, *Arch. Camb.* 1877, *Early Castles*, 224-5.

These earthworks bear comparison with descriptions of artillery related siege works from later in the century, as at Dax, France in 1450 make clear:

The watch ordered and set, our prince sent for a force of pioneers and miners, who, all night long, he [the commander] had make broad approaches and deep ditches and trenches, [and] set up his large artillery, and put the protective mantles there; and he was so diligent that the said artillery was ready to fire at dawn. And in the same way my lord the prince made huts by filling wickerwork and faggots with earth, in the manner of a broad mound, to shelter the watch from the artillery of the town; and the trenches were so advanced the next day that one could go safely under cover from one quarter of the siege to another, and in the same way one could come by the said approaches to the artillery, and even up to their fosses. And always, day and night, the said pioneers worked on them ... Furthermore, the large artillery was fired assiduously day and night. Inside of a few days it had done great damage, so that the defences of the towers . . . and a great part of the forward walls were thrown down to the ground; and our said artillery made large and wide breaches there, over which watch was held; and we fired the large culverines at these, so that, when the enemy wished to make shelters or otherwise repair them, our culverines often killed and wounded their men and knocked them down to the ground, them and their shelters.²⁸

It is known, through correspondence despatched by the constable of Caernarfon that the unsuccessful siege of that castle and its associated borough were conducted with engines and catapults provided as a result of French assistance and it is possible that the same was true at Coity. A secondary possibility is that the damage was inflicted by English forces with the intention of depriving the rebels of the use of the fortification. In either event, it seems unlikely that the castle could have been held with the likely amount of damage.

If we are to accept Clark's judgement, that these earthworks, though now much damaged, were the consequence of a siege, some attempt must be made to assess which of the sieges known to have occurred at Coity in the first two decades of the fifteenth century they are associated with. What little is known of the Gamage siege of 1412 suggests that it was merely a blockade to a secure

²⁸ Leseur, *Histoire de Gaston IV*, i. 119-20, cited in and translated by Rogers, 'The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years' War', 266-7.

building: it appears to have been resolved by negotiation and with reference to law rather than armed force. The sieges in the period of Glyndŵr's revolt are understood mainly through the effort made by the English crown to relieve them and tell us more about the difficulties of Henry IV's financial situation than their military success. Since the records do suggest that the castle was successfully resupplied on more than one occasion, however, it must be presumed that the siege was not continuous although it was clearly sustained for a prolonged period. The scale of the royal expeditions and the importance attached to them through the presence of not only Prince Henry, but his brother, Thomas of Lancaster, later duke of Clarence and even their father, Henry IV, at Coity in person indicates a significant level of threat not only to Coity, but to the coastal lowlands of Glamorgan and, by extension, the west of England.

The damaged earthworks, taken with the significant rebuilding, appear to be consistent with fifteenth century descriptions of siege fortifications involving gunpowder artillery and there is substantial archival evidence of gunpowder weapons being employed in the course of the English sieges of Aberystwyth (1407) and Harlech (1409) together with significant costs associated with repair of the subsequent damage.²⁹ It is not impossible, however, that the garrison of Coity were simply starved into surrender and the walls demolished to deprive the castle to royal forces as appears to have happened at Ogmores. The receiver's accounts in the Lancaster lordship of Ogmores from 1402-5 demonstrate that the whole area was devastated by the rebellion. The castle at Ogmores was heavily damaged and its 'Knighting Chamber' destroyed. Mills were destroyed and houses burnt. The economic effects throughout that lordship were crippling and incomes from rents and farms of revenues recorded arrears of 35 per cent into the third decade of the fifteenth century. In the period of the siege therefore, Coity was isolated and in the midst of hostile territory.³⁰ The survival of these records is only down to the chance of the Duchy of Lancaster lordship being part of the royal demesne, doubtless the lordship of Coity was similarly affected.

The loss of such an extensive section of curtain wall on both inner and outer wards would clearly make the task of holding the castle against what was evidently a well-equipped, and correspondingly well-organised, besieging force all but impossible. Equally, having taken the castle, securing the damaged building against well-equipped relieving forces would be extremely difficult. The nature of

²⁹ For example: TNA E 404/22/551 is a warrant instructing the delivery to Gerard Sprong of stones and powder for cannons to be used in Wales by the prince – to be taken by land to Bristol and thence by sea to Wales (dated 28 June 1407) – my thanks to Dr Rhidian Griffiths for this reference. William Gwyn ap Rhys Llwyd of Cydweli was killed by a cannon ball in the defence of Aberystwyth castle for Owain – TNA JUST 1/1152 m. 5v.

³⁰ *Glamorgan County History* III, 300-2.

the Glyndŵr rebellion in lowland south-east Wales was opportunistic and relatively short-lived. It is plausible, therefore, that had the castle been captured, even briefly, that it was not garrisoned by Glyndŵr's forces. Although they were certainly strong in the area, and well-capable of conducting drawn out siege operations and equipped with advanced military technology, perhaps connected with Glyndŵr's alliance with France, attempting to hold and maintain a castle when the surround area was already sympathetic would constitute a luxury the rebels could ill afford.

Conclusions/Assessment

The siege undertaken at Coity was evidently sophisticated and prolonged. The earthworks to the north of the castle and the scale of the repairs to the curtain wall of both inner and outer wards which have been dated to the early fifteenth century demonstrate that whatever methods were employed resulted in significant damage. Had these walls been breached, it is doubtful – if not impossible – that the castle could have been effectively defended. That said, the documentary record does not suggest that the castle actually fell to the rebels, it is plausible that the outer ward may have done for a time while the defenders, likely very few in number, maintained the more substantial inner ward. In this period, few weapons were capable of affecting an amount of damage consistent with the scale of repairs seen at Coity. It may tentatively be suggested that the likely cause was the deployment of gunpowder artillery in the form of a Bombard. If this were the case, it is probable that such a device was brought by Glyndŵr's French allies and that the earthworks can be dated to 1405. This would accord with the advance across southern Wales by Glyndŵr and his allies in the summer of that year and, in passing hints at the substantial and sophisticated nature of French support.

The later siege conducted by William Gamage in 1412 demonstrates that Coity was easily isolated and while relatively straightforward to access from the direction of Ogmores and Bridgend, was easily cut off from external supplies and reinforcement owing to its elevation, distance from navigable water and relative isolation. These factors were doubtless important in the siege in 1404-5 and the levels of devastation in the neighbouring lordship of Ogmores support this. It is not known with certainty whether either of the relieving armies actually reached Coity: the balance of probabilities is that the first in November 1404 did not, while the second, led by the king probably did. Supplies commissioned, and eventually paid for, by the crown seem to have reached the defenders: that the siege lasted so long indicates the success of the relieving effort.

This interpretation should be treated with caution: although the rebuilding to the northern curtain walls can be convincingly dated to the early fifteenth century, the earthworks have not been securely dated and it is far from certain that excavation or other archaeological survey would help in this regard. The siege conducted by Sir Gilbert Denys and William Gamage in 1412 was clearly a significant enterprise which required intervention from the arrayed men of two counties to end, but it seems that the castle was not taken on this, or any other occasion. Since the castle was still inhabited in the seventeenth century it is not impossible, albeit unlikely, that they may be associated with unrecorded Civil War period military activity.³¹

The evidence for any element of the siege is limited. The financial records are thin: neither of the Inquisitions post-mortem for the lords of Coity in 1411 and 1419 makes reference to the state of the castle. They do record damage and vacant plots within the lordship however, so the effects of the rebellion were not confined to the castle. Inevitably, nothing at all is known with clarity about the besieging army. Some important residents from the English community in the area were implicated, and subsequently pardoned, for taking part in the rebellion and it is believed that Glyndŵr himself was present in Glamorgan during the course of the siege. We can infer that it was substantial, if not consistent in size or presence (as is known to be the case at Kidwelly) and may have been supplemented by Glyndŵr's French allies during the summer of 1405.

What is certain, however, is that the siege of Coity was the longest and most sustained military action conducted by the rebels in south east of Wales and, taken in conjunction with the record evidence showing the damage done in the lordship of Ogmores, is illustrative of the scale of the rebellion even in lowland Glamorgan.

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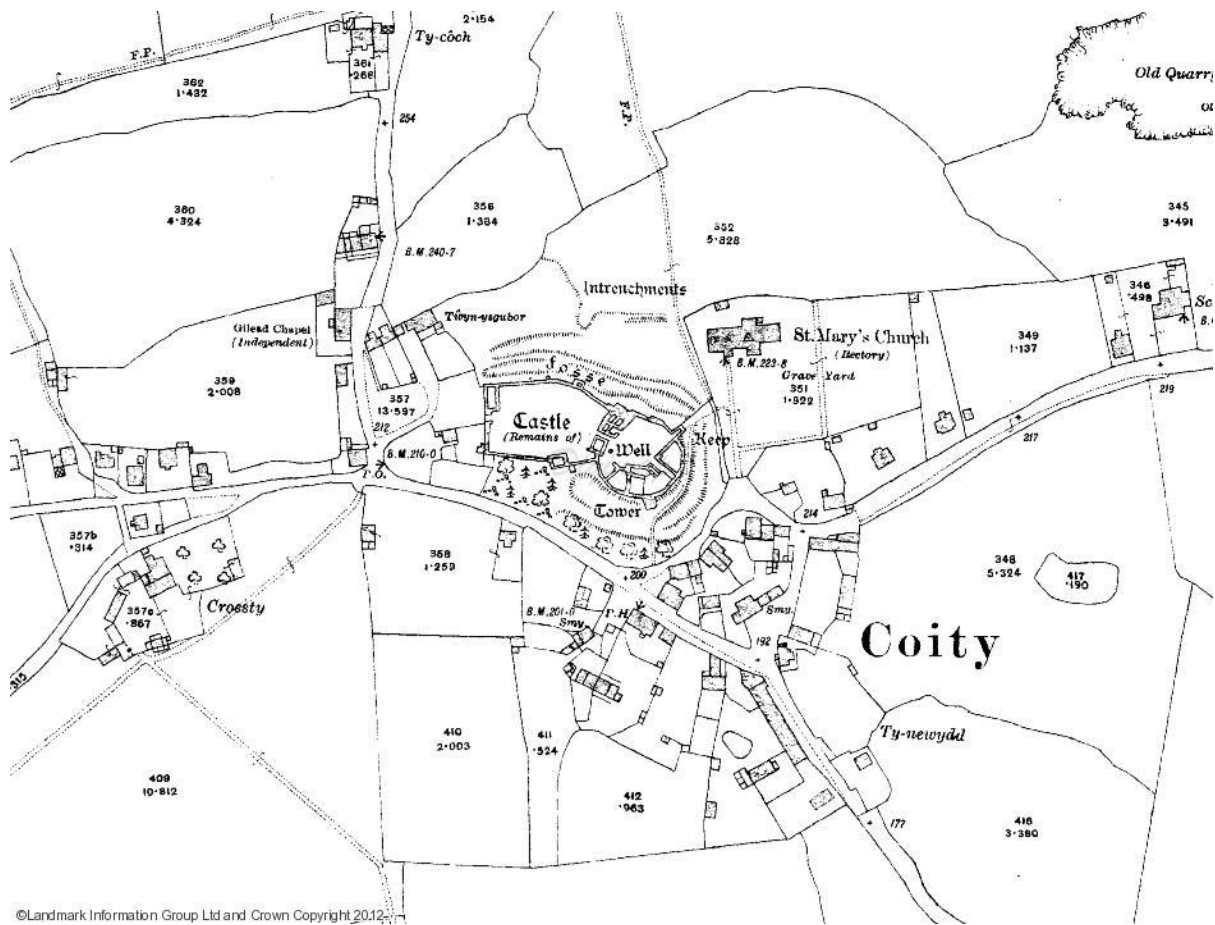
Map 1

A – Coity Castle: Note that this would have been almost wholly isolated in 1404-5.

B – Newcastle: possibly unoccupied during the rebellion

C – Approximate centre of medieval Bridgend

D – Ogmores Castle: badly damaged in the course of the rebellion. Attempts to resupply Coity were shipped here and possibly further up the river Ogwr/Ogmores and then presumably by road, north east to Coity.



Map 2 – OS Map, 1919

Note the 'Intrenchments' marked on this map are no longer marked on modern OS mapping though they are still discernible both on the ground and in aerial photographs. It is likely that these are related to the siege. Of special interest in this respect is the promontory, aligned north south which emerges from them. This is level with the curtain walls of both wards and the rebuilding of them, dated to the early fifteenth century, may be consistent with the use of gunpowder artillery.