

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

Newcastle Emlyn 1287-8



County: Carmarthenshire

Community: Newcastle Emlyn

NGR: SN31144072

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Date: February 2013



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Siege of Newcastle Emlyn (1287-8)

Summary

The siege of Newcastle Emlyn was a secondary action in the course of the revolt initiated by Rhys ap Maredudd, a supporter of Edward I in his wars with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, who had suffered for this adherence at the hands of Llywelyn's supporters but who subsequently found his dignity oppressed by English officials and too little gratitude forthcoming from Edward I. His rebellion came about in the summer of 1287 and, with Edward abroad, was dealt with by his regent, his brother Edmund earl of Cornwall. Enormous numbers of Welsh troops from the north and south of the Principality and the March, together with Englishmen from the border counties, were assembled to besiege Dryslwyn and later, after Rhys ap Maredudd had escaped, Newcastle Emlyn. Rhys survived this siege too and remained a fugitive until he was betrayed in April 1292. The surviving English financial records for this operation are excellent and have been edited and published. They give numbers for the besieging force, the duration for which they served and the monies spent on workmen and engineers taking the castles, the types of siege engines produced and details of the garrison troops and repairs made after the castles were captured. Details of the forces defending the castle are more limited, but can be reconstructed, to an extent, by judicial and administrative records both calendared and surviving in The National Archives. This information is supplemented by monastic chroniclers inside and outside Wales and, to an extent, by recent archaeological investigation.

The history of the castle is essential to understanding its development. Following the failure of a revolt by Rhys ap Maredudd in 1288, the castle remained in royal hands until 1382 when it was granted outright to Sir Simon Burley and, inevitably, this is the best documented period of the castle's history. Two phases of redevelopment between 1315-9 and 1347-9 are known together with periodic repairs. It was taken by Owain Glyndŵr in 1403 and was described, on the death of John Burley in 1428 as 'derelict'; 'the said castle is in ruins and worth nothing yearly', something that had not been rectified by the time an inquisition post mortem was made into his son, Walter's estates in 1446. The castle was acquired by the Carmarthenshire potentate Sir Rhys ap Thomas in the later fifteenth century and passed into royal hands once more after the attainder of Sir Rhys's grandson in 1532. This transfer of ownership brought about another survey which indicates that Sir Rhys had been responsible for significant rebuilding. The castle was described as being in good repair in 1609 and was given to lord Carberry c. 1630. The Civil Wars rendered the castle derelict and the last

recorded habitation of the site was c. 1648, four years after it was besieged by parliamentary forces.

Context

The revolt which ended native rule in Ystrad Tywi had its origins in the lifetime of the father of Rhys ap Maredudd and the wars of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. In October 1251, Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg and Rhys Fychan ap Rhys Mechell on the one part and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and his elder brother Owain on the other, entered into a confederacy of mutual aid. While Rhys Fychan, for a time, persevered in making representations to the crown, Maredudd identified himself with Owain and through this alliance and the twin victories he achieved over English forces at Coed Llathen and Cymerau on 2 June 1257 established Llywelyn's dominance over Deheubarth. In the spring of 1277, however, Llywelyn's power in Deheubarth crumbled as each of his feudatories (dependent lords) transferred their homage to Edward I. The first to do so was Rhys ap Maredudd, who had succeeded his father Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg (d. 1271). Rhys's objective in his defection was to secure his father's dynastic goal; dominance over all of Ystrad Tywi, centred on the castle of Dinefwr.¹ Despite difficulties with reconciling his interests with those of Edward and his officials, in the final wars against Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Rhys ap Maredudd took the side of Edward I, 'alone of all the nobles and magnates of West Wales adhered to the king at the time of the late disturbance.'²

Following the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1282 and the capture and execution of his brother, Dafydd a year later, Edward I enjoyed mastery of much of Wales. By the Statute of Rhuddlan (1284), he imposed English rule over the conquered territories of Gwynedd and extended his influence over Wales creating substantial royal territories governed on the lines of English counties: North Wales; Anglesey, Caernarfon and Merioneth, and in South Wales, Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire. The legal, administrative and military settlement was wide-ranging and comprehensive. The enforcement of this settlement, however, was frequently inflexible and the disregard for the laws, usages, franchises, social distinctions and practices of native society and the high-handedness and insensitivity of many of the local English governors in Wales 'created an accumulation of grievances which in the tinder-dry political atmosphere in Wales could easily lead to conflagration.'³

¹ J. Beverley Smith, 'The Origins of the Revolt of Rhys ap Maredudd', 156-8.

² *Calendar of Welsh Rolls*, 236.

³ Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, 380.

The revolt of Rhys ap Iaredudd of Ystrad Tywi was the first and in some ways a surprising result of these tensions. It was very much based upon the personal resentment of Rhys himself rather than that of the wider community. He and his father had, at great personal cost, remained loyal to the kings of England for more than a generation, fighting alongside Edward I's forces in both 1277 and 1282. Rhys had benefited from this loyalty: he had been given the forfeited lands of his kinsman, Rhys Wyndod which brought almost all of Cantref Mawr in south eastern Carmarthenshire under his authority and, with a grant of two commotes in Ceredigion, he styled himself 'lord of Ystrad Tywi'. In accordance with his loyalty and status in the new order, he married the sister of John Hastings, lord of Abergavenny, the union being symbolic of Rhys's accommodation with the new order.

These benefits were, however, undermined by several affronts to his dignity. In October 1283, he was forced to renounce any right to the castle of Dinefwr, ancestral seat of the princes of Deheubarth in favour of Edward I. In the same month, he was publically humiliated by Edward I before his Council for taking control of the lands which Edward had already granted to Rhys before the formal investiture by a royal official. Worse was to follow: Rhys was subject to financial extortion and judicial harassment by Edward's officials, notably the justiciar of South Wales, Robert Tibetot and by the constable of the royal castle of Dinefwr. Rhys clearly felt that these incursions upon his dignity and ability to exercise his authority over his tenants unpalatable and, eventually unbearable. On 8 June 1287, Rhys went into open revolt.

The revolt was relatively localised and short-lived. Rhys's support of the English crown prior to the conquest of Gwynedd left him with relatively few allies and it seems unlikely that he could rely on the support even of all his own men. Though Edward I was in Gascony, the response of the royal government in his absence was swift and overwhelming. Within a few weeks, enormous armies totalling approximately 24,000 men were assembled, well over half being recruited from within Wales and the March. Early in September, after a short siege, Rhys's stronghold at Dryslwyn was taken though Rhys himself escaped. Although the revolt was reignited in November, by January 1288, his last fortress, Newcastle Emlyn was taken and the revolt ended.

Primary Sources

The clearest primary material comes from the Wardrobe accounts concerning the campaign led by Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, Edward I's brother which survive in The National Archives, Kew. The Wardrobe was the office of Royal Government concerned with the king's personal finances and records day-to-day expenditure. These accounts survive in an almost complete form for the Newcastle Emlyn (1287-8)

by Dr Adam Chapman, 2013

campaign and it is doubly fortunate that they have been edited and published, among the *Records of the Wardrobe and the Household 1286-1289*.⁴ These sources provide an exceptionally clear, day by day, account of the campaign, and provide the number of troops and other personnel employed and the monies expended on supplies and equipment. Like all such accounts, however, there are limitations; we only know about the soldiers in the area who were paid by the crown and the nature of the documents that record their existence is such that payments were recorded when expenses were authorised rather than when they were incurred. Given that the campaign was a relatively localised one however, these limitations are slight. There are some limited references in the chronicles but these provide little of direct use in understanding the detail and chronology of events in the winter of 1287-8. Some additional information is found in narrative sources such as the continuation of the *Brut y Tywysogion* and the *Annales Cambriae*, but these do little to confirm details of the siege.

Secondary Accounts

There are two fulsome historical assessments of the nature of the revolt and the manner in which the English government responded to it by R.A. Griffiths and Jenkin Beverley Smith.⁵ These provide a clear and detailed summary of the known factors behind Rhys ap Maredudd's reasons for his revolt and the political and personal factors behind it.

Archaeological Investigations

The castle has been subject to several archaeological investigations. A thorough earthwork survey was conducted as part of an archaeological assessment by Charles Parry between March and November 1985 and published in the Carmarthenshire Antiquary in 1987. Taken together with R.F. Walker's assessment of the historical evidence for fourteenth century and later developments in the castle, a reasonable assessment can be made of the development of the castle over the 400 years of its active use.⁶

⁴ *Records of the Wardrobe and the Household 1286-1289*, ed. B.F. and C.R. Byerly (London, 1986)

⁵ R.A. Griffiths, 'The revolt of Rhys ap Maredudd, 1287-8', and J. B. Smith, 'The origins of the revolt of Rhys ap Maredudd', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 21 (1964-6)

⁶ Parry, 'Excavation and Survey of Newcastle Emlyn Castle', 11 and Walker, 'Newcastle Emlyn', 45-7. Note that Parry perpetuates the erroneous dating of the earlier Anglo-Norman (French) survey to 1340. For the dating of

Between 1978 and 1982, substantial consolidation work was carried out on the remains of the gatehouse by Carmarthen District Council and in 1982, 23 metres of the south curtain wall was excavated to reveal standing remains up to 2 metres in height. The RCAHMW was not satisfied with the quality of the work and excavations ceased. A full survey and comprehensive excavation of the north gatehouse tower was undertaken in 1985 under the supervision of Charles Parry and the results of this were published in the *Carmarthenshire Antiquarian* in 1987. Five years later, a comprehensive documentary survey also detailing the earlier researches into the history of the castle was published in the same journal by R. F. Walker. Walker's article also reported on a second programme of excavations. In 1988-9, excavations were undertaken under the direction of J.G.A. Payne and the report, plans and photographs were deposited in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. This excavation revealed further details of the gatehouse and associated structures but was primarily concerned with the medieval remains.⁷

The Castle in 1287-8

The castle at Newcastle Emlyn is first mentioned in English records in 1257 and in the Welsh Annals two years later.⁸ As such it is likely that this castle was built as a result of the expansion of the influence of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd into south west Wales at around this time and was, in all probability, the project of Rhys ap Maredudd's father, Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg. Prior to the castle entering royal hands as a result of the rebellion of Rhys ap Maredudd, the nature of the castle in its earliest years has proven difficult to establish. No doubt it was initially built in earth and timber with ditches protecting the exposed western flank (which now faces the town) of its well-chosen promontory site surrounded on three sides by a loop in the river Teifi. The date of the outer ward and stone curtain wall are uncertain and it is not known whether the inner ward initially had a tower or not.

The castle occupies a low plateau, a promontory on the Teifi valley aligned east west and rising 16 metres above river level. The river surrounds the site on three sides with low lying, seasonally

this document to 1320-1, see R.A. Brown, H. Colvin and A.J. Taylor (eds), *History of the King's Works*, ii (1963), 646.

⁷ C. Parry, 'Survey and Excavation at Newcastle Emlyn Castle' in *Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 23 (1987), 11-27; R.F. Walker 'The Fourteenth Century Surveys of Newcastle Emlyn and the building programme of 1347-8', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 28 (1992), 37-50.

⁸ *Annales Cambriae*, 97; *Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1226-57*, 224.

flooded meadow land to the south and west and the widest part of the river to the north. On the north side, the castle is overlooked by high ground now covered in beech woodland. The principal defensive weakness of the site lies on the western approach to the castle from Castle Street. At the eastern extremity of the inner ward the plateau reduces in height and shifts its alignment towards the north-east.⁹

An Anglo Norman (French) account of the castle as it stood in 1320-1 is included in a survey of the royal castles of Wales. It is only a partial reflection of the castle that stood at the time of this siege but is reproduced below in translation:

Emelyn: Defects. The walls of the castle of Emelyn are weak. [There is] a hall and two chambers at the end of the hall newly built, with a larder and a wine cellar, and under the hall a fine cellar. These are well roofed with shingles but their gutters are of timber and lack lead. For these gutters and for the crests, lead should be provided by estimate. Item one kitchen covered with poor timber shingles and roofing [coverture]. Item, a bakehouse and brewhouse of no value. Item, much good mortar is needed to render [pargettre] the walls of the castle on the outside. Item, outside the walls of the castle two small towers have been started by the castle gate and are fourteen feet high from the foundations upwards. And if the work of the gate is not completed the wall of the castle alongside will suffer. And the bridge of the castle is so weak that no horse can enter.¹⁰

The picture presented here is a castle in poor repair with what appears to be a hall partially built in stone and a curtain wall similarly constructed. This is suggested by the recommendation that the hall should be rendered. We may suggest that the walls and elements of the gate, if not the gatehouse, were present at the time of the siege. Excavations of the north tower of the gatehouse between the inner and outer wards hints at a thirteenth century origin for the stone fortifications of the castle but give no firm indication of this.¹¹ The hall described above dated from 1312-3 and was built at a cost of £50. The results of a survey by William Martyn, justiciar of South Wales, in 1315 indicates that the castle was otherwise in a poor state requiring, by Martyn's estimate, repairs to the value of £60. It is uncertain how much money was actually spent, but by February 1317, the chamberlain of South

⁹ Parry, 'Excavation and Survey of Newcastle Emlyn Castle', 11-13.

¹⁰ R.F. Walker, 'The Fourteenth Century Surveys of Newcastle Emlyn and the building programme of 1347-8', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 28 (1992), 37.

¹¹ C. Parry, 'Survey and Excavation at Newcastle Emlyn Castle' in *Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 23 (1987), 19-21.

Wales was informed that 'the gate and houses of the gate' of the castle were repaired according the king's previous orders. Despite this, the survey of 1320-1 strongly suggests that these towers had only been started and not completed. This indicates that the two storey gatehouse was begun only during the reign of Edward II and was not a feature of the castle in 1287-8.¹²

D.J. Cathcart King was of the view that the inner ward had no tower when built and was unsure of the existence of the outer ward.¹³ He also considered that the inner ward was constructed without flanking towers and that a tower in the south west corner of the inner ward was added at the same time as the twin storeyed gatehouse in the reign of Edward II. Walker notes that by the time of the 1347 survey this south western tower was known as the 'Wardrobe Tower' and in little need of repair. Walker suggests that only three 'brattices' built in the corners of the castle circa 1317 were required because this south western tower (Parry's 'South Tower', part of which was still standing in 1922) was already in situ. Since very few masonry castles constructed by Welsh princes lacked towers, Walker suggests that this tower served as the keep of Rhys's castle and was extant in the thirteenth century.¹⁴

Of passing interest is that in the inventory of the castle stores in 1320-1 contained 'six shields of the arms of England' which had probably been part of a consignment of 200 shipped from Bordeaux in the winter of 1287-8 destined for the king's castles in Wales as symbols of royal ownership. Their existence here, in a castle so expensively captured in that winter and in such poor repair thirty years later is richly ironic.¹⁵

Prelude

The immediate prelude to the action against Newcastle Emlyn was a siege of the more formidable castle of Dryslwyn. Earl Edmund reached Carmarthen on 8 August and planned an assault on Rhys's fortress of Dryslwyn, with siege equipment brought from Bristol. This siege lasted three weeks from 13 August, during which mining beneath the castle chapel led to a spectacular roof collapse that killed some leading commanders. Rhys escaped, though most of his adherents surrendered. On 24 September the castle and Rhys's estates were granted to Alan (II) de Plugenet; the stronghold of

¹² Walker, op. cit., 38.

¹³ D.J.C. King, *Castellarium Anglicanum*, i, (1989), 59.

¹⁴ Walker, op. cit., 45.

¹⁵ Walker, op. cit., 39-40, citing A.J. Taylor, *The King's Works in Wales 1277-1330*, (London, 1974), 364, n. 1.

Newcastle Emlyn was captured too with little by way of resistance; Rhys and his forces were evidently concentrated at Dryslwyn. This was an expensive operation requiring loans from Italian merchants; according to J. E. Morris the total cost exceeded £10,606.¹⁶ The annals of Thomas Wykes claim that Gilbert de Clare (d. 1295), earl of Gloucester and other marcher lords urged Earl Edmund to grant a truce: they may have sympathized with Rhys's resistance to royal encroachments, and Rhys's mother was related to several of them. When Earl Edmund retired to England after the fall of Dryslwyn, Rhys was still at large.¹⁷

Narrative

Rhys's movements in October 1287 are unknown, but forces were maintained in the Tywi valley against the risk of further rebellion. On 2 November 1287 Rhys suddenly attacked and captured Newcastle Emlyn by night and seized its constable, Roger Mortimer.¹⁸ Two days later, men from the commotes of Caio and Mabelfyw in northern Carmarthenshire plundered Llandovery leading away 200 head of cattle. John Giffard's lordship of Llandovery, which comprised the two commotes of Perfedd and Hirfryn remained loyal to royal government. On 6 November, the earl of Hereford, who was doubtless concerned for his lordship of Brecon, was granted control of Llandovery and the northern part of the adjacent commote of Mallaen in Cantref Mawr, Carmarthenshire and thus took charge of the defence of the upper Tywi valley; on 14 November other marcher lords and castle constables including the constables of Builth, Carmarthen and Alan de Plugenet of Dryslwyn were told to be vigilant.

Yet Rhys evaded capture and only at the end of December were steps taken to recover Newcastle Emlyn.¹⁹ A great siege engine was dragged from Dryslwyn, where it had been used in September, to Newcastle Emlyn. The route it took, hauled by 40 Oxen, can be clearly established. On 28 December it reached Carmarthen and from there, day by day, it was hauled to St. Clears, Cilgerran (where the beasts were supplied with fodder by a grange of Whitland Abbey) and reached Cardigan by 31

¹⁶ Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 219.

¹⁷ *Annales Monastici*, iv, ed. H.R. Luard 310–11; R. A. Griffiths, 'Rhys ap Maredudd (d. 1292)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48563>, accessed 12 Dec 2012]

¹⁸ This Roger Mortimer held lands in the Cardiganshire commote of Genau'r Glyn; R.A. Griffiths, *The Principality of Wales*, 11. With his sons Llywelyn and Hugh he was leader of forces securing Cardiganshire Is Aeron as far as Cardigan in June 1287 – TNA E 101/4/19 in Byerly and Byerly (eds), 477.

¹⁹ R. A. Griffiths, 'Rhys ap Maredudd (d. 1292)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48563>, accessed 12 Dec 2012].

December. The size and cumbersome nature of the engine is indicated by the fact that the roads from Cardigan along the northern bank of the Teifi had to be prepared for its advance as far as Llandygwydd, where twenty more oxen were found to assist the 40 beasts that had dragged the machine from Dryslwyn. There the oxen and the army were rested for a week before the engine was dragged before the castle, over a hastily constructed wooden bridge across the river. The siege engine's nature is not described in the documents but it seems likely that it must have been a form of catapult. For six days, the castle was bombarded with stones gathered from the seashore and brought by boat as far as Llechryd before being carted to the castle under the direction of the local officials in the commote of Iscoed.

Troops and Casualties

Details of the forces defending Newcastle Emlyn are extremely scant. The *Annales Cambriae* records that a great number of Rhys's supporters were slaughtered at the castle but no quantity is given.²⁰ In contrast, the nature of the English besieging forces is known to an extraordinary level of detail.

The most important feature of the siege was the transportation of a large siege engine from Dryslwyn where it had been used against Rhys' forces in August and September to Newcastle in the depths of winter. The teams of oxen and their attendants made an army in themselves and they were protected by large numbers of footsoldiers. These are recorded in the accounts of monies paid out by the justiciar of West Wales, Robert Tibetot in a special account roll, preserved at The National Archives as TNA E 101/4/21.

A detachment of around 500 men was formed by the justiciar of West Wales, Robert Tibetot from among the local levies to accompany the siege engine from Dryslwyn to Newcastle Emlyn. The precise strength of these levies varied but the largest group were drawn from Cardiganshire. They were supplemented by men from various commotes of Carmarthenshire (including Penrhyn, Widigada and Elfed) as well as the lordships of Kidwelly and Laugharne. It should also be noted that soldiers were recruited from Ystlyf (Oysterlow), Penliniog and Amgoed, since 1285, nominally in the possession of Rhys's wife. As was normal for the period, these were foot soldiers led by mounted constables on 'covered' (*coopertis*, that is, armoured or protected) or 'uncovered' (*discoopertis*) horses. All appear to have been local men led by local landowners including Llywelyn Mortimer, son

²⁰ *Annales Cambriae*, 110.

of the captured constable of Newcastle Emlyn, Roger.²¹ In addition to the ordinary footsoldiers and their constables were a pair of mounted crossbowmen (*Balistarii*) paid at the premium rate of 6d per day, three times that of the ordinary foot soldiers. Their origins are not stated but these were specialist troops who might have been provided by urban communities in England such as Bristol or possibly from Gascony. They were joined by nineteen crossbowmen on foot on 28 December who remained with the army until 20 January.²²

Geoffrey Clement and infantry forces from Cardiganshire who had served without pay were given a payment of £10 while Llywelyn ap Rhys Coik, whose horse was killed while in royal service in Ystrad Tywi, received 40s.²³ Not only soldiers were employed and a summary of the other people and animals shown in the accounts is included below:

- Transporting the siege engine required a total of sixty oxen and twenty four men assigned to look after them.
- Sixteen horses were employed to drag eight pieces of lead from Cardigan to Llandygwydd and then local men to take the lead to Newcastle Emlyn.
- Four masons from Cardigan were employed to collect boulders from the seashore for six days and the bailiff of Iscoed to provide horses to carry 480 stones 'pro ingenio' [for the engine] from Lleched to Newcastle Emlyn.
- Cable, ropes, boards, iron and materials for the working of iron, together with two smiths were employed at Cardigan and another, John the smith (paid 6d per day) and his two assistants (paid 2d per day each) for eight days to make various iron nails and effect repairs to the engine.
- Ten carpenters: two master carpenters and three assistants and five others were employed for twenty four days for works on the siege engine. Three other carpenters were recruited from Swansea while a further twenty four Welsh carpenters were employed to construct a bridge over the Teifi to allow the passage of the siege engine.²⁴

Aftermath

²¹ Griffiths, 'The Revolt of Rhys ap Maredudd', 75, n. 81 and TNA E 101/4/21, mm. 1-2, Byerly and Byerly (eds), 481-90.

²² TNA E 101/4/21 mm. 1-2, in Byerly and Byerly (eds), nos. 4088, 4097, 4103, 4110, 4116, 4122, 4128, 4134, 486-90.

²³ TNA E 101/4/21 m. 3, in Byerly and Byerly (eds), no. 4143, 491

²⁴ TNA E 101/4/21 mm. 2-3, in Byerly and Byerly (eds), nos. 4137-4142, 489-91

The castle appears to have fallen to the besieging forces by about 20 January with substantial damage. After the capture of the castle, two master engineers (*magistris machinatroibus*) were paid 26s for unspecified work on the order of the king. This must have been preliminary to works being carried out to make good the damage but the castle was clearly quickly rendered defensible since shortly after this entry in the account is a payment of £4 15s 4d. to one Einion ap Wilym 'pro municione' (to supply or fortify) Newcastle. At the same time, fifteen quarters of grain were bought for the castle at a cost of 60s. Although we have records of the forces raised in Cardiganshire to search for Rhys ap Maredudd and his adherents, we have no further references to the garrison that was placed in Newcastle Emlyn.

Despite the fact that the revolt was based largely on personal grievance, the oppression of royal officials and harsh English government did lend Rhys support in what might otherwise have been an unpopular cause. There is evidence, for example, that the revolt was distributed across west Wales and that sympathisers were to be found in the Braose lordship of Gower. Two of these men, Traihairn ap Hywel and Gwilym Cragh were later hanged for their involvement at Swansea in November 1289.²⁵ Though Gwilym Cragh survived by a possible miracle and was able to relate the tale in 1307, Rhys's revolt was not so fortunate. The capture of Newcastle Emlyn may have ended the revolt, but Rhys himself escaped and remained on the run or in hiding for another four years before he was betrayed, taken to York and executed; subject to the full horror of a medieval traitor's death.

Assessment and Significance

It is likely that nothing now remains of the castle that was besieged in 1287-8. The castle underwent extensive rebuilding in the middle years of the fourteenth century and what little standing masonry is left date from that period although reworked in the sixteenth century, while the castle was in the hands of Sir Rhys ap Thomas. This structure seems to have been extensively damaged in the course of the civil wars in the seventeenth century and parts of the medieval structures may have been deliberately demolished to the render the site more easily defensible. As such, an assessment of any damage inflicted in the course of the siege is probably impossible. It is likely, however, that the siege engine transported from Dryslwyn would have been used from the direction of the modern town,

²⁵ Bartlett, *The Hanged Man*, 34-7

this being the nearest relatively level ground. The small earthwork resembling a motte to the north west of the castle is probably unrelated to this activity: there is no evidence relating to its construction in the records which, given how extensive they are, may be taken as conclusive. Presumably this is the 'old' castle which the 'new' castle succeeded. The difficulty in making a full assessment of the physical impact of the siege is how little is known of the early development of the castle which, in other ways is relatively comprehensively recorded in the historical record. The effect on the castle is difficult to quantify: some initial rebuilding was clearly made, but the extent of it is all but impossible to judge. Clearly it was deemed inadequate and later developments have obscured much of what was present at the time.

Politically, the importance of the capture of Newcastle Emlyn was twofold. First, it completed the Conquest of south west Wales for Edward I who now controlled the whole of Carmarthenshire north of the Tywi. This extended the feudal supremacy of the English crown over Dryslwyn and Cantref Mawr. The second point is that this was achieved using local officials and local resources. With the exception of a handful of crossbowmen, the army that accomplished this operation was almost entirely Welsh, drawn from Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire. Even the enormous army which initially responded to Rhys's revolt was largely drawn from the shires of the Principality – Caernarfon, Merioneth, Anglesey, Cardiganshire and Carmarthen and the Welsh March. This represents Edward's authority and the acceptance of it even in his absence together with the scale of financial resources which the king and his administration could bring to bear on any rebellion.

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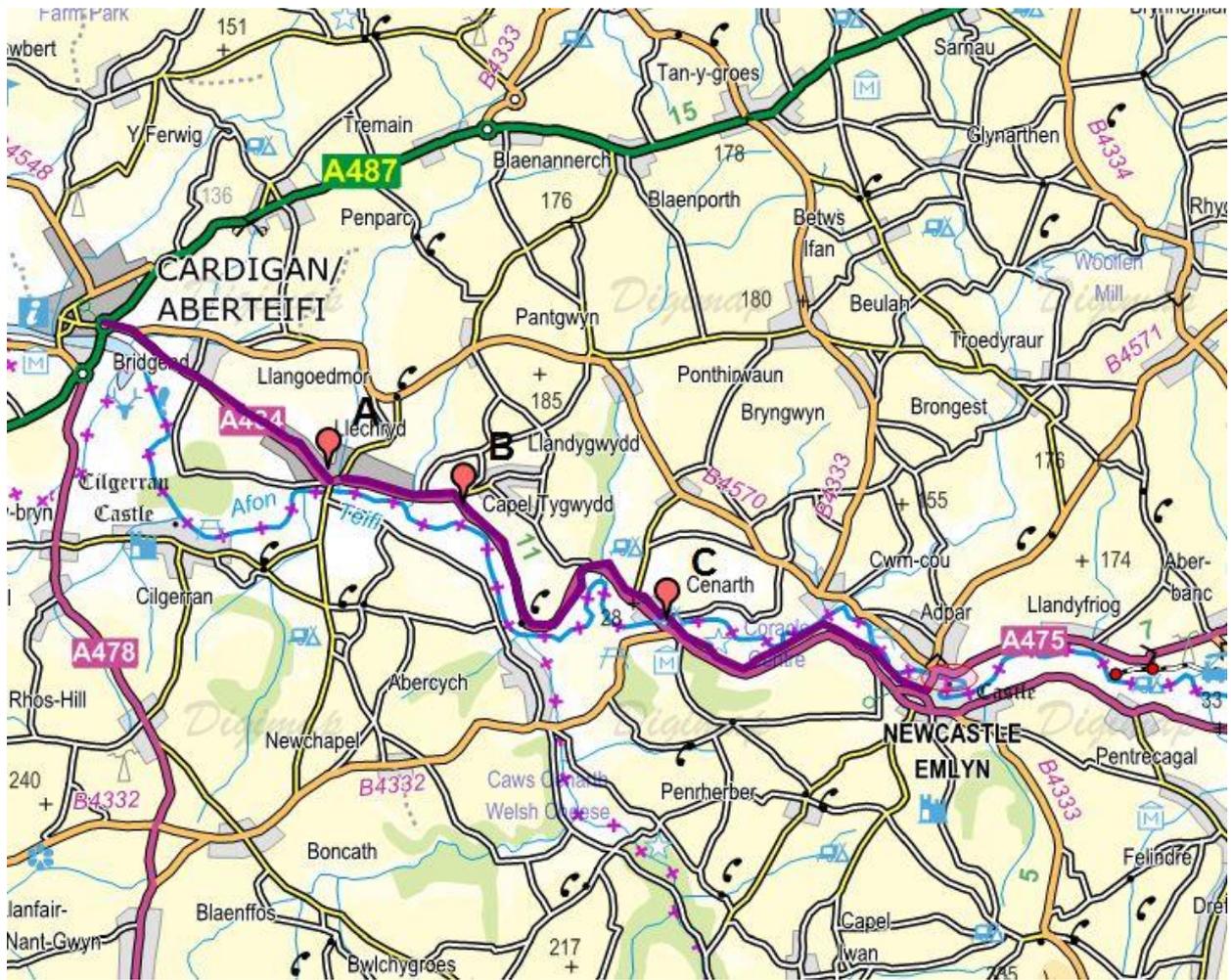
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A – Llechryd: Limit of navigation for boats transporting stones for the siege engine from the sea via the river Teifi

B – Llandygydd: Point to which lead was dragged from Cardigan

C – Cenarth: Probable point at which a wooden bridge was constructed for the transport of the siege engine.

The Purple line shows the likely route over which the siege engine was dragged from Cardigan in December 1287. It had previously been deployed at Dryslwyn and was taken from there along the Tywi valley via Carmarthen and St Clears and thence to Cilgerran, reaching Cardigan by 31 December 1287.