

# THE MANOR OF LLANBLETHIAN.

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(Read at Cowbridge, August 14th, 1888.)

LLANBLETHIAN<sup>1</sup> is a parish and manor of considerable extent (over 3,000 acres), situated in the centre of the district known as the Vale of Glamorgan. Lying within it is the ancient borough of Cowbridge, which is a separate parish.

This borough lies upon the great Roman road which runs through Caerwent, Caerleon, Cardiff, and westwards to St. David's. This fact, and the fertility of the district, make it probable that Llanblethian was settled and cultivated from very early times; and, being a district where the most improved methods of agriculture would naturally be adopted, it is not to be expected that many traces of primitive customs would now be found. The manor has been already noticed in the Journal of the Cambrian Archaeological Society *As* (see vol. ix of the 4th Series, p. 14 *et seq.*). At page 241 of the same volume, there is a full statement of the appeal by Richard Syward, in the year 1248, to the King's Court, from a judgment of the Comitatus of Glamorgan concerning the castle of Talavan and land at Llanblethian.

Llanblethian was reckoned one of the Members of Glamorgan, and not to have formed part of the body of the shire; its position in this respect being rather peculiar, as, except Talavan, which was connected with Llanblethian, the other Members were in the hill district. Prior to Syward's time, a family named St. Quentin are said to have held Llanblethian; but I am

<sup>1</sup> The name is said to be derived from "Bleiddyn", the Welsh word for wolf, and used as the Welsh name of Lupus, the companion of Germanus.

not able to refer to any evidence of this, at any rate as regards the manor.

Llanblethian, having come into the hands of the Lords of Glamorgan in the thirteenth century, is included in the description of the property of the last two De Clares, Earls of Glamorgan and Hertford. In the twenty-fourth year of Edward I, on the 7th December 1295, Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, and Lord of Glamorgan, died, and the inquisition *post mortem* on his death contains an extent of Llanblethian, taken at Cowbridge, on the 5th February following, before these jurors :

" John Rubey	William Keting
Richard Fitz John	John de Geteton
William Dolman	William Pryor
Alan Chyk	Michael le Tayleure
Thomas Randolph	William de Valence
John Galwey	John Galeraund
William le Prute	and John Canty."

There does not appear to be a single Welsh name among the jurors. No castle is mentioned in the inquisition, but a garden and fish-pond are referred to. Cowbridge is referred to as a borough. The heir was Gilbert de Clare, son of the deceased earl, then aged four years and upwards.

The next inquisition, being more full, will be dealt with in preference. Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, the heir in 1295, fell at Bannockburn in June 1314, without leaving any issue surviving him, and his estates were partitioned among his three sisters.

The inquisition on his death contains a very full account of Llanblethian, a translation of which I now propose to read :<sup>1</sup>

" Edward, by the grace of God, King of England, Lord of Ireland and Duke of Aquitaine, to his beloved and trusty Bar-

<sup>1</sup> The translation is from an old office copy which has been lately compared by my friend Mr. W. P. W. Phillimore with the original, now in the Public Record Office.

tholomew de Badelesmere, warden of the castles, and of all the lands and tenements in Glamorgan and Morgannon in Wales, or his deputy, greeting. Willing to be certified upon the true value of the castles, manors, vills, and all the lands and tenements, knights' fees, and advowsons of churches, which were of Gilbert de Clare, late Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, deceased, who held of us in chief in the parts of Glamorgan and Morgannon on the day on which he died, and which, by reason of his death, are in our hands, We command you that you cause the castles, manors, towns, lands, and tenements, knights' fees and advowsons aforesaid, by the oath of good and lawful men of those parts, by whom the truth of the matter may be the better known, to be diligently extended, that is to say, how much the said castles, manors, towns, lands, and tenements by themselves as in demesnes, homages, services, rents, villenages, and other issues of lands, and also the said fees and advowsons by themselves, are worth yearly in all issues, according to the value thereof; and that extent, distinctly and openly made, under your seal and the seals of them by whom the same shall be made, you do send to us without delay, and this writ.

"Witness ourself at York, the 15th day of September, in the eighth year of our reign.

"By the King himself."

*"The County of Glamorgan.—Member of the County of Glamorgan.*

*"The Manor of Llanblethian, with the Castle and Country of Talevan, with Lanhari.—An inquisition of the lands and tenements which were of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, in the manor of Llanblethian, Talevan, and Lanhari, on the day on which he died, made the 19th day of September, in the eighth year of King Edward, by the oath of Richard Nerbert, William ap Philip, Aaron ap Howel, Alexander le Priour, John Lang, Stephen de Cappenmore, Michael Tescord, William Pyeres, John Teler, Roger Thorgod, Thomas Deine, and John Henry, who say, upon their oath, that there is at Talevan a certain castle, and it is worth nothing beyond reprise; also they say that in the manor of Llanblethian there is a certain castle begun by the said Earl, and it is worth nothing beyond reprise; and there is a certain messuage, with a grange, oxhouse, and other necessary houses, the case-ments whereof are worth yearly 5s.; and there are two gardens, the profit whereof, as well of the herbage as of the fruit of the gardens, is worth yearly 10s.; and there are 255½ acres of arable land in demesne, and they are*

worth yearly £4 5s. 2d., value of the acre 4d.; and at Talevan there are in demesne 145½ acres of land, and they are worth yearly 24s. 2d., value of the acre 2d.; and there are at Llanblethian 31½ acres of meadow, which are worth yearly 61s. 3d., value of the acre 18d.; and at Talevan there are 33 acres of mountain meadow, which are worth yearly 16s. 6d., value of the acre 6d.; and there are 28 acres of pasture, and they are worth yearly 10s. 4d., value of the acre 4d.; and there are at Llanblethian 36 acres of pasture, which are worth yearly 24s., value of the acre 8d.; also there are certain woods, which are called Kaergriffud New Forest and Old Forest, with the Park and Little Haywode, the profit whereof, as in herbage and pannage, is worth yearly 60s.; and there is there a certain turbarry, which is worth yearly 5s.; and there are three watermills and one windmill, which are worth yearly £16; and there is a fulling-mill, which is worth yearly 40s.; also there are of rents, as well of free as of villein and cottage tenants, English and Welsh, yearly, £23 9s. 6½d., to wit, at the Feast of St. Andrew, 16s. 6d.; at the Feast of Easter, 18s. 3½d.; at the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, 19s. 10d.; and at the Feast of St. Michael, £20 14s. 11¼d.; and there are of the new rents of certain tenants at the Feast of St. Michael, 35s. 8¼d.; and there are two free tenants who render two sore sparrow-hawks, which used to be redeemed for 4s. yearly; and there is a tenant who holds 164 acres and an half, and half a rood of land at Howardefeld, by charter of the said Lord the Earl, and he renders therefore yearly £4 2s. 3¾d., to wit, at Easter and at the Feast of St. Michael in equal portions; and there is one customary tenant who ought to repair the iron-work of five ploughs with the Lord's iron, with shoeing of one beast of the plough, and it is worth yearly 3s.; also there is one customary tenant who makes the wheels of the waggons and carts, with other wood-works belonging to the ploughs of the manor, and it is worth yearly 3s.; and the aforesaid Welsh tenants of Talevan render yearly at the Feast of the Apostles St. Philip and James, for an annual aid, 56s. 8d.; and the aforesaid customary Welsh tenants of Talevan owe 60 autumn works, and they are worth 5s., value of a work 1d.; also they ought to carry sixty horse-load of billet-wood from the Lord's wood at the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, and those works are worth 5s., value of a work 1d.; also they say that there are at Llanblethian forty customary tenants and an half who owe four score and one plough-works at the sowing of wheat and oats yearly, and those works are worth yearly 20s. 3d., value of a work 3d.; also the same [tenants] owe four score and one

harrowing-works yearly, and those works are worth 6s. 9d., price of a work 1d.; also they owe 162 works at hoeing the Lord's corn yearly, with food at the Lord's expense, and those works are worth 6s. 9d., value of the work 1d.; and the aforesaid customary tenants shall mow 39½ acres of meadow, with food at the Lord's expense, and those works are worth [deducting the food] 6s. 8d.; and they shall also make and cock the hay of the aforesaid meadow, and those works are worth 6s. 8d., for the acre 2d.; also they owe 31 works for carrying the Lord's hay from the meadow to the manor with their horses and carts, with food at the Lord's expense, and those works are worth 3s. 9½d., value of a work 1½d.; and they owe nine works at stacking of the hay, and those works are worth 9d.; also they owe 866 autumnal works, and they are worth 72s. 2d., value of the work 1d.; also they owe 31 works of carrying corn in autumn, and those works are worth 3s. 10½d., price of the work 1½d.; and they owe nine works in autumn at stacking of the corn in the grange, and they are worth 9d.; also they say that there are at Llanhari 133½ acres of land in demesne, and they are worth 33s. 3½d., value of the acre 3d.; and there are certain Welsh tenants who hold divers lands and tenements, and render yearly 25s. 8½d., viz. at the Feast of St. Michael, 2s. 3d.; at the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, 14d.; and at the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 22s. 3½d.; also they say that the pleas and perquisites of the Courts of Llanblethian, as well English as Welsh, are worth yearly 10 marks.

"Sum of the value of the aforesaid manor, £82 13s. 5½d. Whereof the Abbot of Neeth receiveth out of the rent of the aforesaid manor yearly in part of £100 of rents which he hath in exchange for certain lands and tenements in the parts of Neeth, £23 5s. 7½d.

"And so there remains £59 7s. 10d."

"*The Town of Cowbridge.*—The jurors aforesaid also say that in the town of Cowbridge there are certain burgesses who hold 277 burgages and an half and the fourth part of one burgage, and render yearly £13 17s. 9d. at four terms of the year by equal portions, to wit, for every burgage, 12d.; and of the aforesaid burgages there are seventeen who hold 16 acres 3½ roods of land, and render yearly at the Feast of St. Michael 16s. 10½d.; and there is a certain prisage of ale which is worth yearly £6 13s. 4d., for every brewing 6d.; and there is the toll of the market of the same town, with the fairs there, at the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and it is worth yearly 40s. with the chenseries, and the pleas and perquisites of Courts are worth yearly 40s.

"Sum of the value of the aforesaid town, £25 6s. 11½d.



"Whereof the Abbot of Neeth receives out of the rent of the aforesaid town yearly, in part of £100 of rents which he hath in exchange for certain lands and tenements in the parts of Neeth, £14 12s. 6½*d.* And so there remains clear £28 14s. 4*d.*<sup>1</sup>

"Sum of the value of the whole manor of Llanblethian and Talevan with the town of Cowbridge, £78 2s. 2*d.*"<sup>1</sup>

"*The Knights' Fees of the aforesaid Earl on the day on which he died.*—The jurors aforesaid also say that Reginald de Somerton holdeth one fee in Marchelmaur, and it is worth yearly £15; Thomas Basset holdeth half a fee in Saint Hillary, and it is worth yearly £10; and Richard de Nerbert holdeth half a fee in Llancovyan, and it is worth yearly . . .

"Sum of the fees, one fee and an half.<sup>1</sup> Sum of the value thereof yearly, £12.

"*The Advowsons of the Churches of the aforesaid Earl on the day on which he died.*—The jurors say that he hath the advowson of the Church of the Thawe, which belongeth to the manor of Llanblethian, and is worth yearly 5s.; also they say that he hath the advowson of the Church of Llanhari, which belongeth to the same manor, and it is worth yearly 5 marks; also they say that the Abbot and Convent of Tewkesbury holdeth the Church of Llanblethian, with the Chapel, to their own use, in pure and perpetual alms, which is worth yearly 40 marks.

"Sum of the advowsons of churches, two advowsons.

"Sum of the value thereof per annum, £7 6s. 8*d.*"

There are many points of interest in this extent. First, the title is "Member of the County of Glamorgan", and in the margin Llanblethian is spoken of as a manor, with the castle and country (Patria) of Talavan. I am not sure whether this expression Patria is not used for an old Welsh division.

The statement as to the castle which was begun in Llanblethian must relate to what has been called in comparatively modern times St. Quentin's Castle. Mr. Clark refers to the fine gateway at Llanblethian at p. 36 of the *Land of Morgan*. By the way, the name of St. Quentin's is a useful caution not to attach much importance to place-names of which the history is unknown, as the above inquisition undoubtedly proves (if

<sup>1</sup> There is obviously a mistake in the reading of some of these figures. The original is illegible as regards figures in this part.

further proof than Mr. Clark's opinion, from the style of architecture, were wanted) that the castle was begun long after the time of the St. Quentins, even if they ever held the manor.

The two free tenants who paid two shillings in lieu of a sparrow-hawk each were probably lords of sub-manors of Beaupré and Merthyr Mawr, or possibly Llancovian, otherwise Llanquian.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the chief interest of the extent is the light it throws on the system of tenancy of the occupiers of the land at this date. In Seebohm's work on the *English Village Community*, the services of the copyhold tenants in England are traced back to very early times, and there is a particularly interesting description of the manor of Tidenham, the extreme limit of Saxon conquest on the north shore of the Severn, for many centuries. The services of the tenants in villenage seem to have been lightened in the interval between the grant of that manor by King Edwy to the Abbot of Bath in 956 and the reign of Edward I, but at the latter date they were heavier than those in Llanblethian. Mr. Seebohm compares the services in Domesday with the Welsh land system in Gwent, where there were thirteen or fourteen villæ under one præpositus, which rendered money and other produce; but the district was not then divided into manors by that name, nor is there any trace of rent being paid in work.

Reverting to Llanblethian, the distinction between English and Welsh tenants will be noticed, and also that the customary Welsh tenants of Talavan owed sixty autumnal works, and ought to carry certain wood. These works owed by the Welsh of Talavan are trifling compared with those due from the  $40\frac{1}{2}$  customary tenants at Llanblethian. The expression  $40\frac{1}{2}$  customary tenants must, I think, mean tenants possessing  $40\frac{1}{2}$  customary holdings; but I have not

<sup>1</sup> St. Hilary and Llancovian were held *in capite* in 1262.

been able to procure any evidence of what the extent of such a holding was.

The works at Llanblethian were :

Two from each tenant or holding,—

81 plough-works at the sowing of wheat and oats

81 harrowing-works.

Four from each,—

162 works weeding the lord's land

The mowing of  $39\frac{1}{2}$  acres

Making and cocking the hay.

About one from each,—

31 works carrying the lord's hay

9 works stacking the hay.

About twenty-one and a half from each,—

866 autumnal works.

About one from each,—

31 works carrying corn

9 works stacking corn.

The Welsh tenants at Llanhari seem to have paid money only, and owed no works, and this money, being payable at three feasts in very unequal proportions, was perhaps a commutation of old food-rents.

The work of one customary tenant of Llanblethian consisted in repairing the ironwork of five ploughs, with shoeing of one beast of the plough. And another's work was to make the wheels of the waggons and carts, with other woodworks belonging to the ploughs of the manor. Such services were common in England.

There seem to have been separate courts for the English and Welsh.

At Llanblethian, even where Welsh tenants owed works at all they were comparatively trifling, and I believe the same will be found to be the case in other manors in Glamorganshire; also that in the pure Welsh districts the tenants did no works, and in later times in these districts there were no copyhold tenants; while in a border district such as Pentyrch there were trifling works. However, the Welsh were not free from corresponding obligations, as, in addition to their chief rents, they used to pay Comortha.



In Llandaff, which was owned by the Bishop from before the Norman Conquest, it appears, from the taxation of Pope Nicholas, that the value of the works was very small.

The evidence seems to show that Llanblethian was settled by the Normans, who introduced English customs and the system of taking rent in the form of work from their customary tenants, but that the latter system was comparatively slightly adopted in the case of the Welsh tenants at Talavan.

Time will not permit to trace the history of the manor of Llanblethian; but it may be worth stating that the works, which were valued at definite amounts in the reign of Edward II, had, by the time of Elizabeth, and probably much earlier, been commuted to a money-rent of  $5\frac{1}{2}d.$  per acre, in addition to the rent of  $1\frac{1}{4}d.$  per acre payable to the late Abbot of Neath under the exchange of 1289, mentioned in the extent.

The inquisitions *post mortem* do not show the customs affecting copyhold land and other matters; but I may be allowed to point out one or two. Differing from the cases of Cardiff and Llantrisant, the burgesses of Cowbridge do not appear to have had any rights of common on the lord's wastes in the neighbourhood of their town, such rights at Llanblethian being confined to the customary tenants of the manor. Copyhold or customary lands at Llanblethian descend to the youngest son by the first wife, a somewhat peculiar modification of borough English. In Llandaff and other manors in the county where the Welsh appear to have been less interfered with there are now no traces of copyhold land, and consequently no customs of descent.

The custom of borough English was probably introduced by the conquerors, and cannot be considered to be a relic of old Welsh law. If so, the fact of its introduction suggests that it was in England almost a general law or rule of convenience for tenants in

villénage rather than a mere local custom. Why this rule, in its introduction to this district, was limited so as to give a preference to the issue of the first wife, is a problem which some of my hearers may perhaps kindly solve.

It is worth noting that the rule of descent of customary hold lands in Talavan is to the sons of the first wife equally. These lands are probably those held by the customary Welsh tenants mentioned in the inquisition.<sup>1</sup>

I wish to mention a point on which my audience who live in the district may be able to give some assistance. There is a name of a small hamlet in the northern extremity of the parish which, as spelt on the Ordnance Map, carries one's mind to very old times. I refer to Tre Rhingill. The question is, whether this name is ancient. In the old Welsh laws the Rhyngill was an officer subordinate to the Maer and Canghellor, and was, according to the Gwen-tian Code, entitled to his land free.<sup>2</sup> Among the demesnes in the reign of Queen Elizabeth there was a Hayward Field, containing 143 acres. This may be Little Haywode mentioned in the extent, but it might be connected with Tre Rhingill, as that officer was one to whom, in the manorial system, a hayward might correspond.

I feel I ought to apologise for calling this paper the "Manor of Llanblethian", when so much remains to be done to give a due account of it; but I trust the

<sup>1</sup> Extract from the Survey of the Manor of Talavan, showing the custom of descent referred to:—"And also that all the said Customary Lands have time out of minde, by force of the said custom, used to come and descend by and after the death and decease of any Customary Ten'te dying seized thereof (after the nature of Gavelkinde), between the heires male of the first Wif, and in defaulte of such heires male of the first Wife, unto the heires flemale of the first Wife, before the heires males of any second or after married Wife, unless such Customary Landes be put out into ffeolles hands by the rodd to some other uses, according to the said custom."

<sup>2</sup> *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales*, vol. xii, p. 275.

documents which I have submitted to you may be of some interest ; and if any gentleman with more knowledge and opportunities than I possess would investigate the extent and nature of the old customary holdings—how they lay with one another, and how they were cultivated, and the traces, if any, of the ancient systems which have come down to us—it would, I feel sure, appear that the subjects for archaeological research in this district are by no means exhausted, and such a work, though local, would be of general value.

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