

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

Denbigh – 1282

County: Denbighshire

Community: Denbigh

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Siege of Denbigh (1282)

Summary

The winter of 1282 was pivotal in the medieval history of Wales. During it the last independent ruler of native Wales, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd joined a rebellion against English authority initiated by his brother and was killed in its course. The importance of Dinbych/Denbigh in this was that it had become the seat of Dafydd ap Gruffudd, younger brother of Llywelyn after the Treaty of Aberconwy imposed on Llywelyn after his defeat at Edward's hands in 1277. The central position of Dinbych to Gwynedd Uwch Conwy (Gwynedd beyond to the river Conwy, also known as the 'Four Cantrefs' or Perfeddwlad) was strategic – it lay at the centre of the vale of Clwyd and controlled access from the coast into the heart of Gwynedd.

Almost nothing is known by the process by which it was captured or even if there was a siege – in the conventional sense – at all. The same can be said of the nature or position of the structure at the centre of the site of the later which seems to have obliterated all earlier remains. Following the capture of this area of the Vale of Clwyd, it was granted to Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln, as a Marcher lordship. De Lacy was a commander who had been vital to Edward's war effort and who had been at least partially responsible for its capture. His actions as lord of Denbigh shaped the development of the area; he forcibly relocated the native Welsh population from the fertile vale to the less prepossessing uplands and established a castle and borough on the site of Dafydd's *Llys*. This was a symbolic as well as *de facto* usurpation of the Welsh princes.

Context

The thirteenth century in Europe was pivotal in shaping ideas of royal power, authority and kingship. In France, the reign of Louis IX (1226-1270) – venerated as Saint Louis after 1297 – redefined the rites surrounding kingship within France. The French crown exerted a hitherto unprecedented dominance over the affairs of its great lords through the exercise of law and royal justice. One of the French crown's chief lords, the duke of Aquitaine, was also king of England and French developments in royal power were to have wide-reaching practical consequences. Sincere flattery was due to the French kings by imitation: in England, Scotland and in the principalities of Wales the person and personal authority of the king or prince assumed a new importance.

The balance of power in Anglo-Welsh relations was determined by the sword, the bow and the spear, but in the thirteenth century, in Gwynedd in particular, the expanding formality of royal authority redefined these relationship by diplomatic treaties and their terms confirmed, to an increasing extent, in terms of homage and valued in terms of money. In Edward I, England had a ruler determined to discover the extent of his rights and, having identified them, to exploit them to the full. This was expressed through law: he held inquisitions into the English, Welsh and Gascon laws and customs and used their findings to amend, control and contradict. As David Stephenson has shown, Llywelyn ap Iorwerth (d. 1240) and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (d. 1282) sought to extend their reach through formal as well as military means; the two often hand in hand. Essential to this was the creation of a new elite who owed their land and position to the Prince rather than to their kindred.¹ A rapid process of political change in which new offices in the Prince's court had emerged and old ones took on different roles, stone castles were built and large armies assembled characterised the middle years of the thirteenth century in Wales.

Llywelyn ap Gruffudd managed to bring unity to Gwynedd under his leadership and with it, military success and expansion of a distinctly feudal nature. His aim, expressed in the terms of the Treaty of Montgomery forced upon Henry III following Llywelyn's victory over the king's forces in 1267, were expressed in feudal terms. The native rulers of Wales were to do homage to Llywelyn and he in turn would do homage to the English crown. It remains a matter of debate as to how achievable Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's aspirations were. His financial resources were sorely stretched and, as a conqueror of much of Wales, his political power was subject to defections of his Welsh allies and English influence. The difficulty Llywelyn faced after the accession of Edward I in 1272 is best expressed by the late Rees Davies: 'Edward I's imperious, even imperial, concept of the nature of overlordship could not be squared with Llywelyn's concept of a native principality of Wales. Collision was well-nigh inevitable. And so was victory for the one, defeat for the other.'²

Prelude

The conflict between Edward and Llywelyn had first been sparked following Llywelyn's failure to do homage to Edward in August 1275. This had eventually led to war and defeat and with it, peace of Edward's terms which reversed Llywelyn's territorial gains, re-established Llywelyn's brothers Owain

¹ D. Stephenson, *The Governance of Gwynedd* (Cardiff, 1984) and 'From Llywelyn ap Gruffudd to Edward I: Expansionist Rulers and Welsh Society in Thirteenth-Century Gwynedd' in D. Williams and J. Kenyon, *The Impact of the Edwardian Castles in Wales* (Oxford, 2010), 9-15.

² Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, 330

and Dafydd made the prince himself no better than one of Edward's own tenants-in-chief, an equal to the earls of Gloucester or Hereford rather than a man of independent royal dignity. Further conflict was inevitable. The events of the winter of 1282 are far from simple to reconstruct. Edward had invaded Wales following the rebellion of Llywelyn's brother, Dafydd which began around the festival of Easter. Dafydd, as a result of the Treaty of Aberconwy in 1277, had been Edward's vassal and thus his rebellion, which drew his brother in its wake, was against the king, his lord.

Possession of the site of what is now the town of Denbigh, lying to the east of the river Conwy fluctuated over the course of the thirteenth century. Following the Treaty of Woodstock (1247) the *cantrefi* of Rhos and Rhunfoniog were placed under the control of Henry III's officials and at that time, the main settlement of the cantref of Rhufoniog was the *maerdref* of Dinbych, located in the commote of Is Aled and maintained exclusively by a bond population, that is, people tied to the land they lived on and worked. The *cantref* was reconquered by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1256, but in 1277 it was handed over, together with the neighbouring *cantref* of Dyffryn Clwyd, to Llywelyn's brother Dafydd at the instigation of Edward I. Dinbych remained the centre of activity in the area and it has been suggested that it was there that the 'parliament' which resolved to embark upon a policy of attacking royal positions in Wales in the spring of 1282.³ Following the conquest of the area, it was granted to Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln as the new Marcher lordship of Denbigh on 16 October, 1282.

Narrative

No narrative can be written for the siege itself, since nothing specific is known. There are some unusual features in the surviving administrative documents which point to the use of siege equipment in the area and if used this can only have been at Dinbych. That said, a brief reconstruction of the movement of forces in the area of Dyffryn Clwyd can be made and this is of use in understanding the place of Dinbych in Edward I's campaign. The early phases of this campaign appear to have focussed upon the consolidation of Flint, Rhuddlan and Caergwrle, sites of established military significance in the form of stone castles. By the end of August, Edward's forces numbered perhaps 10,500 infantry with as many as 450 cavalry. They advanced south from Rhuddlan through Dyffryn Clwyd, arriving at Ruthin on 28 August. After this point, no significant advance into Rhufoniog though by the middle of September, although an advance was made into Rhos Is-Dulas and a base established at Llangernyw around 7 km north east of Llanrwst. The record

³ Owen, 'Denbigh', 166

evidence suggests that Edward's forces only advanced as far as Llanrwst by January 1283. The direction of Edward's advance around Rhufoniog suggests that Dinbych was the centre of Dafydd ap Gruffudd's resistance but no clear evidence emerges for an English presence at or around what was by then considered the centre of the lordship of Denbigh before 21 October. None of this should be taken as a full reflection of the movements of Edward's army: what it indicates is that resistance was strong in Rhufoniog and possibly that the king's advance was heavily contested. The details, unfortunately, are not apparent in the sources which are available to us.

It may be relevant, however that siege engines, the nature of which is not clearly specified, named 'Pyceyns' and 'Howans' were taken from Chester to Ruthin and thence to Derwen Llanerch, in the parish of Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, 2 km south of Ruthin on 22-3 August. Their presence there is puzzling in the extreme, there being no major fortifications in the vicinity, but it is possible that they could later have been employed at Dinbych. Unfortunately, there is no surviving record of their use.⁴

Troops and Casualties

The number of English forces present can be determined at various points in the course of the period when a siege may have been underway but not with any degree of accuracy. 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. For occasions when the king was not present, there may have been a delay. The number of troops involved in any operations at Dinbych/Denbigh before Edward I arrived at there on 23 October is impossible to determine. Once Edward arrived and remained there with the new lord of Denbigh for ten days, the picture is still unclear, but some detail can be provided. The nature of payments made for activities relating to building rather suggests that any military action had concluded by the time he arrived.

Aftermath

The new Marcher lordship of Denbigh, comprised the commotes of Is Aled, Uwch Aled and Ceinmeirch in the cantref of Rhufoniog, and the commotes of Is Dulas and Uwch Dulas in the cantref of Rhos, was granted on 16 October 1282 to Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln who had largely been responsible for the conquest of these lands.⁵ The nature of the building on this site in 1282 is obscure. Letters dated at Denbigh by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1269 imply a residence but not

⁴ TNA E 101/359/9.

⁵ *Calendar of Chancery Rolls Various, 1277-1326*, 241,

necessarily a castle.⁶ In the view of Taylor, it is probable that the present castle occupies the same site and that it was begun within a few days of the granting of Rhufoniog as a Marcher lordship to Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln on 16 October 1282. Edward was present in Denbigh from at least 23 October and, throughout the last ten days of that month, when the earl was present with Edward I, royal resources from the Wardrobe, to the value of £22 were employed. Taylor notes that a further £19 18s. 6. 0. was expended on 1200 'clays', 'for the construction of the castle' [possibly an artificial motte or bailey?] with most of the remainder being spent of bringing 184 cartloads of timber from nearby woods to the site of the castle together with a cartload of tools from Rhuddlan.⁷ The impression is very clearly given of the erection of a wood and earth fortifications intended to provide protection or royal forces and to give an operational base to secure the locality. Whether this indicates the destruction of existing defences in the course of the earlier siege or their expansion, the suggestion is that the earlier residence was only lightly fortified. Taylor also notes that the payments in the wardrobe accounts were made to men known for their role as surveyors of works: Henry of Greenford and a single payment to Master James of St. George for procuring an unspecified number of 'clays' from Ruthin. It is possible therefore, that the initial phase of the castle and its associated borough which was clearly under way shortly afterwards were surveyed by the Master of the King's works. Taylor's observation that these payments indicate the degree of interconnectedness between the actions of Edward I and the building works of those barons who benefited from their service in Wales remains a valuable one.

Assessment

The principal importance of Dinbych/Denbigh to the events in 1282 comes from the fact that it was the launch point of Dafydd ap Gruffudd's revolt against English rule which quickly escalated into war, the involvement of Llywelyn and the eventual death of both brothers, Llywelyn in battle and for Dafydd the full horror of a traitor's execution, quite possibly the first such instance of public vengeance and humiliation. Like so much else in the war of 1282-3, very little can be said about the conduct of actions around what became the borough of Denbigh with any precision. None of the standing buildings on the site bear any relation to the pre-conquest *Llys* and the present structures have obscured what remains there may have been. We cannot even be certain of their approximate location though it is probable that they occupied the same imposing hilltop site.

⁶ *Cal. Anc. Corr. Wales*, 28

⁷ TNA E 101/3/29, Taylor, *The King's Works in Wales*, 333.

What is apparent is that Edward and his army were present in the Denbigh area for much of October 1282 and that siege engines accompanied the army but were not necessarily deployed there. The nature of these engines and what use – if any – was made of them cannot be established but the site at Denbigh is by far their most likely target. Resistance, however, must have been short-lived which suggests that the site was not heavily fortified and that the defenders were few and relatively poorly prepared. Each of the subsequent sieges of what became Denbigh castle were characterised by long, drawn-out efforts as the castle resisted attempts at assault primarily by its near-impregnable position. That Henry de Lacy was rewarded with a newly-created lordship centred upon Denbigh on 16 October provides us with a clear date by which action at Dinbych had ended – though it had probably ended more than a week earlier – and suggests that it was his efforts that had brought this about but little more. The Welshmen who provided resistance are all but wholly lost to posterity.

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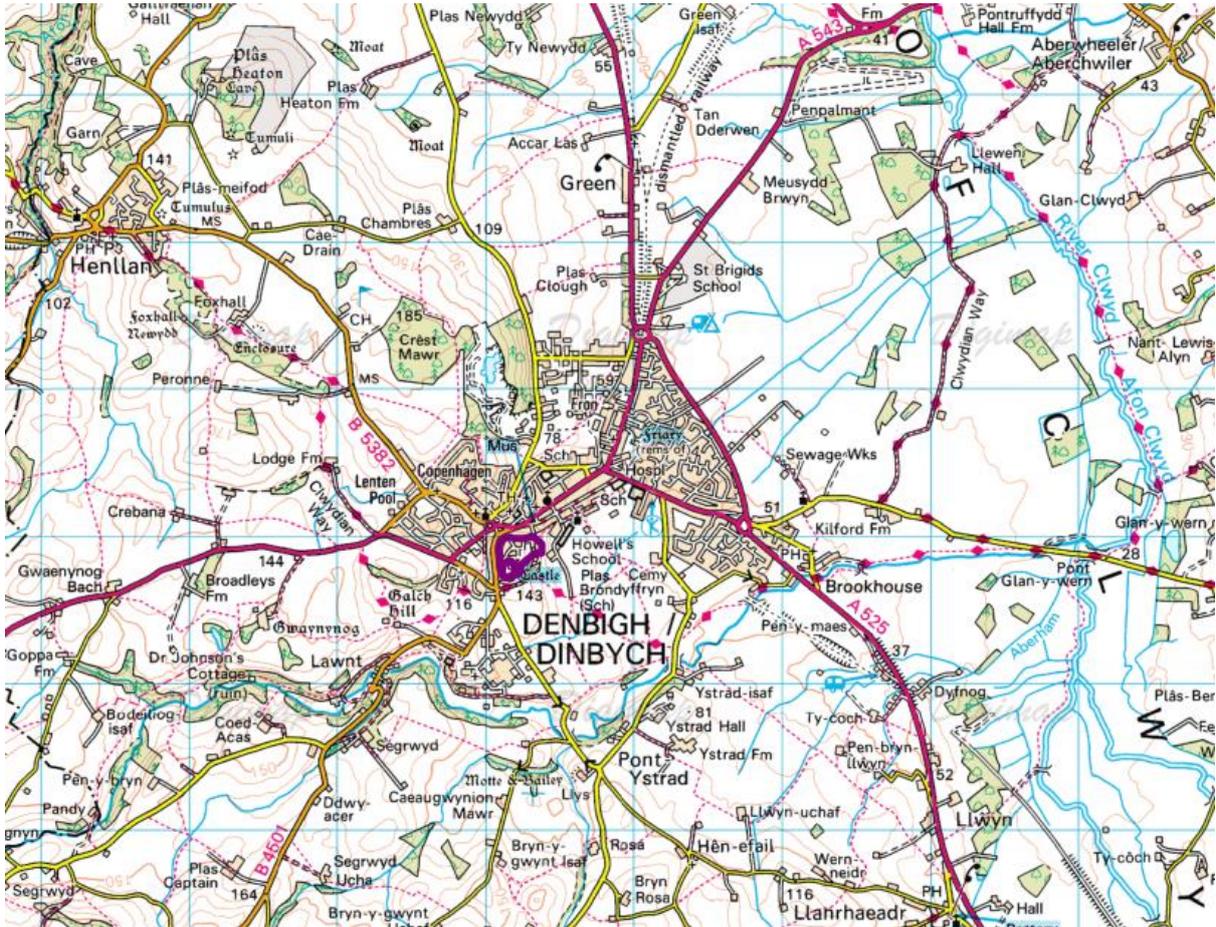
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The highlighted area shows the likely maximum extent of the Castle and borough – within the town walls – of Denbigh in 1294 and probably surveyed and begun in 1282 immediately after its capture by English forces. The early phase of development may well have been surveyed by the Edward I's engineer, Master James of St George taking advantage of a rocky promontory to build what appeared to be an impregnable position. The line of the walls of both borough and castle were probably well-defined by 1294. The majority of the buildings date from the period between 1294 and 1311.