

5. That they should leave their Artillery and Ammunition behind them in the Garrison.⁴⁹

At 7 o'clock on the morning of Sunday 3 November the royalist troops left the castle and headed for Carmarthen under the terms above. Col. Laugharne then finally took possession of the castle and the siege was over.

4.3 Troops and Casualties

The pamphlets in the Thomason Tracts contain several references to the number of forces involved in the siege. The parliamentarian forces were made up of,

The number of both horse and foot were about 2,000, of foot viz the generals regiment, colonel Kilmady his regiment: colonel Beale's regiment. And the horse the major generals troope and a troope of horse and a companie of dragoons of the major of Pembrookes, and colonel Sheffields regiment.⁵⁰

The Royalist garrison that tried to hold Laugharne castle is also noted in E.256.44.

There was in the castle Lieutenant colonel Russell, the owner and governour of it. Major, Alsworth a citizen Captaine Ilinton and Captain Fits, and about 200 common soldiers, they marched to Carmarthen.⁵¹

The parliamentarian forces under the command of Laugharne seem to have suffered very minor losses. One source notes that he lost ten men and had thirty wounded, whilst another gives the men killed as five, with no mention of the wounded.

We lost in all ten men and had wounded about thirty, wee took nigh twenty prisoners, how many we slew we know not, but sure I am great execution was done in the castle.⁵²

On the Royalist side thirty-three of the defenders were killed and an unspecified number were wounded including a Captain Ilinton

Having lost in all thirty-three men and many wounded, whereof four were captains.⁵³

Captain Ilinton was wounded during the siege and did not leave for Carmarthen, the source reveals that the figure of 1200 for the royalist garrison at Carmarthen is information derived from him. The Siege ended just in time as the royalist garrison from Carmarthen would have arrived the following day and no doubt many more would have died in the inevitable fighting that would have ensued.

4.4 Aftermath

Details of what was captured in the castle vary slightly in different sources but are in broad agreement.

⁴⁹ E20.5, image 2, p. 50.

⁵⁰ E.256.44, image 2.

⁵¹ E.256.44, image 3.

⁵² E.256.44, image 3.

⁵³ E.21.23, p. 484.

Tooke 160 armes, two guns a sacker and a minion, two or three murdering pieces, three barrels and a halfe of powder and 500 weight of small shot. There was good store of butter corn cheese and bear. Very little benefit to the soldier, contrary to their hopes who expected large plunder.⁵⁴

Following the capture of the castle, news reached Laugharne that the royalist forces from Carmarthen were heading toward him. He set out with his troops to intercept them and when they came into sight of each other the Royalist forces retreated back to Carmarthen. A Royalist garrison at the nearby house of *Clogaveraine* (modern day Clog y Fran)⁵⁵ on hearing of the fall of the castle, burnt the house and destroyed its fortifications before leaving for the Royalist stronghold of Carmarthen.

Leaving a garrison in Laugharne to defend it from Royalist attack, Colonel Laugharne set off for Cardigan castle. After three days it became clear that it would not be possible to force a breach of the walls without the demi-culverin cannon used at Laugharne and borrowed from the ship *Leopard*, he moved to Cardigan. This was done with ‘much difficulty and industry’ and after three days of firing a breach was made and the castle was taken. Laugharne continued his campaigns in Wales until he was defeated at the battle of St Fagans in 1648 and finally forced to surrender to Oliver Cromwell at Pembroke on 11 July of that year.⁵⁶

5. Evaluation

5.1 Primary Sources

The invaluable collection of civil war pamphlets known as the Thomason tracts preserves a vast collection of material for the events of the civil war. All of the references to the 1644 siege at Laugharne are from the Parliamentary point of view, nothing survives from a royalist perspective. All of the pamphlets are now available online via Early English books online website. A printed catalogue appeared in 1908 giving every pamphlet a number; these are now the primary reference to the collection.⁵⁷ The pamphlets were printed on a weekly basis usually in London and were made up of extracts from letters sent by commanders in the field and therefore are an excellent source of eye-witness accounts published within a matter of weeks or even days of events. Four independent accounts of the siege survive:

The most detailed primary source for the siege of Laugharne appears in a 10 page newspaper published soon after the event entitled *Perfect Occurrences of Parliament*. [TT E.256.44]. The account has informed all subsequent discussions of the event and is based upon letters sent by Parliamentary commanders in Milford Haven.⁵⁸ It has been references extensively in the discussion above.

A briefer account of the siege is printed in *Mercurius Britannicus Communicating the Affaires of Great Britaine*, number 61, [E21.23]. It describes the goods found in the castle slightly differently, but otherwise adds nothing new.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ E.256.44, image 3.

⁵⁵ Named as Clog y Fran on modern maps at (SN 24001595) NPRN 17217.

⁵⁶ Stephen K. Roberts, ‘Laugharne, Rowland (c.1607–1675)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16122>, accessed 9 Jan 2014].

⁵⁷ *Catalogue of the pamphlets, books, newspapers and manuscripts relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth and Restoration, 1640–1661 collected by G. Thomason*, 2 vols., (London, 1908).

⁵⁸ TT E.256.44, image 2.

⁵⁹ TT E.21.23 pp. 483–4.

A third account is printed in *Perfect Passages of Each Dayes Proceedings in Parliament* number 7, [E20.5]. It gives a shorter, but still detailed account of the siege with a good description of arms taken following the siege and is the only source to actually print the five terms of surrender.⁶⁰

A further account appears in a longer work, *The Burning Bush not Consumed or, the Fourth and Last Part of the Parliamentarie-Chronicle* by John Vicars, published in 1646. As it has not been referenced in the discussion above the text is given in full below.

About the 30 of this instant *November*, wee were certified by Letters from Sir *Thomas Middletons* quarters, that Colonell *Beal* (who went with Foot forces out of *London*, by Sea, intended for *Anglesey*, and so for Sir *Thomas Middleton*, in *North Wales*,) landed his forces in *Milford-Haven*, in *Pembrookeshire*, in *South-Wales*, where joyning with the *Pembrookmen*, hee marched into *Carmarthenshire*, where the Enemies had a strong Garrison, called *Laughorn castle*, which this brave Colonell won from them, the exact particulars of which Service being brought to *London*, in a Letter dated at *Pembrook*, I have heer thought fit to extract and set down the substance thereof, to the honour of that gallant Colonell, and the other Commanders assistant to him therein, which was as followeth. Wee made our approach to *Laughorn castle*, and having soon gained the Town, in the Town gate wee planted our Ordnance, and first gave the Enemies a fair summons to surrender the said Garrison for the *King and Parliament*, which they utterly refusing, wee presently made our batteries against the Castle gate-house, and that not without the happy advantage of a great breach, and so with an unanimous consent of our forces fell to hot storm, and undermining of the walls, both which were performed with such fervour, courage and expedition (and that only with the losse of not above 5 of our men, but at the least 33 of theirs within, as was afterward confessed, by some of their own Commanders) as that the Enemy seeing us in such good earnest and wisely fore-seeing the eminent danger they wherein, if they now delayed any longer, they presently sounded a parley, which notwithstanding our advantages being granted them, though at first they began with us on high termes, yet were forced speedily to surrender only upon quarter for their lives, and the Castle thus surrendered into the Generalls possession, wherein were 4 pieces of Ordnance, 160 armes, 4 barrels of powder, and great store of other provision, they having lost in this assault ere it was ended, 33 of their men, and many wounded, whereof 4 were Captains.⁶¹

Further minor references to the siege can be found in other pamphlets from the Thomason Tracts. Some are derived from those noted above,⁶² others note the briefest details of what happened before the fuller accounts appeared in the following week's edition of the respective newspaper⁶³ and two more simply contain brief references to the siege.⁶⁴ The only

⁶⁰ TT E.20.5, pp. 50–1.

⁶¹ John Vicars, *The Burning Bush not Consumed or, the Fourth and Last Part of the Parliamentarie-Chronicle* (London, 1646), pp. 71–2.

⁶² TT E17.15 and TT21.11.

⁶³ TT E256.35 and TT E21.8

⁶⁴ TT E21.1 and E21.3.

detail from these lesser sources not found in the four outlined above is that the initial rendezvous for the forces took place at Carew.⁶⁵

5.2 Secondary Sources

Several early authors associate a siege at Laugharne with Oliver Cromwell as described by James Baker in 1795

A short time before the battle of Worcester it was besieged by Cromwell, against whom it held out for sixteen days and then surrendered. It was defended by Sir Sackville Crew and Morgan Lloyd Esq.⁶⁶

Nicholas Carlisle mentions the 1644 siege very briefly in his *Topographic Dictionary* of 1811 and Samuel Lewis in his *Topographical Dictionary of Wales* (1833) provides the following note:

During the civil war in the reign of Charles I., it was first garrisoned for the king, but was taken, in 1644, by the parliamentary forces, under general William Laugharne. Subsequently, when this commander had embraced the royal cause, it was besieged by Cromwell; it held out for three weeks, but several breaches having been made in the walls, the garrison surrendered upon honourable terms, and the castle was soon afterwards dismantled.⁶⁷

He seems to have garbled events and introduced names into the mix that are unknown elsewhere and this account cannot be relied upon. Curtis 1871 book on the town of Laugharne also gives a similar history and makes no reference to the known events of 1644. Oliver Cromwell was in south Wales on two occasions, in 1648 and on neither occasion did he visit Laugharne. It would appear that the fact that Cromwell defeated Colonel Laugharne has somehow become associated with Cromwell besieging the castle of Laugharne. The only siege at Laugharne Castle was the one of November 1644.

The events of 1644 at Laugharne have not been discussed very frequently by later historians. Phillips makes only passing mentions of the siege in his work on the Civil War in Wales in 1874 and neither does he include the most important works from the Thomason Tracts in his second volume of sources. It is not mentioned at all in Samuel Gardnier's influential four volume work, *History of the Great Civil War* (1886–1901).

The *RCAHMW Inventory for Carmarthenshire* (1917) provides a plan of the castle and a brief mention of the events in 1644.⁶⁸ It also mentions the Glan y Mor earthworks, but the association between this site and the siege was not made until much later.⁶⁹ J. E. Lloyd in his *A History of Carmarthenshire* strangely makes no reference to the civil war siege at Laugharne.⁷⁰ Events at Laugharne castle are mentioned only very briefly in Ronald Hutton's 1982 book on the royalist war effort, referring back to TT E256.44.⁷¹

⁶⁵ TT E256.33.

⁶⁶ James Baker, *A picturesque guide through Wales and the Marches; interspersed with the most interesting subjects of antiquity in that principality*, vol. 1 (Worcester, 1795), p. 160.

⁶⁷ Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, fourth edition, vol. 1 (London, 1833), under Laugharne.

⁶⁸ *RCAHMW Inventory for Carmarthenshire*, (London, 1917), pp. 62–3

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 61–2.

⁷⁰ J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Carmarthenshire* 2 vols. (1935–9).

⁷¹ Ronald Hutton, *The Royalist war effort 1642-1646* (London, 1982), p. 152.

Richard Avent's work at Laugharne since 1976, has been discussed in Section 3.2 above, however the civil war siege was the subject of an important chapter he wrote for *Castles in Wales and the Marches*, the 1987 book of essays in honour of D. J. Cathcart King.⁷² The chapter discusses all of the sources for the 1644 siege and is fundamental to our understanding of this event. Peter Gaunt's accessible *A Nation under Siege* (1991) discusses the event briefly⁷³ and finally the CADW guidebook to the site, written by Avent, places the event in context. I have been unable to find any further information in either the Carmarthenshire archives or the National Library of Wales concerning the siege, not already discussed above.

5.3 Battle Location

The Castle is now a scheduled ancient monument and the Gatehouse still survives. There is little evidence for the town walls and gates. The possible battery sites are discussed below.

5.4 Archaeological and Historic Terrain assessment

Glan y Mor In the north-east corner of the field (SN 30631117) is a semi-circular earthwork (PRN 2158) reaching 2m high in places and over 8m wide. The earthwork was described in 1839 as the 'the battery of the parliamentarians, of a semi-circular form, was established on a rising ground about seven hundred yards north-east of the castle as its remains still testify.'⁷⁴ The bank was described in 1923 and it was noted that it originally extended all the way up to the cliff edge and that a section 'was removed by the late Mr Weinholt for road mending and building.'⁷⁵ A geophysical survey in 1991 returned little of interest. The site is well situated for an attack on the castle fortifications and also overlooking the important ferry to Llanstephan.

The fields now covered by the Ants Hill Caravan Park, identified by Avent as a probable site for the initial camp of the forces arriving at Laugharne, and the fields adjoining to the north called Cannons and Canon Park on the 1842 tithe map, have not yet been subject to archaeological investigation. The Gatehouse to the Inner Ward of the Castle was reconstructed in the Tudor period and withstood two days of cannon fire during the siege of 1644. Two cannonballs were discovered during conservation work in the mid-seventies.⁷⁶ The building is still present and much of the damage that can be seen, can be directly attributed to the Civil war cannon fire.

Avent suggests that the Parliamentarian guns were likely moved from the earthwork at Glan y Mor down to a site on the hillside behind Fernhill (SN 2994310833) in order to get closer and in a better position to fire upon the Gatehouse.⁷⁷ No archaeological remains have yet been discovered to support this idea, but the documentary sources, taken in conjunction with the topography of the site, would seem to confirm this suggestion. The distance to the gatehouse from this site is within the range of the canon and would explain the extant damage to the curtain wall and the location of the cannonball finds in seventies. A search of Archwilio, Coflein and the Portable Antiquities scheme produced nothing of further relevance to the Siege.

⁷² Avent, 'The Siege of Laugharne Castle'.

⁷³ Peter Gaunt, *A Nation under Siege*, (Cardiff, 1991), p. 58.

⁷⁴ A. J. Kemp, 'Notices of the castle and lordship of Laugharne, Carmarthenshire', *Gentlemen's Magazine*, new series 12, vol. 166, (1839), 353.

⁷⁵ J. P. G. Williams, 'Laugharnshire Miscellanea', *Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society Field Club*, 16 (1922-3), 2-3.

⁷⁶ Avent, R. and Read, E., 'Laugharne Castle, 1976: introduction, historical summary and excavations' *The Carmarthen Antiquary*, 13 (1977), 26.

⁷⁷ Avent, 'The Siege of Laugharne Castle', p. 193.

5.5 Historical Significance of Battle

The siege of Laugharne castle in 1644 was one of many such events during the civil war in Wales. It was taken by Gerard in September and then besieged by Laugharne in November and may have been taken again by Gerard in 1645, although no documentary sources exist to prove this. With the exception of the town history written by Curtis in 1871 and Avent's 1987 article, the event has received very little attention. The siege was a minor event in the early days of the Civil War and Laugharne castle is never mentioned again following the events of 1644. The fact that archaeological evidence has been found that can be associated with the detailed documentary sources that survive for the siege makes the site worthy of further investigation.

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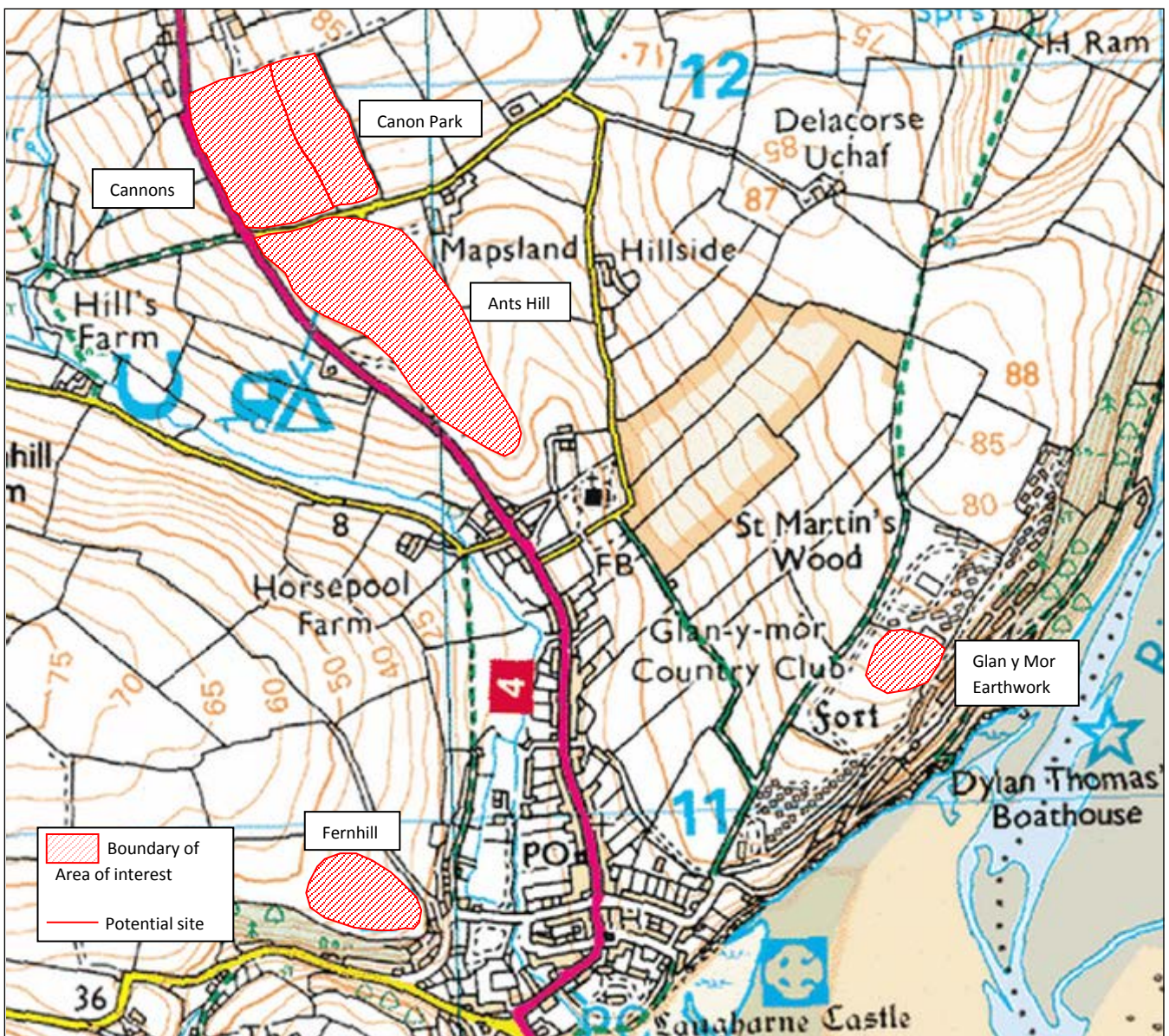
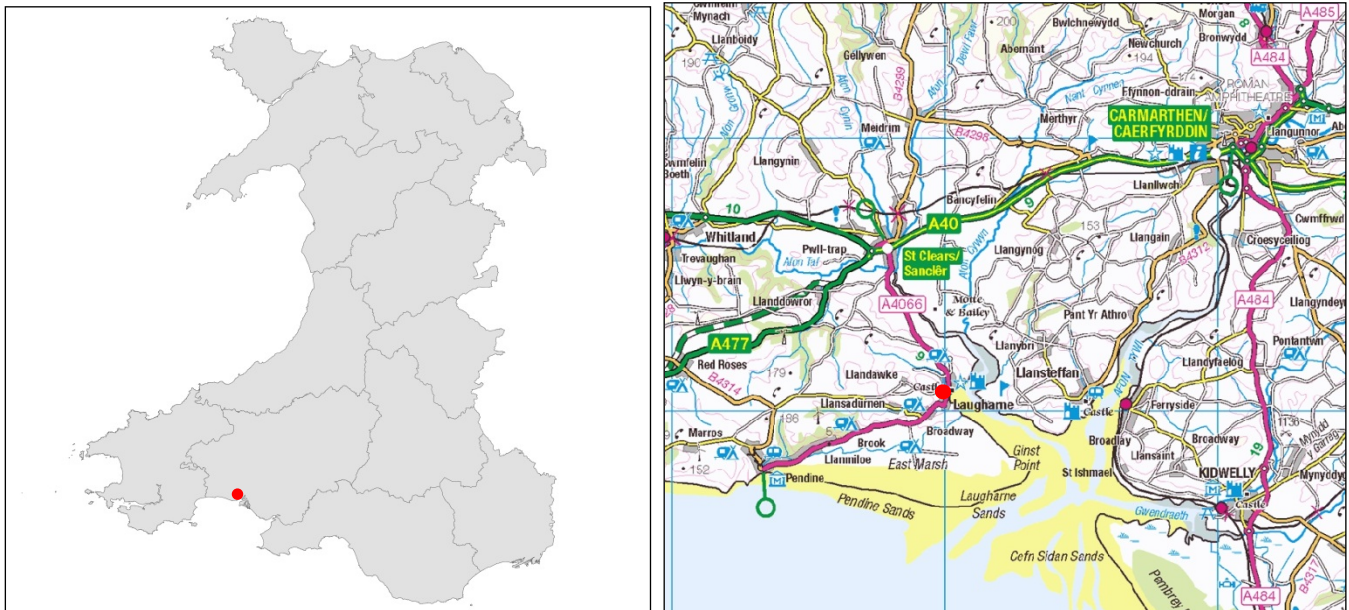
1841 Tithe Map of Laugharne Parish excepting Laugharne Township [#328].

1842 Tithe Map of Laugharne Township [#329].

6.4 Web Resources

Archwlio	www.archwilio.org.uk
Coflein	www.coflein.gov.uk
Portable Antiquities Scheme	http://finds.org.uk/database/search/advanced
People Collection Wales	http://www.peoplescollectionwales.co.uk/Places/FullMap

5. Map of Site



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Figure 1: Location Map of Laugharne Castle and associated sites.