

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) |

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|--|---------|------------------------------------|--------|--|
| | | | | <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> |

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|---|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|--|
| 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) |

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| | | | | 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) |

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|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 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) |

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| 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 |

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|---|--------|------------------------------------|--------|--|
| | | | | 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 |

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|---|------|----------------------------|--------|--|
| | | 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) |

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| | | 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

Denbigh – 1646

County: Denbighshire

Community: Denbigh

NGR: SJ0515765771

NPRN: 95209

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Date: February 2013



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Siege of Denbigh (April-September 1646)

Summary

The siege undertaken on the castle of Denbigh in 1646 was one of the more celebrated episodes of the Civil Wars in north east Wales. Generally accepted as beginning on 17 April 1646 after the fall of Ruthin and continuing until the castle's formal surrender on 26 October of the same year, evidence suggests that the town of Denbigh must have been under the control of parliamentarian forces since at least November 1645. Throughout the siege, Royalist forces controlled both wards of the castle and appear to have made use of the Castle's Postern Gate for access. Despite having only one cannon and being faced with several artillery pieces, the possession of artillery appear to have made no difference. Owing to events elsewhere, notably the surrender of Charles I to the Scots on 17 May, the military position of Denbigh Castle was largely irrelevant even at the commencement of the siege. Control of the castle was an advantage, but one from which little military benefit could be extracted. The siege seems not to have been efficiently conducted: William Salesbury, the royalist captain of the castle, was capable of despatching skirmishing and raiding parties throughout the siege and despite the evidence of surviving siegeworks and suggestions in written sources of the existence of others, the parliamentarian forces caused little damage to the fabric of the castle. Extensive correspondence between the opposing commanders suggests that the siege was conducted in a courteous and mannered fashion though this must conceal what was a sustained military effort. Loss of life through military action appears to have been limited, and although it is possible that disease may have accounted for a number of the garrison, precise numbers and rates of mortality are not known. The siege was only brought to an end by an appeal to Charles I himself acting through intermediaries. This was an exceptionally unusual state of affairs and in Wales, only Harlech, which surrendered on 13 March 1647 following a fruitless resistance, remained.

Context

The siege of Denbigh falls into the period of the war when, for all intents and purposes, the royalist cause was already lost. After the defeat of the Royalist field army at Naesby on 14 June 1645, North Wales, which had hitherto been relatively sheltered from the effects of war, unlike the south and west and the March, came into the conflict. In the course of the summer and autumn of 1645, southern Wales was lost to the king and by December, it was obvious that the king was losing the

war across England. In the north east of Wales and Cheshire the principal manifestation of this was the prolonged siege of Chester which had begun in February and drew men and resources from across northern Wales. A disastrous attempt by royalist forces to relieve the siege was crushed at the battle of Rowton Heath on 24 September and the city finally surrendered on 3 January 1646. Gradually, north east Wales was lost to royal forces and by the time the siege of Denbigh began in April, the game was already up.

Primary and Secondary Sources

Conventional governmental records were limited in this time of civil conflict. There are no records of the payment or precise lists of the numbers of soldiers involved; in many respects, the documentary situation was better in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In terms of secondary sources and studies we still lack a comprehensive history of Wales in the Civil Wars though there are some useful regional studies. Of particular relevance for the siege of Denbigh is A.H. Dodd's comprehensive analysis of the Civil Wars and their effects in eastern Denbighshire published in 1954. Ronald Hutton's excellent study, *The Royalist War Effort 1462-1646* does provide a valuable introduction and extensive contextual information, but since this inevitably regards events on the 'national' scale its value for specific engagements such as this is limited. The emphasis of recent scholarship has, in common with the direction of studies of the Civil Wars in general, taken a more political and cultural direction. Mark Stoyle's excellent 'Ethnic History' of the English Civil War, *Soldiers and Strangers* which analyses attitudes to those on England's Margins – the Cornish, Welsh and Irish – is a case in point.¹ These provide interesting historical insights into the way in which stories concerning the wars were told and how the actions of the Welsh, not to mention the Irish and Scots, were interpreted. They are not intended – and do not – provide a 'Welsh' narrative of the war.

The principle documentary sources therefore are personal correspondence from the commanders. Remarkably, this includes a series of letters between the rival commanders and between the commanders and their superiors, the king and the speaker of the Commons. There is also useful material contained within printed newsheets and propaganda papers though these must, given their purpose, be read with extreme caution. Many of these have been reproduced in print several times and occur frequently in secondary works, notably in Williams' pair of volumes, *Ancient and Modern Denbigh* (1834) and *Records of Denbigh and its Lordship* (1860). A selection of extracts from these same letters and other publications were reproduced in Phillips's invaluable second volume. We are

¹ M. Stoyle, *Soldiers and Strangers, An Ethnic History of the English Civil War* (New Haven and London, 2005)

fortunate in having a substantial body of correspondence concerning the siege from both sides. Predominately in the form of correspondence sent between various participants and observers and their relatives.

The course of the siege was dictated by the intractable position the castle: early in the piece, Parliamentary commanders admitted that they were unable to take Denbigh – or several other castles in North Wales – by force; starving the garrison or negotiating an honourable surrender were the alternatives. The surviving written sources provide a near-complete narrative which gives a clear idea of the difficulties of the siege and the problems of the population.

The Castle in 1646

Denbigh castle in the seventeenth century was largely as it is today; the main buildings are largely late thirteenth and early fourteenth century in fabric with a number of later alterations. The state of the castle and town can be estimated from surveys undertaken in the reign of Henry VIII and again in 1597. The first of these surveys describes a castle in a state of repair appropriate for its use at that time as an administrative centre. The Treasure House Tower and principal chambers (the Green Chambers) were in good repair, the walls were sound but many of the structures inside them had lost their timber and lead. By the end of the sixteenth century most of the buildings were semi-ruinous with only a handful roofed and none glazed nor any form of weapons on the site. It is possible that some work was done since parts were clearly habitable by 1621 when, on 30 March, Charles Myddleton, the governor of the castle died in residence. No more significant work appears to have been done to the castle until November 1643 when Colonel William Salesbury was commissioned to garrison it. He refortified it at his own and his family's expense but it is likely that such repairs were of a limited and necessary nature, rather than wholesale redevelopment. There is no clear evidence of the nature of this work.

Prelude

The register of the corporation of Denbigh records that Denbigh was briefly besieged by Thomas Myddleton in April of 1645. Myddleton's army lacked artillery, however, and departed when royalist reinforcements arrived from Ireland. Charles I stayed at Denbigh for three days from 25 September 1645. He was welcomed by its governor, Colonel William Salesbury of Bachymbyd (known as 'old

blue stockings'/Hen Hosannau Gleision), who had received his commission from the king two years earlier. He and his kindred had repaired the castle at their own expense and Salesbury proceeded to engage the king so frankly in the course of two hours that Charles remarked that 'never did a prince hear so much truth at once'.² Despite the apparent security at that time, on either side of the king's visit, the parliamentary threat was sustained and illustrates the physical divide in the town; the garrison clearly could not control the town beyond the walls, but opposition forces could not get in. Williams notes that parliamentarian forces were encamped nearby: 'Cromwell's camp was at Whitchurch, or the White Church in the Fields by Denbigh, during the summer, but towards the end of autumn the rebel infantry took up their quarters in the suburbs of the town, outside the walls, and the cavalry in the country houses and farms around.'³

A.H. Dodd, in his account of the Civil Wars in east Denbighshire, noted the royalist reversals in 1645, long before the siege of Denbigh had begun, and described a hopeless position: 'For east Denbighshire, this was to all intents and purposes the end of the war... by the end of 1645 Denbighshire and Flintshire, as well as Montgomeryshire were largely under contribution to parliament.'⁴ All that remained, therefore, was to reduce the castles and garrisons in the area and this process was relatively quickly accomplished. When Ruthin surrendered in early April, the attentions of Thomas Mytton and his army turned to Denbigh. Prior to the beginning of the siege in earnest, there were a number of skirmishes. On 6 April, about one hundred and twenty cavalry and thirty rifles who had left Denbigh the previous evening and before the dawn on 7 April, they fell upon a part of Captain Price's quarters. Heavily outnumbered and finding their enemy well-warned, they retreated but were intercepted by Colonel Carter, with his 'horse guards' near Whitchurch [St Marcella, approximately 2km east of Denbigh]. Several Royalists were taken prisoner, including Captains Wynne, Morris, Morgan, and Pickering, with one lieutenant, two cornets, one sergeant, and several privates. These numbers were recorded in a letter – the first of a great many – sent from Mytton to Salesbury later on 7 April.⁵ If evidence presented in Williams's *Ancient and Modern Denbigh* has been interpreted correctly, it seems that parliamentary forces had been camped in close proximity of Denbigh for several months and possibly billeted in the 'suburbs' (the town beyond the walls) for several months prior to the formal commencement of the siege. If this were the case, then it would seem that the main means of entrance and exit for the garrison was the

² *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, p. 161 and *Y Cymmrodor*, 1926, 76, cited Gwynn Williams, 'The Castles of Wales during the Civil War, 1642-47', 8

³ Williams (ed.), *Records of Denbigh and its Lordship*, 133.

⁴ A.H. Dodd, 'The Civil War in Eastern Denbighshire', 71

⁵ *Calendar of Salesbury Correspondence*, nos. 354-384. Wynne was injured in the encounter and apparently died of his wounds three days later.

Postern gate of the castle into the former deer park which would accord with a letter from Salesbury to Sir William Vaughan written on the night of 1 November 1645 following the defeat of Vaughan's forces from Ludlow and the central marches at Denbigh Green, a flat expanse of open country that covered an area of three miles in length stretching approximately from Trefnant village north of Denbigh to a point at Llanfarchell on the Old Ruthin Road. Salesbury perceived Vaughan's foot – pursued, apparently, by Mytton's – below the castle wall and despite not requiring them for the defence of the castle, nonetheless received them. He concluded by stating that he had information that Mytton and his foot were quartered in the town. Clearly the castle was not besieged at that stage, but access to it through the town must have been rendered impossible; Salesbury must have admitted Vaughan's troops by the Postern gate into the medieval deer park.

Narrative

The course of the siege is easily tracked through the surviving correspondence. For what was a military exercise, the siege seems to have been a remarkably civil, somewhat mannered, affair. A stream of letters issued in both directions through 'Salesbury's drum'. Unfortunately, the precise mechanism of exchange is not described. Part of the apparent equanimity might stem from the fact that the principal commanders, Salesbury, Mytton and Myddleton were local men and were known to each other. Myddleton's family home at Galch Hill is clearly visible from the castle while Salesbury's home was of Rûg and Bachymbyd near Corwen. The full details, tracking every step of the negotiation and eventual surrender of Denbigh are beyond the scope of this exercise.

Siege works, some of which may survive in the vicinity of the Goblin Tower, were established in the first phase of the engagement. This began around Friday 17 April when Mytton's first overture to Salesbury was sent from within Denbigh Town requesting that he surrender the fortress by 9 am the following Monday, 20 April. The threat made was that the estates of Salesbury and his fellow defenders would be forfeited and the resources used to run the Parliamentary siege. Clearly this was unsuccessful, but the twin themes of the negotiation; the threat of besieging forces to the prosperity of the locality, and the appeal to the pious Salesbury not to spill Christian blood, were established.

The most coherent account of early stages of the siege at Denbigh is found in a letter from Colonel Mytton which includes materials from a letter signed by Lieutenant Colonel George Twistleton, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Mason and Captain Richard Price dated after 26 June 1646:

Our forces are so many that all the countries under our command can hardly afford us provision. We are put to use our utmost skill to get maintenance this way; then you may judge how hard it is with us for want of pay, without which our soldiers will not continue patiently to go on in their hard and difficult duty that hitherto they have undergone ; harder than which, we dare boldly say, hath not been in any place since the Wars ; and, besides, many of our soldiers with us are auxiliaries from Lancashire, who are most unreasonable men if they are disappointed in their pay.

For news we acquaint you with the above several sieges we are engaged upon. Each of them hath enforced much care and resolution, being all places of very great strength, well-manned and victualed. They have made many sallies, but all of them repulsed with loss, especially Carnarvon, which siege was laid and is managed by our General himself [Mytton], the Commander-in-Chief. Each siege has made works suitable to the condition of the place. Our hopes must be of starving, not storming any of them. Denbigh we laid siege to so soon as we took Ruthin, which now is six weeks since. Its Governor William Salesbury is a very wilful man, and hath very nigh 500 able-fighting men in it. [Salesbury's *own* account states that he had 300 men and a troop of horse at the end of February 1645 or 1646]⁶ It hath in its situation all the advantages for strength that any castle can have. There are many gentry in it and some riches. And it would do well that as they are notoriously refractory so they may be made notoriously exemplary, by the justice of the Parliament upon them and their estates according to their demerits. The countries have improved their interests, and many other ways have been used, but all ineffectual. Their hearts are as hard as the very foundation of the castle itself, being an unpierceable rock. There are mounts raised round about it, and approaches for battering of a tower called the Goblin's Tower: hoping thereby to deprive them of the benefit of a well in that tower; which, can we attain, we may then soon expect the castle through want of water they having but one well more, which is usually (as it is reported) dry in June or July every summer...⁷

The earthworks at the foot of the Goblin Tower noted must have been in place before the siege commenced in 1646. The tower itself was not to prove especially vulnerable, though it shows signs

⁶ *Calendar of Salesbury Correspondence*, 163. The picture is clouded by the distance in time from this statement until the start of the siege and the coming to Denbigh of troops from other castles, not to mention prisoners taken in the course of sallies made by the garrison.

⁷ Phillips, ii., 306-7.

of the bombardment it suffered on account of the presence of one of two wells within the walls immediately behind it. The siege quickly arrived at a state of stalemate: the castle was more or less invulnerable to the available artillery and not amenable to an assault with the troops available to Parliamentary commanders.

Surrender

The surrender of Denbigh was eventually only secured by reference to the king himself by the action of an intermediary, Ebulo Thewell. The letters between Salesbury and the king have been preserved:

In nomine Jesu.

" Sir, — Tho coming of more forces to besiege this place will noe way move my resolution, who preferre noo ende to the acquitting of myself like an honest man in that trust which my king hath committed to mee, which I am fully satisfied can never be done before my king receive an accompt of my proceedings, and without that (to deals freely with you) I have such an engagement upon mee, that I will not entertayne any overture of this nature — and since I must beelieve that your hands are tyed up, yeat I am so much concerned in this business, that I must apply myself to other means, in that particular, for my satisfaction, which will take up some time ; and if I must quit the place, I confesse, I had rather you had tho honour of it, than any other person in England, of your party ; tho' give me leave to tell you, that the addition of a new force, bee the consequence what it will, will but add to my honour, which is all I have now left to care for. " I remayne your servant, "

Ult. Augusti, 1646."

William Salesbury⁸

Charles R.

Whereas, Wee have resolved to comply with the desires of our parliament in everything which may bee for the good of our subjects, and leave no means unassayed for removing all difference betwixt us – therefore wee have thought fit, the more evidence the reality of our intentions of settling a happy and firm peace, to authorise you upon honourable conditions, to quit and surrender the castle of Denbigh, entrusted to you by us, and to disband all the forces under your command for which your soe doing this shall be your warrant.

⁸ Williams, *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, 232-3.

Given at Newcastle the 14th September 1646.⁹

Despite this agreement, the negotiations appear to have been painstaking and the terms on which the surrender was granted were strikingly favourable to the besieged which, if nothing else, indicates the strength of their position. The formal surrender was finally concluded by 14 October though the Royalist forces remained in the castle until 26 October 1646. The manner in which Salesbury and his garrison were to depart the castle is remarkable and this, clause 2 of the articles of surrender, is reproduced here:

2, That Col. William Salusbury, governor of the towns and castle of Denbigh, with his servants, and all that to him belongs, and all officers and soldiers of horse and foot, as well reformed officers and volunteer soldiers as others, and all other officers with their servants, and all it appears to them, shall march out of the town and castle of Denbigh, with their horses, and arm proportionable to their present or past commands, flying colours, drums beating, matches light at both ends, bullet in the mouth; every soldier to have 12 charges of powder, match and bullet portionable, with bag and baggage properly to them belonging ; and all persons of quality, clergymen, and gentlemen, with their servants, horses, and arms, in like manner with bag and baggage, and all goods to them properly belonging to any place within 10 miles, such as the governor shall make choice of; where, in regard ye king hath no army in the field, or garrison unbesieged, to march to ; the common soldiers shall lay down their arms (their swordes excepted) ; which arms, so laid down, shall be delivered up to such as General Mytton shall appoint to receive them.¹⁰

These terms were, as Mytton confirmed, observed to the letter and the names of some of those in the castle recorded.

Honoured Sir,

I can now assure you of the surrender of Denbigh Castle for the service of the Parliament. Sir William Myddelton commanded here in-chief under General Mytton; but the General was here himself in person, and during all the siege departed himself with much gallantry and

⁹ Williams, *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, 233.

¹⁰ Williams, *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, 234.

wisdom. He agreed with Mr. Salesbury, the Governor, who (according to the Articles) marched out to the place agreed on this night, and there they laid down their arms and scattered several ways. I have sent you (here inclosed) a list of the particulars that we are possessed of, and the names of the most notorious amongst them. The place is exceeding strong, and, though the terms be high, yet the benefit is great of reducing it...

...There was taken at the surrender on Tuesday, one piece of ordnance, 200 arms, muskets, pikes, &c., which they marched out with, and afterwards surrendered to Major-General Mytton ; many barrels of meal, a great quantity of wheat, with other corn and victuals very plentiful. Some hundredweights of lead and bullets [but] no great quantity of powder and match, which they most wanted.¹¹

The character of the surrender reflected a triumphant success of endurance with the garrison allowed to retain their dignity and yield their castle with honour. The castle was held – as the parliamentary commanders admitted – through the strength of the structure rather than by the resources within. That only a single item of artillery was recovered with only a limited amount of powder underlines this point; it seems likely that the garrison could have stayed where they were while their stores lasted.

Aftermath

After the surrender of Denbigh, the castle was garrisoned by the parliamentarians, under the same George Twistleton – despite the opposition of General Mytton – who had besieged it. Among its occupants were 100 or more Royalist prisoners, some of them presumably one time members of the garrison. In July 1648, accounts emerge of an attempt to retake the castle for the Royalists. General Mytton, writing on 8 July, recorded that the events took place on the previous Monday (3 July), a detail confirmed by a second letter, this time from Twistleton to the speaker of the Commons, William Lenthall.¹² These letters record that the attempt was made by a significant number of men, perhaps sixty or more, who scaled the outer ward and had planned to bribe three of the garrison to gain access to the inner ward. Mytton attributes the discovery of the plot to the captain of the watch, one Sergeant Owen and the prompt action of the governor, Twistleton who took eleven prisoners including the corporal and one of the sentries who had been bribed to admit the royalist supporters.

¹¹ Phillips, ii., document xcvi, 328-9.

¹² Both are included in Hemp, 'Denbigh Castle', 116-8, but were also printed in Historical Manuscripts Commission, 13th Report, Appendix, part 1., 1891 *MSS of the Duke of Portland*, i, 475.

This attempt having failed, the role of the castle as a military building was all but at an end and by 1660 it had been rendered beyond use.

Physical Evidence of the Siege

Contemporary documents – letters and reports of parliamentary commanders make frequent reference to ‘entrenchments’, batteries and other siege works which seem to have been erected at the very start of the siege. Their locations, however, are difficult to trace though their effects are visible in the standing fabric of the castle.

There were occasions when the besiegers themselves were inadequate and less than eager for action. Thomas Mytton, leader of parliamentary forces in North Wales, was highly critical of George Twistleton (later parliamentary governor of Denbigh), ‘a headie, self-seeking man’, for inefficiency in conducting the siege of Denbigh because he had ‘made the works of Denbigh so farre from the castle and so far distant from each other that the enemie did issue out at his pleasure,’¹³ to fetch any animal which came within a quarter mile of the castle. The extent of two examples of this incompetence is revealed later in Mytton’s letter ‘On one occasion, even when besieged, part of the Denbigh garrison issued out to capture six oxen and on another, twenty, or perhaps even forty cattle.’¹⁴

In other words, one of the fundamental conditions of siege warfare: that the besieged should remain within the fortification without access to supplies was absent. Leaving aside the obstinate character of Salesbury himself, it is little wonder that he and his garrison were able to resist so readily and, when surrender came, to do so on beneficial terms.¹⁵

The besieging parliamentary forces are known to have established at least two sets of batteries with other entrenchments:

‘At Denbigh, a battery on the south-western slope near Galch-Hill, the ancient home of the Myddleton family, was designed to attack the castle wall on its most vulnerable side. A

¹³ Bodleian Lib., Tanner MSS, 59, No. 317, f. 577. Letter of Sir Thomas Mytton opposing the appointment of Twistleton, governor of Denbigh, 11 November 1646.

¹⁴ J. Gwynn Williams, ‘The Castles of Wales during the Civil War, 1642-47’, 10, 15. Mytton recalled the story in an earlier letter, to Speaker Lenthall - Bodleian Lib., Tanner MSS, 59, No. 256, f. 455, dated 12 August.

¹⁵ J. Gwynn Williams, ‘Presidential Address: The Castles of Wales during the Civil War, 1642-47’ *Arch Camb.* 137, (1988), 1-26, 15.

Parliamentary report in June 1646 indicated that mounts had been raised around the castle (founded on an 'unpierceable rock')¹⁶ and 'approaches' to it to batter the Goblin Tower so as to deprive the besieged of the use of the well, for it was understood that the only other well dried up every summer.'¹⁷

One battery was intended to destroy the Goblin tower and to deprive the defenders of the use of the well – a second well, within the walls of the castle, was known to dry out during the summer – while the second was intended to bombard the south western corner of the castle walls, their weakest point. While the walls may have been at their weakest there, a breach would have been of limited use during an assault owing to the steep escarpment below them. Traces of mounds which may be associated with these batteries will be described below.

Goblin Tower

The evidence on the ground for these siege works is extremely limited. Beneath the 'Goblin Tower', within the bounds of the scheduled monument are a number of earthworks which seem likely to date from the seventeenth century. It is difficult to establish whether their intent was defensive or as a platform for guns used to bombard the tower. These consist of a crescent shaped earthwork extending from the bank protecting the outer ward of the castle (the Town Wall) south east in front to the north eastern face of the Goblin Tower This is best shown in a 1:500 town plan of Denbigh dating from 1875 and was clearly in existence to be described by Hemp in 1926.¹⁸ It is known that a 'crescent' of this type was used by the defenders of Cardigan Castle in 1645¹⁹ and it is reasonable to suggest that this earthwork was one of the defensive improvements initiated by Salesbury when he took over the castle at his own expense in 1643. It is also quite possible that this feature is one of the 'approaches' – an earthwork with a sloping face or 'glacis' intended to protect artillery personnel from defending fire – but without knowing the relative heights of the earthworks which is difficult to establish since those at the foot of the Goblin Tower are now under trees, it is impossible to be certain.

The 1:500 plan and the 1878 1:10560 OS map, show a clear, oval-shaped feature east north east of the Goblin Tower in the grounds of Howells School which would accord with mounds mentioned by

¹⁶ Philips, *Civil War*, II, 307.

¹⁷ J. Gwynne Williams, 18-19.

¹⁸ Hemp, 'Denbigh Castle', 80-1.

¹⁹ Hutton, *The Royalist War Effort*, 173-4.

Williams in *Ancient and Modern Denbigh* in the same area. This is not shown on post-World War Two mapping though the access road to the main entrance of Howell's School curve at this point and appears to respect the feature.

The associated mound therefore is most probably an offensive earthwork intended to support cannon to bombard the tower and circumvent the effect of the crescent earthwork. This must be one of several described in a report by Lieutenant Colonel's Mason and Twistleton and Captain Price for the purpose of bombarding the tower. Williams notes the discovery of an array of cannonballs used in the bombardment of various sizes, but none more than 3½ pounds which would be consistent with smaller guns – 'minions' (c. 4lb projectiles) or 'falcons' (c. 2½lb projectiles).²⁰ These were not really suitable for the task in hand as the extremely limited damage to the Goblin Tower testifies.²¹ There is a record of a larger gun – a culverin, firing an 18lb ball – being dragged from Chester by sixteen oxen as far as Denbigh.²²

The same 1870s map shows a straight, regular bank aligned north-west to south east to the south of the Goblin Tower described in the 1875 Town plan as 'Drying Ground' which suggests a later date and a specific, possibly industrial, purpose.

Other sites

J. Gwynne Williams states that the south west facing curtain wall was bombarded from a battery on Galch Hill.²³ On the current OS map, a 'Mount' recorded, now in the 'elbow of a 'v' shaped wood to the east (c. 100 m) from the modern reservoir at the summit of the hill. This is difficult to differentiate in the Royal Commission's 2 metre resolution LiDAR data and not immediately obvious from the oblique aerial photograph (ref. 905031/5) taken from the south east. This may also show a second mount approximately equidistant between Galch Hill and the SW corner of the castle walls. This may be natural, but is clearly shown as a squared feature on the 107m contour. This is just apparent in one of the vertical APs (79-105 143) while a third potential battery, a marked lump below Galch Hill House itself may possibly be a garden feature. The first might be an early modern garden feature, a viewing mount, given its proximity to Galch Hill House (c. 1500).

²⁰ Williams, *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, 229.

²¹ See Department of Environment photograph, catalogue no. C536246 (Accession no.NA/GEN/96/107e) to be found on Coflein entry for 'Denbigh Town Wall (Upper Town)', photograph 1.

²² Tucker, 'Denbigh's Loyal Governor', 24.

²³ J. Gwynne Williams, 19.

If the damage to the south-western curtain wall was caused by artillery and not by the process of slighting (partial or complete demolition to render a castle or other building indefensible), then clearly substantial artillery pieces were available to the besiegers and it has to be questioned as to why these were not employed against the Goblin Tower instead. It may be concluded, therefore that these breaches were a function of the later slighting.

Assessment

The difficulty for the besiegers in 1646 was that no access was possible to the gates of the castle since they were surrounded by the town of Denbigh which, apparently was still inhabited although, presumably, at least partially blockaded by parliament's troops. Certainly it is known that the community of the town and district suffered through the siege to the extent that a month after it had started, a petition was raised by them (the 'Bumpkin's Petition') imploring Salisbury to end his resistance.²⁴ There were clearly profound effects on the town too; the usual municipal election was not held in 1646, possibly due to depopulation caused by the siege.²⁵

The difficulties faced by the besiegers and the reasons for their failure to take the castle by force were recognised by them only too clearly.

1. The castle was ideally situated on an enormous stone outcrop, impermeable to the weapons available.
2. Parliamentary resources were clearly stretched by the siege. Such evidence of munitions as has been found strongly suggests that the guns directed at the 'Goblin Tower' were too small to be effective and, assuming the damage done to the south west curtain wall was caused by artillery, no benefit could be had owing to the rocky escarpment below.
3. Poor planning and execution of siege techniques. General Mytton laid the blame here at the door of the local commander, George Twistleton, who appears to have been responsible for initiating the siegeworks. The substantial gap between the battery on Galch Hill and the approaches before the Goblin Tower coincide with the gate from the castle to the medieval Deer Park (the Postern Gate) and would account for the ease with which the garrison was able to come and go.

²⁴ For 'the Bumpkin's Petition' see *Calendar of Salisbury Correspondence*, no. 364, 165-6 and *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*,

²⁵ Williams (ed.) *Records of Denbigh and its Lordship*, 133.

Casualties and Troops

On the part of the defenders, casualties were severe. Exact numbers are unknown, but at the commencement of the siege, Salesbury testified in a letter that he had 300 men and a troop of horse for the defence of the castle and the 'outwarde', that is, the upper town of Denbigh within the walls which had gradually depopulated over the preceding centuries.²⁶ No suggestion is given of the size of the 'troop' but usually, a troop of cavalry would be between thirty and one hundred men. Allowing for the known civilian presence within the castle, it is likely that the number of occupants of the castle was nearer 400 than 500 men with, presumably, a large number of horses. By the end of the siege, only around 200 men remained and no horses are mentioned. This represents approximately fifty per cent mortality from various causes. Some, it is probable, died in the course of sallies out from the castle. It is likely that Captain Edward Wynne, buried at the church of St Dyfnog, Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch Church was one of these. The arrangements for his funeral indicate the difficulty of burying bodies within the walls of the castle: he was taken as far as the 'Ystrad Bridge' by members of the garrison and there passed to parliamentary forces who took him for burial. This episode, and the exceptionally mannered way in which the siege appears to have been conducted indicates that a great many of those on both sides were related or known to one another. The arrangements made to take Wynne's body for burial were complicated however, and suggest that the transportation of his body for burial was unusual. The majority, however, must have died within the walls. Williams, in *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, postulated a number of causes: 'In the first place we find that the siege was carried out on one of the hottest summers on record. The usually copious spring of water must *then* have been very inadequate... 'then the rocky nature of the ground scarcely afforded any facility for the proper burial of the dead except within the inner ward of the castle. Human skeletons have been, at different times, exhumed from within and around the fortress, and many bodies discovered buried under the aisles of St. Hilary's Church.'²⁷ Since the church was built circa 1300, this information is not as significant as it might appear without osteoarchaeological examination of any remains left in situ.

Exactly what caused this level of mortality is not known. Given the resilience of Colonel Salesbury and the absence of apparent difficulties with maintaining the morale of those under his command, it seems unlikely that food or water were an immediate concern: significant stores of food remained when the castle was surrendered and the well beneath the Goblin Tower remained accessible. It is

²⁶ Owen, 'Denbigh', 184-7.

²⁷ *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, 233-4.

probable, therefore, that the deaths were the result of military action rather than disease. Since this was not a static siege and members of the garrison were able, on occasion to venture beyond the walls of the castle and borough, it is almost certain that some died beyond the walls, victims of enemy action.

We know comparatively little about the besieging forces. They seem primarily to have been local men serving under local commanders although reinforced by soldiers from as far away as London and Lancashire. General Thomas Mytton was from Halston in Shropshire, three miles from Oswestry, and his forces appear to have been more varied. Myddleton's family home at Galch Hall was and remains visible from Denbigh Castle. The tone of the correspondence between Mytton and Salesbury suggests very clearly that they were known to each other and had moved in similar circles in London though as the siege progressed, the tone becomes notably less cordial doubtless a consequence of frustration on the part of parliamentary commanders: the siege was exceptionally demanding of military and physical resources in the neighbourhood. Lieutenant Colonels Twistleton, Mason and Captain Price note that most of their forces were Lancashire Auxiliaries and that one of the main difficulties was lack of pay. Such problems were exacerbated by the need for Parliamentary resources to stretch to closely besiege Caernarfon, Holt and In the early phases of the siege, it is noted that the horse of the garrison forces engaged with other cavalry companies from Ruthin. Various sources indicate that he had auxiliaries from Lancashire at his disposal and 'London Reformadoes' – soldiers serving at half-pay awaiting the formation of regiments – who were certainly with parliamentary forces in November 1645.²⁸

Names of some of the royalists implicated in the siege of Denbigh were included in reports of the *Committee for Compounding with Delinquents* which allowed Royalists whose estates had been sequestrated, to compound – to pay a fine and recover their estates – if they pledged not to take up arms against Parliament again. The size of the fine they had to pay depended on the worth of the estate and how great their support for the Royalist cause had been.²⁹

- Colonel William Salesbury of Bachymbyd and Rûg was fined with his son Charles (£781). The captain of Denbigh, Salesbury, also known, in Welsh, as *Hên Hosanau Gleision* ('Old Blue Stockings'), matriculated from Oriel College, Oxford, on 19 October 1599. He appears to have turned shortly thereafter to a military life, gaining experience as a pikeman in the

²⁸ Phillips, ii, 283.

²⁹ Tucker, *The Civil War in North Wales*, 169-72.

Netherlands and a privateer in the East Indies. He was shipwrecked on the way home, however, losing much of the wealth he had acquired. On his return to Wales he worked as a cattle dealer for a time until the death of his oldest surviving brother, John, in 1611, when he became head of this branch of the family. In remembrance of Salesbury's loyalty Charles I, on the eve of his execution, sent him an embroidered cap of crimson silk – this cap survived at Bliffield Hall, home of the Bagot family, Salesbury's descendants into the 1950s, though the property was sold in 1959.³⁰ Salesbury made his will on 8 June in 1659 or 1660 and it was proved on 10 December; he was buried in the church at Llanynys, Denbighshire.³¹

- Thomas Whitley of Aston (presumably Salop) compounded and was fined £125 for 'deserting his habitation and going into the garrison held against parliament'. His son, Colonel Robert Whitley was governor of Aberystwyth.
- John Williams of Llanefydd, Conwy. He was under age when he fought through the siege of Denbigh by was fined £66.
- Colonel John Thelwell, Plas Coch, Denbs. (£117)
- Robert Parry, Lleweni, Denbs. (£28)
- Colonel Thomas Davies, Gwysaney (£51)
- Edward Goodman, Nantglyn, Denbs. (£46.10.8)
- Captain John Edwards, Chirk (£80)
- John Eyton [senior], Leeswood, Flints (£172.15.0)
- John Eyton, junior (son of the above), (£42)
- Colonel Peter Griffiths, Caerwys (£113.13.6)
- John Jones (senior), Halkyn, Flints. (£156.11.4)
- Edward Lloyd, Hersketh, Mold (£64.10.0) – his son, Thomas, petitioned to have his estate sequestered to meet his father's delinquency fine as Edward Lloyd died shortly after the surrender.
- Gabriel Edwards was not fined (but presumably involved)
- Major John Dolben (£107)
- Robert Price of Plas Iolyn, Denbs. admitted being engaged in the wars but was not fined.
- Sir William Gerard, a Lancashire Catholic was among the prisoners taken at Denbigh.
- Colonel Richard Lloyd, Llwyn-y-Maen, near Oswetry, Salop. Captured at Y Dalar Hir (5 June 1648) and who fought in both wars was fined £480.

³⁰ It is illustrated in Tucker, 'Denbigh's Loyal Governor', 32. The subsequent fate of the cap is not known at present.

³¹ Lloyd Bowen, 'Salesbury, William (1580?-1659/60)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24547>, accessed 10 Jan 2013]

- Colonel John Bodvel of Bodfel, Pwllheli, Caerns.

Mytton, in his note on the surrender, records a number of 'civilians', present in the castle including William Gerard, noted above and described as, 'a Papist of Lancashire, in the exceptions from mercy; 'Doctor Nicoll, sometime Dean of Chester, that acted much against the Parliament ; Mr Richard Charles, of Charley, a notorious Papist and an incendiary.'³² Most of those involved, on each side, were local men predominately from Flintshire, Denbighshire and their neighbouring counties. It seems evident that there was very little in the way of hand to hand fighting and casualties as a direct consequence of the siege were few.

Conclusions

Militarily, the siege of Denbigh was arguably of relatively little importance; it was effectively the last royalist act of the war in north east Wales. On its conclusion, the forces within the castle seem to have returned either to their homes or were held as prisoners in the castle they had defended. The siege fits into a wider pattern in the northern part of Wales, however, in that strong, well-defended castles, despite being over 300 years old and in varying states of disrepair could be made defensible with only limited effort and expense. While Holt, Ruthin and Chirk provided some resistance, Denbigh, Caernarfon, Conwy and Harlech were capable of withstanding any resources which parliamentary forces could put before them. This is a testament to the quality of the buildings, their strategic positioning and the preparedness of the defenders. In the case of Denbigh, it was only the king's order that ended the siege; the garrison had enough stubbornness, experience, stores, men and materiel to continue.

Having admitted early in the piece that forcing the castle was not a possibility, the principal difficulties were in maintaining the siege was in terms of money, supplies and numbers of men on the side of the castle facing away from the town. The town side, we must presume, was fully blockaded throughout. It is evident that the way in which the siege was managed deficient: the besieged should not be able to come and go at will, presumably via the Postern Gate.

It is obvious that the quality of artillery available to the Parliamentary forces at Denbigh was insufficient; the effects on the building were limited; the Goblin Tower shows signs of damage, but these signs are purely cosmetic. The damage elsewhere in the walls seems more likely to originate

³² Phillips, ii, 307.

either from neglect over the successive centuries or deliberate slighting in 1660. Despite the lack of physical effects evident in the fabric of the castle, the difficulties experienced in the locality are evident in the petition made by the citizens of the borough to Salesbury in May 1646 and the stresses of supporting a large, if indeterminately sized, army in the neighbourhood and the suffering this caused are frequently referred to in Mytton's letters to Salesbury, a clear attempt to act on the latter's piety.

The siege only delayed inevitable defeat for Royalist forces in north Wales and the resistance of both castle and garrison, while stubborn, clearly respected by Charles I and evidently an irritation for parliamentary commanders, was pointless. Possession of the castle, however, enabled Parliamentarian forces to be more efficiently used; it was a prize worth securing.

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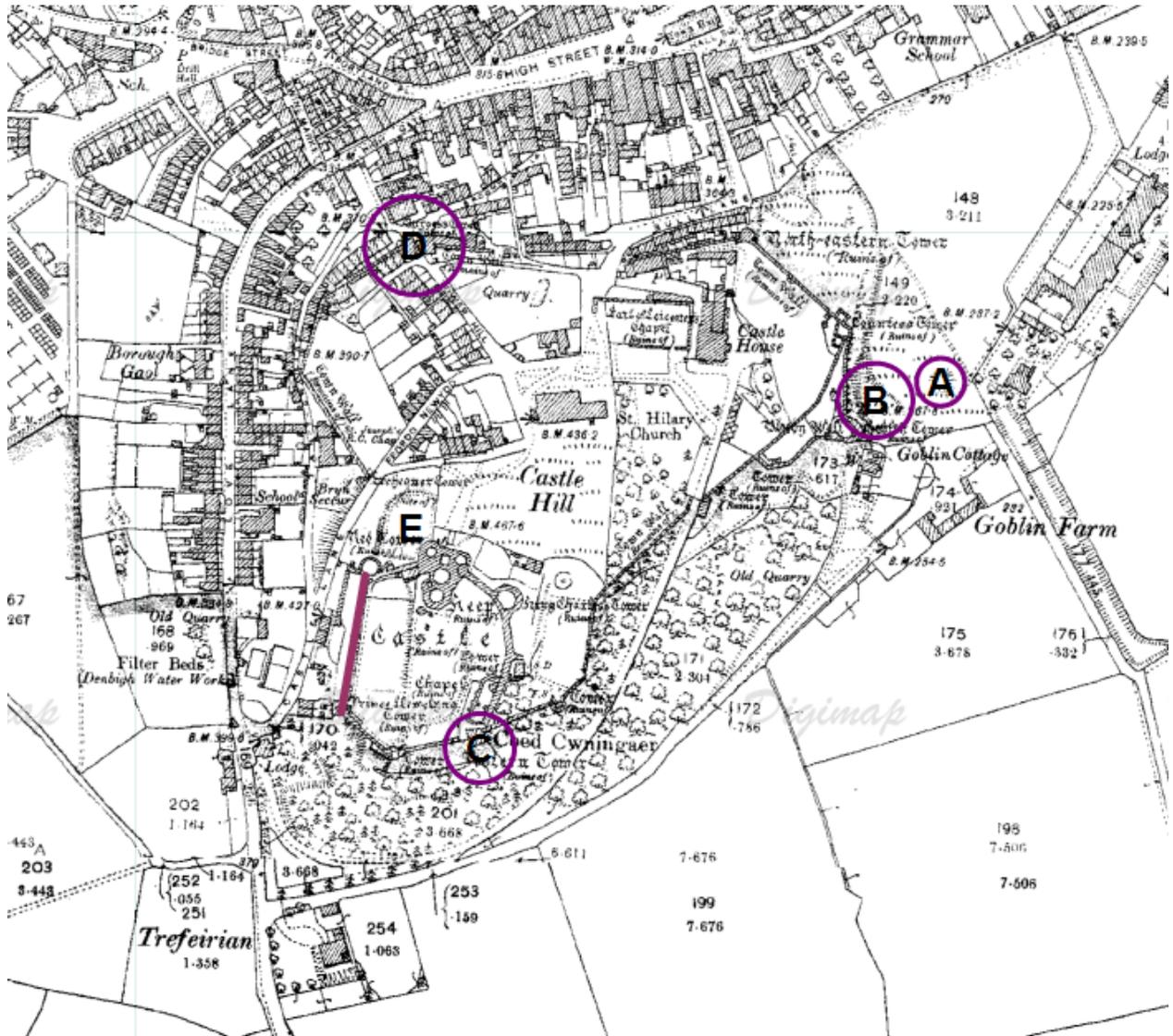
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Map 1 – Areas associated with the siege and related engagements

The green area is the approximate outline of Denbigh Green, site of a skirmish between Royalist and Parliamentarian forces in November 1645

A – Lleweni Hall, family home of one branch of the Salesbury family.

The areas highlighted in purple are shown in more detail on Map 2.



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- A – Site of probable gun battery now in the grounds of Howell’s School
- B – Earthworks, possibly defensive in nature constructed around the base of the Goblin Tower
- C – Postern Gate. Probable means of access for Royalist forces into the former Deer Park immediately to the south of the castle (indicated by ‘Coed Cwnigaer’ or Rabbit Wood’ [Cwnigen = rabbit])
- D – Burgess Gate to the outer ward of the castle.
- E – Damaged Curtain Wall. This damage may be related to the siege or the later ‘slighting’ of the castle, c. 1660.