

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 – 1294-5

County: Denbighshire

Community: Denbigh

NGR: SJ0515765771

NPRN: 95209

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Date: February 2013



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Denbigh (1294-5)

Summary

The siege of Denbigh in 1294-5 was only part of a wider rebellion. The newly founded borough and castle were extensively damaged, to the point that the borough had to be effectively begun anew afterwards, a fact witnessed by the grant of a second 'foundation charter' soon after the rebellion had subsided. Like several of the other castles involved in 1294-5, it is likely that Denbigh was in a process of transformation from a temporary fortress of wood and earth to a substantial private castle in what was a near impregnable position. It is difficult to establish what efforts were made by de Lacy and the English crown to retake the castle from the local population and it seems probable that no sustained siege was mounted and that the castle fell back into English hands as the revolt reached its conclusion. The effect of this action, in the longer term, was to render Denbigh one of the most 'English' of the post conquest boroughs. De Lacy had initiated a campaign of forced resettlement of the native population before the rebellion and this was continued thereafter. The walled part of the borough was also probably a direct result of this, though the prosperity of Denbigh was such that less than a decade after its 'refoundation' the majority of the population lived beyond its walls. Archaeologically, the effects of this action are difficult to trace within Denbigh though the effects of relocation of the native population into the uplands of Clwyd may well be; within Denbigh, these are obscured by later development.

Context

The revolt of 1294-5 most significant rebellion in Wales following the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1282 and the defeat and death of his brother Dafydd and the subsequent settlement of law and territory, formally declared in the Statutes of Rhuddlan in 1284. The causes of the rebellion in were twofold: undeniable discontent following oppressive governmental intervention in the decade after the Conquest and, in the shorter term, a harsh taxation assessment in 1292-3. The newly created county of Merioneth, for example, was assessed to pay £566, more than a third of the sum (£1604) which was to be levied from the far richer county of Essex ten years later. It can be no accident that the rebellion began on the date that an instalment of the lay subsidy was due, 30 September.¹ The

¹ Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, 382, Williams Jones, *The Merioneth Lay Subsidy Roll, 1292-3*, xxxiv-xxxv.

advent of the rebellion also coincided with Edward's recruitment of soldiers from Wales to serve in Gascony.

The revolt was a serious threat to English government in Wales. It affected almost the entire country: the royal lands in north and south Wales (the shires of Anglesey, Merioneth and Caernarfon; Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire), established Marcher lordships such as Brecon and Glamorgan as well as those founded after the conquest; Denbigh and Dyffryn Clwyd.

The leadership of the revolt varied across Wales. In the north, its leader was Madog ap Llywelyn, 'an embittered member of a cadet segment of the Gwynedd royal family whose forebears had been rulers of Meirionydd'. In the south east, it was led by Morgan ap Maredudd, of the dynasty of Machen and Caerleon. Although Morgan had been an adherent of both Llywelyn and Dafydd ap Gruffudd, in 1294 – and indeed, as long ago as 1277 – his primary discontent was with the lord of Glamorgan, Gilbert de Clare. Later, the revolt in Glamorgan was subsequently called 'the war against the earl' and transferred the community of the lordship transferred their homages from the earl to the king.² Elsewhere, other local leaders drawn from ancient dynasties took the lead in Brecon and Cardiganshire.

It was, Rees Davies stated, 'a classic anti-colonial revolt'. English officials were killed – notably Roger Puleston, sheriff of Anglesey and Geoffrey Clement, deputy justiciar of South Wales – castles were taken, including Denbigh, Caernarfon, Ruthin, Hawarden and Morlais (Glamorgan). Madog ap Llywelyn took as his title, 'Prince of Wales'.

Edward I was taken by surprise but his response was swift and characteristically devastating. Overriding distinctions between Marcher lordships and royal lands, Wales was treated as a single military unit. Three armies were assembled to squeeze the rebels into submission. The largest, containing 16,000 infantry met the king at Chester; a second force was assembled at Montgomery for mid- Wales while the third was gathered at Brecon and Carmarthen. Supplies were mobilised effectively by sea to relieve the besieged castles of Cricieth, Harlech and Aberystwyth. A combination of winter weather and successful guerrilla tactics confined Edward to Conwy from January to March 1295; but with spring, and a succession of decisive English victories, of which Maes Moydog on 5 March 1295 was one, the revolt collapsed quickly. Early in April 1295, Edward

² Ancient Petitions 217, no. 6839

embarked on a circuit of Wales, receiving submissions, taking hostages and issuing commands on the way. By 17 July, he left Wales able to turn his attention to matters in Gascony.

Primary Sources

The earliest charter for the town, now preserved in The National Archives among the records of the Duchy of Lancaster, is dated 1 October 1285 and presents a clear picture of the borough as it existed on the eve of the rebellion. It records the existence of sixty-three burgesses, each of whom held a single burgage plot 'en notre ville' [in our town].³ A second charter, from a slightly later date [c. 1295-1300] which survives within the corporation muniments, shows that some reorganisation of the borough had taken place and lists a total of forty-five burgages held by thirty-nine burgesses, along with the conditions by which they held their lands.⁴ These sources provide the clearest demonstration of the effects of the 1294-5 rebellion on the development of the borough. Accounts of the rebellion itself derive largely from chronicles and from the financial accounts of the English crown. In general, these have relatively little to say about Denbigh.

Summary of secondary Studies

The history of the borough of Denbigh has been long studied and benefits from many surviving documents, notably the great survey of the lordship dating from 1334. Though not relevant to this particular event, this, and many other documents were published in 1860 by John Williams and had informed his earlier (1856) descriptive history of the borough. Although not comprehensive, and subject to a few minor errors, Williams' interpretation has remained influential and his provision of the documents in printed edition is useful. The most recent and comprehensive account of the development of the borough, which stems from an increased interest in the study of urban settlement in Wales, is by Dorothy M. Owen and draws upon a wide variety of sources and academic work.

The context and prelude to the siege

Edward de Lacy, earl of Lincoln, was responsible for conquering much of the area which became the lordship of Denbigh and was granted the commotes of Is Aled, Uwch Aled and Ceinmeirch in the

³ TNA DL 42/1 ff. 30v, 31r, 31v.

⁴ A transcript is in Williams, *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, 302-3.

cantref of Rhufoniog, and the commotes of Is Dulas and Uwch Dulas in the *cantref* of Rhos, on 16 October 1282.⁵ The bond settlement of Dinbych had been the centre of the area prior to the conquest and, with the great rock on which Denbigh castle now stands at its centre, it was the natural choice for the establishment of the urban, military and administrative centre of the new lordship of Denbigh. The foundation of boroughs was an essential element of the post-conquest settlement throughout Wales and formed a key plank in the socio-political policies of the English crown. Extensive immigration was encouraged with the granting of exclusive trading privileges and led to the creation of an English colony or ‘Englishry’ within the lordship. Denbigh was the largest of five identifiable urban – and thus Anglicized – zones within the lordship.

The capture of the newly established castle and borough of Denbigh and its subsequent siege by English forces formed part of the most significant rebellion in Wales following the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1282 and the defeat and death of his brother Dafydd and the subsequent settlement, the statutes of Rhuddlan, proclaimed in 1284. The causes of the rebellion in were twofold: undeniable discontent following oppressive governmental intervention in the decade after the Conquest; in the shorter term, a harsh taxation assessment in 1292-3. The newly created county of Merioneth, for example, was assessed to pay £566, more than a third of the sum (£1604) which was to be levied from the far richer county of Essex ten years later. It can be no accident that the rebellion began on the date that an instalment of the lay subsidy was due, 30 September.⁶ The advent of the rebellion also coincided with Edward’s recruitment of soldiers from Wales to serve in Gascony.

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

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

⁶ Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, 382, Williams Jones, *Merioneth Lay Subsidy Roll, 1292-3*, xxiv-xxxv.

which in the tinder-dry political atmosphere in Wales could easily lead to conflagration.⁷ The revolt was a serious threat to English government in Wales. It affected almost the entire country: the royal lands in north and south Wales established Marcher lordships such as Brecon and Glamorgan as well as those founded after the conquest; Denbigh and Dyffryn Clwyd.

While the general motivations for the rebellion of 1294-5 are understood as being a reaction to the impositions of English rule and the demands of taxation, in the Marcher lordship of Denbigh, we can be more specific about the motivation of the rebels. Their lord, Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln, had begun a program of territorial apartheid; the Welsh population of the lordship was forcibly resettled to create an English enclave around the newly established castle and borough of Denbigh. Although this process was in its infancy in 1294-5, enforced resettlement from the fertile lowlands of the lordship to the less prepossessing upland territories was greeted with inevitable antipathy.⁸

Edward I was taken by surprise by the outbreak of the revolt, but his response was swift and characteristically devastating. Overriding distinctions between Marcher lordships and royal lands, Wales was treated as a single military unit. Three armies were assembled to squeeze the rebels into submission. The largest, containing 16,000 infantry met the king at Chester; a second force was assembled at Montgomery for mid-Wales while the third was gathered at Brecon and Carmarthen. Supplies were mobilised effectively by sea to relieve the besieged castles of Cricieth, Harlech and Aberystwyth. A combination of winter weather and successful guerrilla tactics confined Edward to Conwy from January to March 1295; but with spring, and a succession of decisive victories, notably by the earl of Warwick at Maes Moydog near Welshpool (5 March), the revolt collapsed quickly. Early in April 1295, Edward embarked on a circuit of Wales, receiving submissions, taking hostages and issuing commands on the way. By 17 July, he left Wales able to turn his attention to matters in Gascony.

Narrative of the conflict

The basic outline of the military actions around Denbigh in 1294-5 is reasonably well understood. The castle begun in October 1282 was clearly defensible shortly after its commencement. Denbigh Castle was in the hands of the Welsh community and attempts to retake it by de Lacy were

⁷ Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, 380.

⁸ See R.R. Davies, 'Colonial Wales', *Past and Present* 65 (1974), 3-23.

unsuccessful: he was defeated on 11 November and compelled to withdraw.⁹ The buildings whose remains now survive were built in the years after this rebellion, and that their fabric bears few, if any, traces of these actions. It is evident that the structure of the borough, and to an extent, the nature of its inhabitants was substantially changed by the effects of the revolt.

Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln and lord of Denbigh was nominated as one of the commanders for the king's expedition to Gascony and, with a view to recruiting men from his lordship, intended to arrive there on 11 November 1294 only to be driven away by local inhabitants, presumably the native Welsh rather than the new settlers in the borough.¹⁰ The revolt concluded by 29 June 1295 when a number of specified Welshmen from each commote in the lordship offered, on behalf of their communities and in return for a pardon, a sum of £3000 to Henry de Lacy.¹¹

Little is known about the nature of the revolt and its effects on Denbigh town and lordship. Edward I himself arrived at Derwen Llanerch in the upper Clwyd valley on 17 December 1294 remaining there until 19 December. From Derwen, Edward moved down through the Vale of Clwyd with around 5000 infantry through Llech in Kinmeirch and Henllan, a little over two miles north west of Denbigh presumably for the purpose of the reducing the rebels there and in the lordship of Ruthin. The bulk of Edward's army was not with him having been left at Rhuddlan and probably met him at Abergele on 23 December. When the king moved westward shortly afterwards, he left Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln and lord of Denbigh at Rhuddlan with approximately 2500 troops. Whether resistance was ended by this intervention or not is unclear. It is entirely possible that it was.

Soldiers and Casualties

Little can be said with any certainty on this matter. It is known that a force of 2500 infantry was serving under Henry de Lacy at Rhuddlan in December 1294 until Reginald de Grey took over this command. This much is known from the surviving pay records. Since both men had direct interests in recovering their lordships, we may assume that de Lacy remained in north Wales until the end of the rebellion. Nothing whatsoever is known of the rebels though we may be certain that they were local men.

Aftermath

⁹ Morris, *Welsh Wars of Edward I*, 253.

¹⁰ Hog (ed.), *Trivet*, 333-5.

¹¹ Owen, 'Denbigh', 179-80.

Military operations continued while the king progressed around Wales taking submissions from rebels. He was at Denbigh for this purpose on 13 and 14 July.¹² The effects of the rebellion and the siege of Denbigh are most simply illustrated by the second, undated, 'foundation charter' of the borough. This indicates that both the number of burgesses and burgages has been reduced from the granting of the first charter on 1 October 1285. The number of burgages fell from sixty-three to forty-five (a reduction of 29%), while the number of burgesses was reduced from sixty-three to thirty-nine (38%). We may infer that a number of the burgage plots were lost to the ravages of the rebellion but the fate of most of the burgesses who left between the granting of the two charters is unknown. The displacement of two, Thomas de Seyntpol and Richard de Hereford is recorded and others obviously were compelled to leave. The second charter reveals a second wave of immigration from England into the town and lordship and many of those individuals clearly stayed as they can be identified in a later burgess list of 1310.

The second charter also reveals changes in the physical structure of the borough. In August 1290 a royal charter had released the burgages from paying various dues, including tolls, stallage, murage and pannage and from this we may suppose that no wall was planned, still less executed, around the borough before the revolt.¹³ The second of de Lacy's 'foundation' charters [c. 1295-1300], specified that burgages were held 'dedenx les murs' [within the walls] and curtilages [gardens or crofts associated with the burgage plots] 'dehors le murs' [beyond the walls].¹⁴ The implication, therefore, is that the walls had come to define the town, albeit only for a short period. By 1305, the number of burgages outside the walls greatly outnumbered those within them [52 within the walls, 136 outside them].¹⁵

Significance

The siege of the Denbigh added to the overall costs of the campaign; at £55,000, these were substantial, but the development of the castle and borough was only slightly affected. The extant remains, in large part, date from the period immediately after the revolt; the castle as it now appears was the most physical response to the revolt. Within the wider lordship of Denbigh, the process of territorial resettlement and the importation of English settlers into the lordship

¹² *Book of Prests*, 224

¹³ This charter is cited in the charter of 14 May 1662, extracts of which are translated in Williams, *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, 118-25 and cited in Owen, 'Denbigh', 172.

¹⁴ Owen, 'Denbigh', 170

¹⁵ TNA DL 29/1/2, cited Owen, 'Denbigh', 170.

proceeded apace. A survey of the lordship, conducted in 1334, shows that the best, most fertile lands in Denbigh were occupied, almost exclusively by these English immigrants and their descendants.

The principal importance of the siege was not military but on the development of the borough and lordship of Denbigh. The process of establishing the borough effectively had to be restarted, but this was made easier by the ability of de Lacy to reallocate land in the settlement of Denbigh through escheat; those Welshmen involved in the rebellion were automatically dispossessed and others were forced into forcible land exchanges on unfavourable terms. The effect was to make Denbigh a largely English borough. The few lists of burgesses which survive from the Middle Ages demonstrate that the settlers came to dominate the borough; a rental of 1476, for example, shows only a three burgages – all beyond the walls of the borough – held by someone with an unambiguously Welsh name, Dafydd ap Llywelyn ap Gronw and his wife Ermelen.¹⁶

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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. 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.