

## 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).*

<b>ENW/NAME</b>	<b>DYDDIAD /DATE</b>	<b>SIR HANESYDDOL/ HISTORIC COUNTY</b>	<b>NPRN</b>	<b>YMCHWIL/RESEARCH</b>
<b>Aberllech</b>	1096	Sir Frycheiniog Brecknockshire	404446	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
<b>Pont Cychod (Menai ac Ynys Môn)</b>  <b>Bridge of Boats (Menai and Anglesey)</b>	1282	Ynys Môn Anglesey	404319	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Bryn Derwin</b>	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)
<b>Bryn Glas (Pillth)</b>	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>
<b>Campston Hill</b>	1404	Sir Fynwy Monmouthshire	402328	<p>Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009)</p> <p>Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009)</p>
<b>Cilgerran</b>	1258	Sir Benfro Pembrokeshire	405201	<p>Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013)</p> <p>Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)</p>
<b>Coed Llathan</b>	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>
<b>Castell Coety (gwarchae) /Coity</b>	1404-05	Morgannwg	545701	<p>Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)</p>

<b>Castle (siege)</b>		Glamorgan		Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Coleshill</b>	1157	Sir y Fflint Flintshire	402325	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (2009)  Documentary and historical research (2009)
<b>Craig y Dorth</b>	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)
<b>Crug Mawr</b>	1136	Sir Aberteifi Cardiganshire	402323	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009)  Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009)
<b>Castell Cymaron (gwarchaeau) / Cymaron Castle (sieges)</b>	1144 1179 1195 1215	Sir Faesyfed Radnorshire	545328	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
<b>Cymerau</b>	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)
<b>Castell Dinbych (gwarchae)/ Denbigh Castle (siege)</b>	1282	Sir Ddinbych  Denbighshire	545687	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Castell Dinbych (gwarchae)/ Denbigh Castle (siege)</b>	1294-5	Sir Ddinbych  Denbighshire	545613	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Castell Dinbych (gwarchae)/ Denbigh Castle (siege)</b>	1460	Sir Ddinbych  Denbighshire	545718	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Castell Dinbych (gwarchae)/ Denbigh Castle (siege)</b>	1468	Sir Ddinbych  Denbighshire	545720	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Castell Dinbych (gwarchae)/ Denbigh Castle (siege)</b>	1646	Sir Ddinbych  Denbighshire	545789	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Castell Dryslwyn (gwarchae) / Dryslwyn Castle (siege)</b>	1287	Sir Gaerfyrddin  Carmarthenshire	545605	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
<b>Carregwastad - Abergwaun (ymosodiad) / Carregwastad Point - Fishguard (invasion)</b>	1797	Sir Benfro  Pembrokeshire	308824	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009)  Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009)

<b>Gŵyr/ Gower</b>	1136	Morgannwg Glamorgan	404856	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
<b>Grosmont</b>	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)
<b>Hyddgen</b>	1401	Sir Drefaldwyn Montgomeryshire	402310	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Pont Irfon (Llanganten) / Irfon Bridge /</b>	1282	Sir Frycheiniog Brecknockshire	403411	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Cydweli / Kidwelly</b>	1258	Sir Gaerfyrddin Carmarthenshire	404729	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
<b>Castell Talacharn (gwarchae) / Laugharne Castle (sieges)</b>	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)

<b>Maes Gwenllian</b>	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)
<b>Maes Moydog</b>	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)
<b>Trefaldwyn / Montgomery</b>	1644	Sir Drefaldwyn Montgomeryshire	405168	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
<b>Mynydd Carn</b>	1081	Sir Benfro Pembrokeshire	300319	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009)  Documentary and historical research (Border Archaeology, 2009)
<b>Castell Newydd Emlyn (gwarchae) / Newcastle Emlyn (siege)</b>	1287-8	Sir Gaerfyrddin Carmarthenshire	545606	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)  Documentary and historical

				research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Castell Newydd Emlyn (gwarchae) / Newcastle Emlyn</b>	1645	Sir Gaerfyrddin Carmarthenshire	545768	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Gwrthryfel y Siartwyr, Casnewydd / Newport Chartist Uprising</b>	1839	Sir Fynwy Monmouthshire	405003	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Border Archaeology, 2009)  Documentary and historical research (Border Achaeology, 2009)
<b>Painscastle</b>	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)
<b>Pennal</b>	1472/4	Meirionnydd Merioneth	403495	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Chapman, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Chapman, 2013)
<b>Pentraeth</b>	1170	Ynys Môn Anglesey	404315	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
<b>Pwllgwdig</b>	1078	Sir Benfro	405188	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol

		Pembrokeshire		(Gildas Research, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
<b>Pwll Melyn</b>	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)
<b>Castell Rhaglan (gwarchae) / Raglan Castle (siege)</b>	1646	Sir Fynwy Monmouthshire	545797	Ymchwil ddogfennol a hanesyddol (Gildas Research, 2013)  Documentary and historical research (Gildas Research, 2013)
<b>Sain Ffagan / St Fagans</b>	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)
<b>Twthill</b>	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 – April 1645



**County:** Carmarthenshire

**Community:** Newcastle Emlyn

**NGR:** SN31144072

**NPRN:** 92783

**Report Author:** Dr Adam Chapman

**Date:** February 2013



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



## Siege of Newcastle Emlyn (April 1645)

### Introduction

Newcastle Emlyn changed hands a number of times in the course of the Civil War. Initially re-fortified by the local royalist commander, it was quickly lost to parliamentary forces who held it until its capture by Sir Charles Gerard in 1644. Major-General Rowland Laugharne besieged it for Parliament in 1645 but was routed by Gerard in a fierce engagement below the castle walls on Easter Sunday, 1645. The castle was eventually re-taken by parliament towards the end of 1645. After the general surrender of the Royalists, the castle was blown up to make it indefensible and, according to a source of 1700, the castle was plundered and has been neglected ever since.

### Primary and Secondary Sources

Conventional governmental records are limited in this time of civil conflict. There are no records of the payment or precise lists of the numbers of soldiers involved in west Wales; 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. 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, been more political and cultural in its nature, Mark Stoyle's excellent 'Ethnic History' of the English Civil War, *Soldiers and Strangers*, being a case in point.<sup>1</sup> These works 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 an understanding of the narrative of the war. Considerations of the Civil War in Wales have tended to proceed on a county by county basis and no study currently covers Carmarthenshire though episodes on the war in the county appear in several works on Pembrokeshire, notably the relevant volume of the county history and A.L. Leach's *The Civil War in Pembrokeshire and its*

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

*borders 1642-49*.<sup>2</sup> Both works, however, draw heavily on J.R. Phillips's two volume work describing the conduct of the war in Wales and publishing a selection of primary sources.

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. The civil wars in west Wales were concentrated in Pembrokeshire

The earliest coherent account of the Civil War in Wales is found in the first volume of Phillips's work and later historians have drawn extensively upon this. In the specific case of Newcastle Emlyn, a short narrative of the facts then known and a record of local traditions were gathered by the reverend Evan Gruffydd and published in *Y Cymmrodor* in 1922.<sup>3</sup> We still lack a full and detailed modern narrative of Wales in the Civil Wars taking into account twentieth century scholarship. The only detailed and reasonably comprehensive account of these wars is J.R. Phillips's *Memorials of the Civil Wars in Wales and the Marches* which remains influential; almost all the other secondary surveys for areas of Wales lean heavily upon it. In two volumes, Phillips's work provides both a bare narrative account and a number of original sources. What it lacks is full scholarly referencing and contextualisation. Ronald Hutton's *The Royalist War Effort* goes some way toward providing a clear account of the vagaries of fortune by the Royalists in Wales but there is clearly more work to be done as specialists in the field acknowledge.

### **Archaeological Investigations**

The castle has been subject to several archaeological investigations. 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 real 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

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<sup>2</sup> A.L. Leach, *The Civil War in Pembrokeshire and its borders 1642-49* (London, 1937).

<sup>3</sup> Rev. Gruffydd Evans, 'The Story of Newcastle Emlyn and Atpar to 1531 with concluding survey', *Y Cymmrodor* 32 (1922), 58-170

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.<sup>4</sup>

An iron and lead canon ball, presumably dating from the siege, was recovered in excavations at Newcastle Emlyn exists in the Ceredigion Museum collection [cat. No. 1977.7.1].

### **The Castle in 1644**

Very little of the structure of the castle that was present in the seventeenth century has survived until the present. 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 estimate can be made of the changes brought about in the course of the Civil War.

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

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<sup>4</sup> 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.

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 the siege in question.<sup>5</sup>

The castle occupies a low plateau and 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 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.<sup>6</sup>

The castle consisted of two wards. The outer ward may well have been abandoned before 1350 since it was in a deplorable state in the 1343 survey and was not mentioned at all in the survey made in 1532. It is far from clear whether this ward was part of the original thirteenth century castle but it is by far the most important area in the context of the Civil War period. The principal alteration to the medieval structure in the outer ward made in the course of the Civil War is the 'Ravelin' immediately in front of the gatehouse between the inner and outer wards of the castle which is possibly the site of a barbican. Parry gives the following description of the earthwork as it now exists:

The ravelin is a substantial earthwork measuring 35 metres north-south and 30 metre east-west. It is separated from the outer ward by a dry moat which is a minimum of 7 metres wide and 1 metre deep. To the north this moat runs into a quarry pit and to the south may be associated with a linear feature. This feature runs from the south of the Ravelin and is composed of two parallel ditches separated by a low bank. The western ditch is the wider of the two, with a minimum width of 5.5 metres and a minimum depth of not less than 1.5 metres. The northern bank and eastern ditch are both approximately 4.0 metres wide and are less well defined.

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<sup>5</sup> 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 survey to 1340. For the dating of 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.

<sup>6</sup> Parry, 'Excavation and Survey of Newcastle Emlyn Castle', 11-13.

This linear feature may be defensive and is perhaps associated with the construction of the ravelin. Whatever its date it clearly represents an attempt to enclose the southern slope of the inner ward area.<sup>7</sup>

Parry goes on to note that the fourteenth century survey evidence suggests the existence of a moat and a bridge in this area – in such disrepair in 1320-1 that no horse could cross it – and there is no evidence of this moat in existence today. The nature of the construction of the ravelin is not known with certainty, though there is evidence of a few courses of mortared masonry included on the south west side. By any standards, this would have presented an impressive and formidable obstacle which appears to have been more than capable of resisting the forces ranged against it during the Civil Wars. A conjectural reconstruction of the possible states of these defences, including the postulated barbican constructed from wood on the western edge of the outer ward is shown on an interpretation board at the end of Castle Street.

Aside from these works, the best guide to the state of the castle on the eve of the Civil War comes from the survey conducted of the castle when it entered royal ownership for the second time in 1532. This indicates that the gatehouse, hall, apparently that described in 1320-1 and repaired in 1347-9, the south tower – which Walker suggests may well have been built in the thirteenth century – a chapel with a cellar, an east range with two storeys, a stable block at the eastern extremity of the site and a substantial curtain wall. The south of this curtain wall was excavated in 1982 revealing that it stood to a height of at least 2 metres in places and it is probable that all of these were standing in 1644.

### **Context: The Civil War in West Wales**

The early phases of the Civil War in west Wales were relatively peaceful. The clearest description of the early phase of conflict in the area comes from Ronald Hutton's biographical note in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography on the royalist commander in the area, Richard Vaughan, earl of Carbery. The parliamentarian propagandist John Vicars called Carbery a man of 'pride and menacing insolencies'.<sup>8</sup> Prior to the war he had shown no interest in politics and at the start of the war was so unknown that he was commissioned by *both* parliament and the king to secure the counties of south west Wales. On 4 April, as part of the establishment of regional royalist commands, Carbery was commissioned lieutenant-general of the three south-western Welsh counties – Cardiganshire,

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<sup>7</sup> Parry, 'Excavation and Survey of Newcastle Emlyn Castle', 14.

<sup>8</sup> John Vicars, *Magnalia Dei Anglicana, or, England's Parliamentary-Chronicle*, 4 parts, 1646, 2.177.

Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire – and instructed to secure them for the king's cause. A system of county committees was established to provide him with the money and recruits for a local army. Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire were firmly royalist, but in Pembrokeshire the towns of Tenby and Pembroke contained a party sympathetic to parliament. The details of this earliest phase of the war are uncertain, but it seems that commanders in the area preferred to adhere to a local truce and wait for the war to be won or lost elsewhere. On 30 August the corporation of Tenby had declared for the king, and by 24 October that of Pembroke had done the same. Carbery appeared to have secured a total and bloodless victory, and was lavishly rewarded. On 24 October he was given an English peerage as Baron Vaughan of Emlyn and on 17 November he was commissioned governor of Milford Haven, a position which gave him direct military control of Pembroke and any outlying forts along the inlet leading to it. It may have been this commission which precipitated a rising among the parliamentary zealots in Pembroke, led by John Poyer, who seized the port and made actual conflict inevitable at last.<sup>9</sup> Carbery, had neither the aptitude nor the training to make an effective general and proceeded to lose his entire command including Newcastle Emlyn by the end of March 1644 to the parliamentary commander Rowland Laugharne.

Prince Rupert appointed Colonel Charles Gerard, one of his most trusted officers, to undertake the task. Gerard's commission extended the area formerly commanded by Lord Carbery to include Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire, thus enabling him to draw upon the resources of south Wales in his re-conquest of the west.

Gerard left Oxford for Wales on 8 May 1644 with an army of 1,000 foot, 700 horse and 200 dragoons. Lord Carbery accompanied him to advise on local conditions. Although relatively small, Gerard's force was enough to overwhelm the Parliamentarians. Either in late May or early June Gerard landed with his army at Black Rock on the coast of Monmouthshire near Chepstow. From there, he drove Parliamentary forces out of Cardiff to secure Glamorgan before advancing westwards. By the end of June, he had captured the whole of Carmarthenshire including the castles of Cardigan and Newcastle Emlyn. Details of the first occasions on which Newcastle Emlyn changed hands appear not to have survived and even the date is currently unknown. The Parliamentary commander Colonel Laugharne abandoned his territorial gains and withdrew his forces to the strongholds of Pembroke and Tenby, from where he could maintain contact with the Parliamentary navy for reinforcements and supplies.

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<sup>9</sup> Ronald Hutton, 'Gerard, Charles, first earl of Macclesfield (c.1618–1694)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008  
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10550>, accessed 04 Jan 2013]

Rather than repeat Lord Carbery's mistake of committing his field army to garrison duty, Gerard consolidated his position by ordering the Welsh gentry to recruit local forces to defend the newly-captured towns and castles and by appointing veteran English officers to command the most important strongholds. Large areas of countryside around the remaining Parliamentary outposts in Pembrokeshire were ruthlessly laid waste to deny support to Laugharne's forces, which remained blockaded in Pembroke. On 2 July, however, Royal forces in England were defeated at Marston Moor and three weeks later, Gerard's forces were withdrawn to England. By October 1644, Gerard was able to leave the region fully garrisoned while he marched with 3,000 troops from Wales to reinforce the King's Oxford army.

### **Prelude**

The details of the resulting engagements – including a combined operation between Parliamentary naval and land forces – were recorded in a letter from Captain William Smith to the Lord High Admiral from aboard the *Swallow* in Milford Haven dated 5 February, 1645 and, rather less reliably, in two newsbook accounts.<sup>10</sup> Captain Smith records the efforts of first Laugharne, with around five hundred horse and two hundred foot, to force the surrender of Cardigan from 21 December. After three days, Laugharne had realised that this task would have been impossible without artillery which was fetched relatively quickly but with some difficulty from Laugharne Castle. Use of this artillery caused the surrender of the castle by 29 December. Laugharne left a small garrison there, probably under Lieutenant-Colonel Powell, and intended to march on the Royalist garrison at Newcastle Emlyn. He was prevented from doing so by the arrival of Royalist forces – apparently numbering 1200 horse and 1300 foot<sup>11</sup> – under Charles Gerard, who broke down the bridge 'between Cardigan and Pembrokeshire', and launched their own siege using guns brought from Bristol. The ensuing relief of the castle and the rout of those of Gerard's forces present is confused, but by captain Smith's account, which is probably the most reliable, four pieces of artillery were taken and 'were slain in the place [i.e. Cardigan] 85, besides those that were slain before the castle. 100 prisoners were taken and their whole forces routed, and I believe in their flight they never looked behind them until they came to Castle Emlyn, which is six [sic] miles from Cardigan.' The Parliamentary newsheet accounts are rather more lurid and insist that all Gerard's force was routed, something disputed by the Royalist press which cited a false rumour that Thomas Myddleton, and his army from North Wales were marching south. The falsehood having been discovered,

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<sup>10</sup> Phillips, ii, document lxix A, 228-9.

<sup>11</sup> Phillips, ii, document lxix A, 229

He [Gerard] charged into them and rescued his cannon. The sum of the rebels' victory being twelve men killed, twenty taken, with two drakes. This action happened yesterday was sennight ; but next night he fell into the rebels' quarters, regained most of his prisoners, and took a whole troop of horse, both officers and common soldiers, which done, he marched after the rebels into Pembrokeshire, to bid them battle if they durst draw out.<sup>12</sup>

Gerard had rendezvoused with Prince Rupert on 9 March at Bridgnorth, Shropshire and 2000 Northern Horse which were returning south from a raid on Yorkshire. By 15 March, the Royalist forces had advanced across Shropshire uniting with Prince Maurice near Ellesmere with the object of relieving Beeston and Chester. Beaten back by parliamentary forces under Brereton the armies divided with Gerard and his forces returning to the March of Wales moving through Montgomeryshire and settling in Newtown around mid-March for a month to levy supplies and recruits from what was then enemy territory. According to a parliamentary source such ruthless grasping alienated the local Royalist Richard Herbert who refused to serve under him. Refreshed, Gerard's aim appears to have been to march on Pembroke at lightning speed and it was this march that brought him to Newcastle Emlyn.

### **Narrative**

We are fortunate to have both Royalist and Parliamentarian accounts of the end of the siege of Newcastle Emlyn in April 1645. Defences of the castle were evidently in good order by the time that parliamentary forces under General Rowland Laugharne besieged the royalist garrison for two weeks prior to being surprised and routed by troops under the command of Charles Gerard in a surprise early morning attack on 23 April 1645.

The Royalist account, included in Phillips ii, 250-1 from Merc. Aulicus, 4-11 May, 1645, p. 1578 is reproduced below:

The manner of that action at Emlyn (for though the certain news of it was brought to court nine days since, yet the particulars came not till this morning) was briefly thus: General Gerard, knowing that all the rebels of Pembrokeshire (with their assistants), under Major-General Laugharne, had besieged a garrison of his Majesty (called Newcastle) at Emlyn, in Carmarthenshire, on the borders of Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire, resolved upon their

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<sup>12</sup> Phillips, ii. Document lxxix B, 233, 4. Merc. Aulicus, February 2-9, 1645. (K. P. 1954, under date February 6.)

speedy relief, and marched above 100 miles in that one week through a country from whence he had no kind of assistance, either of men, money, or provisions; yet came upon the rebels so unexpectedly (by marching in small bodies, several ways) that, till they took some prisoners of his forlorn hope, they did not believe he was in the field. However, the rebels had little time to consult, for General Gerard fell upon them with so well-ordered speed and courage that he presently put them to a total rout, killed 150 in the place (besides those slain in the pursuit which was continued full seven miles), took 486 prisoners, with 20 commanders, besides inferior officers, 120 good horse, one piece of ordnance of 9lb. bullet, almost 700 arms, and (which we cannot omit) among the prisoners were all the English-Irish, whom the Earl of Essex, in his letter to his Highness Prince Rupert, said were to expect no quarter. The bloody consequence of which is now manifest, if his Highness urge their own ordinance against them.

The Parliamentarian Account (included in Phillips ii, 248-9 from a pamphlet, entitled 'An Exact and Humble Remonstrance touching the late conflict of Armies in and near the County of Pembroke', &c. London: Printed by J, M., 1645).

Who sadly remonstrate to your Honours that when it pleased God to give a great blessing to the said county [Cardigan], not only plentifully to cast off, but also for a good while to be nourished and miraculously to be preserved by His great power and providence, raising them so beyond all probabilities from a handful of naked men to become a pretty considerable body of armed men. The resolved Commanders and Worthies there, for discharge of their faithfulness in so great a trust, having a tender eye also to the exonerating and easing of a county almost worn out by the pillaging and oppression of the enemy and necessary quarter of friends, put on a resolution and marched out of their own county to Cardigan, where, after they had possessed themselves of the said town and castle, and indeed wonderfully relieving the said castle afterwards when it was strongly besieged by General Gerard, they besieged the Castle of Emlyn about six miles distant from Cardigan, being the enemy's next and only garrison in that quarter. Where (after they had been there near a fortnight) upon the 27th day of April last, being the Lord's day [i.e. Easter Day] about six o'clock in the morning, there came a very strong party of the enemy's horse from England, besides other foot very numerous, who suddenly and secretly fell upon our men, slew and took most of our foot companies,<sup>13</sup> besides many horse, drove the rest into their

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<sup>13</sup> "400 of our men were killed and taken in the field." *Exchange Intelligence*, No. 2, for May 22.

garrisons, being about 30 miles remote from the place of their defeat, and forthwith advanced into the County of Pembroke, faced Haverfordwest, and summoned it [to surrender].

The accounts are broadly compatible barring an error in date for the arrival of Gerard – 27 April is clearly meant in the Parliamentary Account since this was a Sunday – Easter Day – in 1645. An additional, brief Parliamentary account, noted that ‘400 of our men were killed or taken in the field’. Such a number is in a similar order of magnitude to the figures given by the royalists. Allowing for the propaganda value of the victory and the exhilarating tale of how it was achieved, the numbers in the Royalist account must be treated as reliable. If the account of what was captured by Gerard’s forces at Newcastle Emlyn we might suggest that the failure of the Parliamentary siege after two weeks was in part caused by the lack of artillery – only a single, relatively small piece of artillery was captured – and the difficulty of mounting a frontal assault from the most accessible western side indicates that the ravelin was an effective gun platform.

### **Troops and Casualties**

The size of Gerard’s army is difficult to gauge. It is likely that a significant proportion of the army he had brought with him, a combination of seasoned troops, both mounted and on foot and a number of pressed men from Montgomeryshire.

The size of Laugharne’s army is also difficult to gauge. Clearly they were surprised in the early morning and substantial numbers were captured. By the account of a royalist newsheet, Gerard captured 486 prisoners, with 20 ‘commanders’, besides inferior officers were captured together with 120 good horses and 700 arms killing 150. The total number of parliamentary losses therefore was in the order of 700 men and their weapons. Reverend Evans notes that he was unable to trace where these bodies were buried, but a mass grave somewhere in the parish must be the most likely option.<sup>14</sup> The parliamentary accounts broadly agree with these figures and this must represent a reasonably substantial part of Laugharne’s field army, possibly as many as half if the number of arms captured is any indication. Of those who escaped, it is probable that the majority were mounted and thus able to avoid pursuit as the parliamentary account suggests. The effect of this action – which seems to have claimed very few casualties, was to reduce Laugharne’s capacity to resist in the field almost to nil. This was probably the key factor in the success of Gerard’s success in forcing the

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<sup>14</sup> Evans, ‘The Story of Newcastle Emlyn and Atpar’, 152.

garrison of Cardigan to evacuate and to take Picton and Carew. With Haverfordwest already in his hands, Laugharne and his forces were confined to Pembroke and Tenby. By the time Gerard had further refreshed his forces with new recruits, he was able to leave west Wales in May having installed substantial garrisons with a field force of 2,000 foot and 700 horse.<sup>15</sup> This was a force only slightly larger than that available to Gerard at the beginning of the year when he attacked Cardigan with 1200 horse and 1300 foot.<sup>16</sup>

### **Aftermath**

The immediate aftermath of the raising of the Parliamentary siege by Gerard was spectacular success. The next day he pressed on to Haverfordwest and stormed it. This cut off the outlying enemy garrisons such as Cardigan, which had to be evacuated by sea. The following day he stormed Picton Castle, and four days later took Carew Castle in turn. Within a week, therefore, he had recovered all of the territory lost since his departure from the region in the previous autumn.

Once again he faced the problem of having to keep his opponents penned into Pembroke and Tenby even when they were reinforced by a hostile navy which dominated the coasts. His solution was the same as before, but this time he moved forward his cordon of fortresses much closer to the enemy bases, by garrisoning Haverfordwest and the two castles very strongly and so bottling the parliamentarians into southern Pembrokeshire. He then settled down to recruit again, and by mid-May 1645 was able to leave his garrisons in place under chosen officers while marching to re-join the royal field army once more, with a mobile force of 2000 foot and 700 horse. He had repeated his success of 1644, in a quarter of the time.<sup>17</sup> Carmarthen had fallen to Laugharne by 12 October but the castle at Emlyn remained in Royalist hands until December. The siege was underway by 5 December but had fallen to Colonel Lewes by the middle of the month. Letters sent to Parliament by Laugharne indicate that he had initiated the siege of Newcastle Emlyn in early December but, before 18 December – when the content of the letter appeared in the newsletter ‘Perfect Passages’ – had left part of his regiment, with the ‘countie forces’ under the charge of Colonel Lewes while Laugharne himself ‘owing to the extreme frostiness of the weather’ was looking to head to winter quarters at Haverfordwest with part of his regiment at Aberystwyth. By 19 December, a servant of Laugharne had arrived in person to bring news that the castle had fallen to Lewes’s forces. ‘The

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<sup>15</sup> Hutton, *The Royalist War Effort*, 174-5.

<sup>16</sup> Howells (ed.) *Early Modern Pembrokeshire, 1536-1815* (Haverfordwest, 1987), 193.

<sup>17</sup> Ronald Hutton, ‘Gerard, Charles, first earl of Macclesfield (c.1618–1694)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008.  
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10550>, accessed 04 Jan 2013]

messenger saith he came by Newcastle-Emblim [sic] and that the said castle is surrendered to the use of the parliament, and that he saw the soudiers march out, and divers of them went home to their owne dwellings, which we hope is true but not confirmed by any letters yet.'<sup>18</sup> No confirmation was forthcoming by 23 December 1645, but there is no mention of the possession of the castle thereafter. So far as the castle is concerned, the Civil War ended its use. Following the general surrender of the royalists it was destroyed. According to Reverend Evans, John Lloyd of Cilgwyn. "Gwynionydd" says that after the Restoration some part of the castle was inhabited by a '*haid o ladron haerllug*' [a horde of impudent thieves] who raided the country'. In 1698, Edward Lhuyd describes it as 'dismantled plundered and ever since neglected'; and by 1807 the greater part of the material had disappeared.<sup>19</sup>

### Assessment

There is no doubt that the Civil War greatly changed the nature of the fabric of the castle at Newcastle Emlyn. Though documentary references to this and actions related to the castle in the period of the wars are extremely limited, there seems little doubt that the earthwork remains visible today represent the castle in its final phase of development. The subsequent demolition of the castle buildings would not, to any great degree, detract from the effectiveness of the fortification given the resources available in west Wales. This demonstrates that these modifications were extremely effective in adapting the medieval buildings for the purposes of being a stronghold in the age of gunpowder artillery even if the available evidence suggests that both Royalist and Parliamentarian forces in west Wales were exceedingly short of guns suitable for the task. The Civil War was, however, the last chapter in the history of the castle at Newcastle Emlyn as a fortification though its deliberate destruction indicates that it had proven a successful fortification capable of resisting siege and assault for some time.

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<sup>18</sup> 'Perfect passages of each dayes proceedings in Parliament', 61, 17-24 December 1644, 483, 485.

<sup>19</sup> Rev. Gruffydd Evans, 'The Story of Newcastle Emlyn and Atpar', 152-3.

