

### Chapter VIII

#### **Witchcraft as *Malefice* : Witchcraft Case Studies, The Third Phase of The Welsh Antidote to Witchcraft.**

Witchcraft as *malefice* cases were concerned specifically with the practice of witchcraft, cases in which a woman was brought to court charged with being a witch, accused of practising *malefice* or premeditated harm. The woman was not bringing a slander case against another. She herself was being brought to court by others who were accusing her of being a witch. Witchcraft as *malefice* cases in early modern Wales were completely different from those witchcraft as words cases lodged in the Courts of Great Sessions, even though they were often in the same county, at a similar time and heard before the same justices of the peace. The main purpose of this chapter is to present case studies of witchcraft as *malefice* trials from the various court circuits in Wales.

Witchcraft as *malefice* cases in Wales reflect the general type of early modern witchcraft cases found in other areas of Britain, Europe and America, those with which witchcraft historiography is largely concerned. The few Welsh cases are the only cases where a woman was being accused of witchcraft practices. Given the profound belief system surrounding witches and witchcraft in early modern Wales, the minute number of these cases raises some interesting historical questions about attitudes to witches and ways of dealing with witchcraft. The records of the Courts of Great Sessions<sup>1</sup> for Wales contain very few witchcraft as *malefice* cases, sometimes only one per county. The actual number, however, does not detract from the importance of these cases in providing a greater understanding of witchcraft typology for early modern Wales.

The witch was typically brought to court by a number of accusers. She was tried and the evidence presented against her. If found guilty, the result was a verdict couched in such a manner that the witch survived; the cases are marked by an unusual lack of legal and communal consequences for the accused. The unusual response to such Welsh witches occurred even in those cases where the woman was found guilty and declared to be a witch. Court records show evidence that other people, including officers of the court, made every effort to ensure that the woman was not placed in a position where execution was the outcome of the guilty verdict. The woman's community also endeavoured to ensure that the woman would survive by resorting to various measures: providing petitions in support of her as was the case for Dorothy Griffith of Flintshire;<sup>2</sup> assisting her to escape as happened in the case of Anne Ellis of Penley;<sup>3</sup> or instances

<sup>1</sup> Glyn Parry, *A Guide to the Records of Great Sessions in Wales*, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1995. Please note: Parry states on p.clix that all classes should now be identified in citations and references by "NLW, Great Sessions" whereas, previously, the Public Record Office used the prefix "Wales."

<sup>2</sup> NLW Wales 4/985/2/18-19 Great Sessions for Flint (1655-56). Dorothy Griffith of Picton on 7th April 1655-56 at Flint.

<sup>3</sup> NLW Wales 4/985/5 Great Sessions for Flint (1657) Anne Ellis of Penley on 28th September 1657 at Flint (particularly f.23).

where justices stated that the evidence was not admissable in court as in the case for Golly Lullock<sup>4</sup> and the cases of Gwenllian and Margaret David.<sup>5</sup> The allegations and evidence in the cases for witchcraft practices against Katherine Lewis of Gumfreston in Pembroke in 1607 were considerable <sup>6</sup> but she was not executed, nor was Catherine Rees of Cardigan in 1693.<sup>7</sup>

The Welsh judicial response to those accused as witches seems to have been prompted by endeavours to curtail and control the witch's *malefice* activities when the community could no longer tolerate the results of such actions. This is reflected in both the case numbers and outcomes as, apart from one substantiated case,<sup>8</sup> women accused as witches in early modern Wales did not die for witchcraft as *malefice*. They were, however, often found guilty when accused before the courts. This outcome suggests an important conclusion as there is an implication that execution may not have been the intention of those involved in all aspects of the court process. Referral to the court may have been the last of the threefold, sequenced pattern used by Welsh communities to curtail the activities of the suspected witch. As the analyses of the personal and communal antidote responses indicated, customary practices were used as the means of eliciting an admission of guilt from the witch, the cause of the *malefice*. Only with such an admission could the reconciliation process be achieved and inter-personal harmony restored. If the witch refused to admit guilt after the personal and communal antidotes had been undertaken, lodgement of a case in the Courts of Great Sessions may, in all probability, have been the last remaining option by which all parties concerned could achieve an admission of guilt from the accused. It is notable that the case transcripts for all the witchcraft as *malefice* cases cited here contain a direct statement from the accused woman in which she categorically admits her guilt.

Voluntary admission of guilt by the accused witch is one of the most unusual aspects of witchcraft as *malefice* cases for Wales. Earlier chapters have highlighted the contrasts between the Welsh witch's experience when accused in comparison to the experiences of individuals accused of withcraft practices in regions outside Wales.<sup>9</sup> The depositions and indictments for Welsh cases all contain an admission of guilt, volunteered by the

<sup>4</sup> NLW Wales 4/789/4 Great Sessions for Pembroke (1655) Golly Lullock of Haverfordwest on 20th August at Haverfordwest.

<sup>5</sup> NLW Wales 4/719/2/48-55 Great Sessions for Carmarthen (1656) Gwenllian David or Lys Hier of Llangadock and Margaret David or Maggie Hier of Llangadock in June at Carmarthen.

<sup>6</sup> NLW Wales 33/6/5-6 (1607) Great Sessions for Pembroke (1607) Katherine Lewis of Gumfreston OR Katherine Bowen of Tenby at Pembroke.

<sup>7</sup> NLW Wales 4/886/15 (1693) NLW Gaol files for Aberteifi, Cardigan Gaol File (1693) The case of Katherine or Catherine Rees (The "K" and "C" are interchangeable but "C" remains the most commonly used spelling of her name throughout the text).

<sup>8</sup> NLW Wales 16/7 Great Sessions for Anglesey (1655) Margaret verch Richard of Beaumaris on 20th August 1655 at Beaumaris.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter I Contextualising the Welsh Witch in the Early Modern World, Witchcraft Historiography.

accused, who had not been subjected to any form of torture or intimidation. This is not reflected in the eliciting of confessions in other regions where some form of torture was used: the witch-pricker, sleep deprivation as well as starvation and thirst in England<sup>10</sup> and Scotland.<sup>11</sup> In Germany,<sup>12</sup> the emphasis was on increased physical pain. Nevertheless, what constituted torture in one society is not necessarily reflective of the concepts another society associated with torture.<sup>13</sup> In other words, there were degrees of torture methods used in early modern witchcraft cases and these were also accompanied by regional variations. Abuse of the law was also a problem as Levack points out in relation to the situation in Scotland. Scottish courts were not, by law, permitted to use torture but local magistrates and clergy used methods without a warrant, usually just after the individual had been apprehended.<sup>14</sup> Soman also made this point for France between 1565-1640.<sup>15</sup> In ascertaining torture useage and methods, it becomes imperative to compare the country's laws with the reality of the accused's experience in local courts. In early modern Wales, there is no evidence of a local disregard for the legal rulings pertaining to accused individuals in *malefice* cases.

In court, therefore, the accused woman always admitted her guilt, an admission which, following Welsh popular beliefs, enabled reconciliation and restoration of communal as well as inter-personal harmony. In other words, the court case achieved the objective inherent within Welsh popular beliefs and customary practice: admission of guilt enabled all parties to resolve the effects of the *malefice* and harmony was restored. This, therefore, made execution unnecessary. Execution of the witch was probably not the intended outcome of the case lodgement in early modern Wales and case evidence provides sufficient detail which underlines this point.

Following the pattern of the inter-relationship established between the outcome of witchcraft as words cases and the pre-Acts of Union Welsh Laws of Women, witchcraft as *malefice* cases also provide evidence of an inter-relationship between customary

<sup>10</sup> James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness Witchcraft in England 1550-1750*, Penguin Books Ltd, London, 1997 edition, p. 218.

<sup>11</sup> Gilbert Geis and Ivan Bunn, *A Trial of Witches A Seventeenth-century Witchcraft Prosecution*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 53-54; See Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft Stories of English Witches*, Routledge, London, 1999, p. 34-36 for an analysis of confessions of witches, their responses under examination and the meanings behind the answers, both to the accused witch and to those asking the questions.

<sup>12</sup> Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil. Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe*, Routledge, London, 1994, p. 203-206; and Lyndal Roper, "Early modern Germany.", in Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester and Gareth Roberts, (eds), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe Studies in Culture and belief*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp.213-217, 230-231.

<sup>13</sup> James Sharpe, *Instruments...*, op. cit., p. 213-215.

<sup>14</sup> Brian Levack, "State-building and witch-hunting", in Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester and Gareth Roberts, (eds), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe Studies in Culture and belief*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 105-106.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Soman, "The Parlement of Paris and the Great Witch Hunt (1565-1640).", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 2, 1978, p 36.

practises and how Welsh people responded to women accused as witches.

Witchcraft as *malefice* cases<sup>16</sup> were also lodged in a set court procedure: the formal charge against the prisoner was written down by the clerk of indictments and the indictment contained the name, occupation and residence of the accused as well as the place, time and nature of the offence.<sup>17</sup> Indictments could be fraught with problems because the given place of residence of the prisoner was always the parish, not the village from which the person came. The occupation of the accused was also unspecified, since generalised terms such as "labourer" were not descriptive of the specific form of labouring at which the person was employed. Similarly, "yeoman" could mean any type of activity undertaken by those classified in this manner. Complicating matters still further, "the date when the offence took place may be incorrect" because the offence may have occurred years or months before the apprehension of the suspect.<sup>18</sup>

The next stage of the legal process was an assessment of the prisoner's case by two juries, the first of which was the grand jury. The grand jury decided if the Crown should prosecute and, if the decision was positive, the indictment was endorsed *billa vera* or true bill and filed. This decision meant that the accused would have to face a trial jury in open court. However, if the grand jury decided that there was no case, the indictment was marked *ignoramus* or no true bill and the prisoner was freed when the sessions ended.<sup>19</sup> "*Ignoramus*" indictments were usually destroyed because, strictly speaking, they were not records of the court and this, as Parry notes, was the practice of the three circuits which have pre-1700 gaol files.<sup>20</sup> However, some counties did regularly file such indictments: Cardiganshire, Pembrokeshire and Flintshire did so from 1650-51;

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<sup>16</sup> Witchcraft as *malefice* cases were located in the extant records for NLW, Great Sessions 4 which are the gaol files; NLW, Great Sessions 33 which are gaol files additional; and NLW, Great Sessions 16 which are the plea rolls. Court procedure in witchcraft cases before the Great Sessions was dictated by the type of witchcraft case which was being heard. The majority of witchcraft as *malefice* cases were located in NLW, Great Sessions 4, which are the Gaol files. "the principal records of the Crown (or criminal) side of the work of the Court of Great Sessions. In consequence, they are a fundamental source for the history of crime in Wales (and of much else besides). They have been seriously neglected by most historians."The gaol file records do not have the same title throughout as the counties had various titles for such records: those from Flintshire were titled *mainprize* whereas Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire, the other two counties comprising the Chester circuit, used the title *calendar*, of which eighty percent are still extant. Carmarthen titled them *gaol bundles*, and Brecon used the term *gaol files*. In North Wales such files were referred to as *calendars* or *files of the clerk of the Crown* although only approximately thirty-five percent of these are now extant. Witchcraft as *malefice* cases were also located in NLW, Great Sessions 33 which are gaol files additional and NLW, Great Sessions 16 which are plea rolls. See Glyn Parry, *op. cit.*, pp. lxi, lxii. In a footnote on p. lxvi, Parry states that no gaol files survive for the North Wales circuit prior to the early eighteenth century.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p. lxii.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p. lxiii.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p. lxiii-lxiv.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. lxiv.

Montgomeryshire and Carmarthenshire in 1670, Denbighshire in 1676 but not until the 1690s for the Brecon circuit.<sup>21</sup>

Following the assessment, the next procedural stage was the issuing of recognizances which bound the victim of a crime to appear in court in order to prosecute the offender. Failure to appear resulted in the forfeiture of a sum of money to the Crown by both the victim and those who had gone surety for the victim. Witnesses were also given recognizances as were people on bail. Recognizances contain considerably more information than do indictments as these were far more specific regarding names and residential details of individuals. Precise information was necessary because, if the prosecutor or witness or bailed person failed to appear, the court needed to know how to levy the sums of money forfeited, a levy called estreating recognizances.<sup>22</sup>

Examinations, the depositions, were made by victims and their witnesses and these documents provide the historian with a great deal of information. Within such depositions, circumstantial and incidental evidence can be obtained, information which adds to the understanding of the social dynamics of the people and communities which were involved.<sup>23</sup> Depositions, from the point of view of witchcraft cases, are vital documents because the testimony of all concerned underlined what was happening in the village community and the reasons the case for *malefice* was lodged against a member of that community. The importance of depositions cannot be underestimated although it is necessary to remember that the information in them could be biased. Apart from the obvious reasons surrounding such bias, there was no legal obligation to file these documents because they were not considered to be records of the court since they were taken by the magistrate in the early stages of the prosecution.<sup>24</sup>

Individuals who had indictments lodged against them were not normally held in custody, a circumstance which required the issuing of a writ to the sheriff so that he could then apprehend the indicted person. The whole process "was extremely cumbersome and not particularly effective. It led to delays and, in many cases, the suspects were never brought before the court at all."<sup>25</sup> Added to this, Wales, unlike the English assize courts, had a second jury which was called the hundred or second jury. The second jury acted in a dual capacity with the grand jury: it acted as a pre-trial jury and as an initiator of prosecutions which was done via presentments. Endorsements state which jury was hearing the case but the hundred juries disappear from the records after the 1660s.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p. lxiv.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. lxiv.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. xv.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. l xvi.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. lxviii.

Plea rolls, the primary formal record of the court, contain the pleadings in civil actions between private parties. There was one roll for each session because all the pleadings were engrossed on parchment membranes by the prothonotary, entered and stitched together, then rolled. North Wales circuit sessions are combined as the documents for both sessions were engrossed on one roll.<sup>27</sup> Procedure in court began when the plaintiff submitted a declaration or bill which was a statement of the plaintiff's grievance. If the defendant chose to respond, then this response was called a plea. The plaintiff could then reply by means of a replication to which the defendant could respond with an answer. Both could also plead a demurrer which had to be adjudicated by judges because it brought up an issue in law although demurrers, replications and answers were not pleaded in the majority of cases.<sup>28</sup>

Pleadings halted when issue had been reached, after which, the pleadings were then followed in the plea rolls by a precept to the sheriff who then had to summon a jury in order to try the case at the next sessions. In the records, this would often be followed by a statement that the jury had failed to appear and the case had to be adjourned until the next sessions, a common situation up until the end of the seventeenth century. Cases which were decided in favour of the plaintiff also had the damages and costs which were awarded noted although this occurred in only a minority of cases.<sup>29</sup> From the late seventeenth century onwards, judgements which followed jury verdicts were not usually enrolled on the plea rolls because the plaintiff had to ask and pay for the prothonotary to enrol the verdict. Prior to the late seventeenth century, few judgements or verdicts were recorded and this was because a settlement between the parties concerned had been reached outside court. This meant that, even though the sheriff had been ordered to summon a jury, the case did not come before the court. "The action thereafter simply disappears from view."<sup>30</sup>

Many actions record the defendant requesting, after issue had been taken, an imparlance with the plaintiff from the court and this was nearly always granted but also required a fee payment. The case was often discontinued, as, once again the parties probably settled out of court. Actions were also terminated when the defendant confessed to the action in court, one way of avoiding the cost of a writ of inquiry, which a successful plaintiff, might pursue in order to assess damages.<sup>31</sup> Pre-1700 plea rolls include pleadings in actions which concluded either by confession or by default. The defendant could default in three ways: by appearing and saying nothing in bar or preclusion of the action; or by failing to appear; or by means of his attorney who stated that he had not been informed by his

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. cxii.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. cxii.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. cxiii.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. cxiii.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p. cxiv.

client of an answer to give to the action, all of which were entered on the plea roll.<sup>32</sup> Defaulting in cases for damages claims may have occurred for a particular reason as "It is possible that in order to save costs, the litigants agreed that if the defendant defaulted the plaintiff would remit part of his claim. Another possibility appears to be that the plaintiff pitched his claim far higher than what he actually wanted and was quite willing to reduce it provided the defendant defaulted."<sup>33</sup> The entire process indicated that there was a considerable amount of compromise between the parties.

The procedure of the Courts of Great Sessions having been established, it is clear that the third phase of the Welsh antidote to witchcraft as *malefice* was undertaken with the lodging of just such a court case, accompanied by numerous accusations, against the suspected witch. The arrangement of witchcraft as *malefice* case studies follows the same court circuit order as that of the witchcraft as words analysis: beginning with the Brecon Circuit which heard cases for the counties of Brecon, Radnor and Glamorgan. This is followed by cases from the Chester Circuit which heard cases for the counties of Denbigh, Flint and Montgomery. The North Wales Circuit heard the cases for Anglesey, Caernarvon and Merioneth and the final circuit, Carmarthen dealt with Carmarthen, Carmarthen Borough, Cardigan, Pembroke and Haverfordwest County and Borough.

One of the main difficulties facing the researcher for witchcraft in early modern Wales is that of sources. Early modern witchcraft historiographical studies are largely dependent upon the court records, whether these were ecclesiastical, quarter sessions, assize or, as was the case for Wales, the Courts of Great Sessions records. Glyn Parry's 1995 publication lists, but does not index, all the extant Great Sessions records available to the researcher for all the early modern Welsh counties although it should be noted that most witchcraft as *malefice* cases were located in the Prothonotary Papers as these were the original declarations and pleas filed at each session.<sup>34</sup> Cases which reached issue and which proceeded to trial were enrolled in a parallel series of plea rolls but neither the prothonotary papers nor the plea rolls are available, in continuity, for all of the counties of Wales throughout the early modern period, 1543-1750.

### Records of Witchcraft as *Malefice* Cases

#### I. Brecon/Brecknock Circuit.

The Brecon Circuit of the Courts of Great Sessions heard cases for the counties of

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<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. cxvi.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. cxvi. In a footnote, Parry cites "Richard Suggett for these suggestions."

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

Brecon, Radnor and Glamorgan.<sup>35</sup> Existing records for the Courts of Great Session for the Brecon circuit, covering the counties of Brecon, Radnor and Glamorgan are few: 154 files from 1560-1650 exist for Brecon and Radnor but Glamorgan records exist from 1702. Plea Rolls for Brecon begin in 1542-1830<sup>36</sup> and Prothonotary Papers pre-1660 begin in 1559-1650<sup>37</sup> whilst post-1660 Prothonotary Papers begin in 1679-1830.<sup>38</sup> Gaol files for Brecon begin in 1559 and are continuous until 1830.<sup>39</sup> Quarter sessions records for Brecon are extant from 1670-1968.<sup>40</sup>

### Brecon

Membrane 1 of the Plea Rolls of the Great Sessions in Wales for Brecon indicates that sessions were held before John Pakyngton at Brecon on 10th July in 1542. However, these records contain references to a previous sessions, indicating that such sessions were held at Brecon in August 1541. This means that the courts had actually begun activities prior to the 1543 Statute by which the courts were formally established. The August 1541 sessions papers are no longer extant.<sup>41</sup> Prothonotary papers for Brecon begin in 1559<sup>42</sup> and continue well into the Restoration period although there was only one witchcraft as words case, that of Elizabeth, the wife of Henry Probert at Brecon in 1634.<sup>43</sup> No witchcraft as *malefice* cases are located in the records for the county of Brecon for the early modern period.<sup>44</sup>

### Radnor

The first sessions for Radnor were held in 1541 by John Pakyngton and the act provided for sessions to be held twice a year in the shire. One justice presided at the sessions which were to be of six days duration and spring and autumn sessions

<sup>35</sup> The research for the counties of the Brecon Circuit and for the county of Merioneth was undertaken in 1998. I am indebted to the members of the Welsh Academy, Cardiff for awarding me the Gwyn Alf Williams Memorial Award for 1998. The twenty-thousand word research paper entitled

"Witchcraft in Early Modern Wales: The Counties of Merioneth, Radnor, Brecon and Glamorgan." was submitted to The Welsh Academy in Cardiff in June, 1999.

<sup>36</sup> Glyn Parry, *op. cit.*, p.186-191. (NLW, Great Sessions 17).

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p. 206-207. (NLW, Great Sessions 13).

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 207-211. (NLW, Great SessionsP).

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p.272-279. (NLW, Great Sessions 4).

<sup>40</sup> Powys Record Office, Llandrindod Wells, Powys.

<sup>41</sup> Kenneth Owen Fox, "An Edited Calendar of the First Brecknockshire Plea Roll of the Courts of the King's Great Sessions in Wales, July, 1542." *The National Library of Wales Journal*, Vol. XIV, 1966, pp. 474, 484. Extracts of the cases which came before the court in 1542 can be found from p. 474- 483 although there were no witchcraft, slander or other case types which could be related to this topic.

<sup>42</sup> Glyn Parry, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

<sup>43</sup> NLW, Great Sessions13/20-2.

<sup>44</sup> Two witchcraft as words cases were located NLW, Great Sessions13/20-2 Great Sessions for Brecon (1634) Sessions for Brecon 16 March CharlesI and Brecon Quarter Sessions/21 (1690).



became the norm.<sup>45</sup> Great Sessions Plea Rolls for Radnor begin in 1541-1830<sup>46</sup> and pre-1660 Prothonotary Papers exist for 1542 but do not begin again until 1554-1639.<sup>47</sup> Post-1660 Prothonotary Papers begin in 1663-1830.<sup>48</sup> These records suffered badly as poor storage and ventilation led to the loss of records from the 1640 -1660 period as well as records for the following twenty-six years. Gaol files for Radnor begin in 1542-1830.<sup>49</sup> None of the surviving records contain cases of witchcraft of any type, although there were cases for conjuring activities for the county. Given the scarcity of cases, the few alternatives which remain to the researcher are the antiquarian writings and diaries of the period, and the oral history record for Radnor which provides information as to the personal and communal protective antidotes to witchcraft as the incident of the farmer from the Carneddau hills detailed.<sup>50</sup>

### Glamorgan

Courts of Great Sessions Plea Rolls for Glamorgan begin in 1541 -1830,<sup>51</sup> pre-1660 Prothonotary Papers begin in 1548 but there are only six years represented: 1548, 1549, 1555, 1557, 1570, and 1651.<sup>52</sup> Post -1660 Prothonotary Papers run from 1702-1830.<sup>53</sup> Gaol files for Glamorgan begin in 1542 with many gaps in the years until 1669, after which the records are continuous until 1830.<sup>54</sup> Quarter Sessions records for Glamorgan exist from 1712-1800.<sup>55</sup>

Despite a lack of recorded cases, the basic concepts and customary practices associated with the procedural response to witchcraft are evident in the popular traditions of Glamorgan, as Brinley Richards<sup>56</sup> reiterates, citing Martin Phillips' references to the bewitching of cattle at Llangynwyd. A witch, by a curse and sign, would cause a cow to yield water instead of milk because the owner had refused a piece of cream cheese to

<sup>45</sup> Evan D. Jones, "Gleanings from Radnorshire Files of Great Sessions papers, 1691-1699." *Transactions of the Radnorshire Historical Society*, 13, 1943, p. 7-8.

<sup>46</sup> Glyn Parry, op. cit., p. 213-220 ( NLW, Great Sessions 26).

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p. 235-236 ( NLW, Great Sessions 13).

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 236 - 240 (NLW, Great Sessions P).

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p. 280-287 (NLW, Great Sessions 4).

<sup>50</sup> Please see Chapter VII Communal Protection, The Second Phase of the Welsh Antidote to Witchcraft as *Malefice*. for the details of this occurrence. D. Edmondson Owen, op. cit., p.103-104. for the oral history concerning the farmer from the Carneddau hills, the priest, burning the carcass and the old woman.

<sup>51</sup> Glyn Parry, op. cit., p. 242-249 ( NLW, Great Sessions 22).

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p.264 (NLW, Great Sessions 13).

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p.264-267 (NLW, Great Sessions P).

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p.288-292 (NLW, Great Sessions 4).

<sup>55</sup> Glamorgan Record Office, Cardiff.

<sup>56</sup> Brinley Richards, *History of the Llynfi Valley*, D. Brown and Sons Ltd., Cowbridge, South Glamorgan, n.p., p.70. Citing Martin Phillips, "In an address to the Aberfan and Margam Historical Society" on 'The Folklore of the District.'

the witch. The farmer consulted a local conjuror who advised him to get the witch to undo the witchcraft and, after certain cabbalistic ceremonies, the witch restored the milk to the cow.<sup>57</sup>

This type of contemporary social commentary becomes vital in counties such where few or no records survive. Writing in 1915, D.T. Alexander<sup>58</sup> made a point concerning witchcraft and older people in his Glamorganshire community. Such people had to avail themselves of poor relief because, despite hard working lives, they had been unable to make sufficient provision for their old age. The older women were more affected than the men and two of these old women in Alexander's community were thought to have been gifted with witchcraft. Kitty Badger and Nanny Taunton "*used to get about in a bent position, leaning on their sticks, with big cloaks over their shoulders and hoods over their heads, and were the terror of nearly all the young people in the district, especially the boys and girls. I have often clambered over a fence and hid behind it to avoid the possibility of meeting either of these characters on the highway. I recollect one was called 'Kitty Badger' and the other 'Nanny Taunton'. Kitty Badger used to be greatly annoyed by the young people calling out after her 'Tunie, tunie, like a lark, Kitty Badger of Penmark.'*"<sup>59</sup>

Some earlier antiquarian observers were convinced that witchcraft, as a superstitious practice, had died out. Talking about witchcraft in a book published in the 1880s, T.C. Evans or *Cadrawd* said, "Occasionally, the journals report examples of a lingering belief in the existence of living witches in Somerset and Dorset even at this period, where old women were subjected to the pains of blood letting, by means of a point of a pin or pen-knife, with a view to destroy their supposed occult influences, but in Glamorgan, that belief has happily entirely died out. There are few aspects of the question more curious or more fatal to consistent belief than the nationality and topography of different forms of superstition."<sup>60</sup> However, this was not necessarily the prevailing communal view surrounding witchcraft in the county of Glamorgan as the differences between folk beliefs and religious persuasion were many, as the publications of Marie Trevelyan indicate.<sup>61</sup> All of these oral histories follow the *malefice*, confrontation, arbitration and reconciliation procedure which the personal and communal antidotes indicate were the processes followed by the Welsh community prior to lodging a witchcraft case in the Courts of Great Sessions.

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<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>58</sup> D.T. Alexander, *Glamorgan Reminiscences*, W. Spurrell and Son, Carmarthen, 1915 (Stewart Williams 1973 edition).

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, p.19.

<sup>60</sup> T.C. Evans, (*Cadrawd*), *History of Llangynwyd Parish*, Printed in the Llanelly and County Guardian Office, Llanelly, (1887), p.166.

<sup>61</sup> Marie Trevelyan, *Glimpses of Welsh Life and Character*, John Hogg, London, 1893, p. 282- 86. Marie Trevelyan, *Folk-Lore and Folk-Stories of Wales*, Elliot Stock, London, 1909, p. 214.

Cases for Glamorgan were few but in 1855 Morgan Rhys published a work on the traditions of Glamorgan in which he provided details of the well known witches of Cwm Afon.<sup>62</sup> The witches were Nell, who has been mentioned in relation to witch's butter,<sup>63</sup> Bess and Catti. The same informant, who had worked in Bess's household for three years at Bryntroedcarn, told how Bess would always know if the workers in the field had been working or playing and could always tell the servants where to find the cattle and sheep they had been responsible for but had lost. According to the informant, Bess knew all this because she watched over the doings of her servants by shape-shifting into a hare and observing them.<sup>64</sup>

The third witch, Catti, also shape-shifted into a hare and antagonised the gentlemen shooters by constantly outwitting them. Once, however, a shot that was fired at the hare found its mark and old Catti was discovered very ill in her bed after the hunters followed the trail of blood to her door. The informant, Mary of Ynys Fawr, stated that her

*“ mother used to say that Catti bewitched William Shams Dafydd, of Coed y Fedwas Ddu, and his posterity for ages.  
“Do you not see”, she would say, “ how very ragged all his descendants are ? The men are all drunkards, compelling their wives to become beggars, with the view to keeping their children alive; but the women are better off than the men. ”* <sup>65</sup>

The informants gave details which still corresponded to the Welsh personal procedural responses to witchcraft as *malefice*, as late as 1928.

Antiquarian writers habitually give a large amount of detail about witches and their practices but these are often untraceable in the court records. Great Sessions records for Glamorgan are sparse, beginning as the Prothonotary Papers do in 1548 and ceasing in 1651, not beginning again until 1702.<sup>66</sup> The oral history of Rachel Fleming cannot, therefore, be substantiated in the Great Sessions records since these no longer exist for the years quoted, 1668 and 1678. NLW, Great Sessions records, Gaol files for Glamorgan are not extant for either the years 1668 or 1678 <sup>67</sup> and quarter sessions records for Glamorgan begin in 1712. In the case of Rachel Fleming, verification of oral history information was possible by matching the names of the justices of the peace,

<sup>62</sup> Morgan Rhys, "Legendary Lore. Unpublished Traditions of Glamorgan" *Cambrian Journal*, 1855, p.117-119. The exact same text, word for word but without acknowledgement, is used by Martin Phillips in *The Folklore of The Afan and Margam District*, The Guardian Press Ltd, Neath, 1933 p.14. The original version of Rhys' is the actual statement of several elderly women who knew the witches but in Phillips version, the whole has been reduced to a folk tale and presented as such.

<sup>63</sup> Please see the discussion in Chapter VI Personal Protection, The First Phase of the Welsh Antidote to Witchcraft as *Malefice*. citing Morgan Rhys, op. cit., p.117.

<sup>64</sup> Morgan Rhys, op. cit., p.118.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p.118-119.

<sup>66</sup> Glyn Parry, op. cit., p. 264.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p. 288 (NLW, Great Sessions 4).

said to have been involved in the years when the cases were brought to court, against the list of known justices of the peace for Glamorgan during this period.

The information concerning Rachel Flemynge/Fleming<sup>68</sup> indicated that she was tried twice for witchcraft practices in Glamorgan, in 1668 and again in 1678.<sup>69</sup> Rachel lived in the area of Llanilyd Fawr and Llantwit in Glamorgan and was first brought to trial in 1668 before Sir Thomas Stradling of St. Donat's Castle at Llantrythid who acquitted her. Both Sir Thomas Stradling senior and Sir Thomas Stradling junior were justices of the peace for the Brecon Circuit at Glamorgan from 1660 to 1685, as was Richard Bassett.<sup>70</sup> Rachel was brought to trial again in 1678 but Sir Thomas Stradling refused to try the case and absented himself. Richard Bassett of Beaupre replaced Sir Thomas Stradling and tried the case, sentencing Rachel to burn.<sup>71</sup> However, Rachel died as the mob was walking her up the hill to the stake and the description of her symptoms indicated that she may have had a heart attack.<sup>72</sup>

Following the premise established by Gwynn Williams<sup>73</sup> for Flintshire, motives for the cases against Rachel may have had very little to do with the actual *malefice* witchcraft of which she was accused. The politics, feuds and religious leanings of the Glamorgan gentry, however, may provide an explanation. The Stradlings were one of the oldest Catholic families in Glamorgan. Richard Bassett, according to a document prepared by Sir Edward Mansell of Margam in 1677 for the Secretary of State, Sir Joseph Williamson, was "A good downeright (sic) honest gentleman...(and) A very well meaning man to the government."<sup>74</sup> There was some evidence that there was dissension between the Stradlings and the Bassetts over a large amount of money which one of the Stradlings had lost after borrowing from the Bassetts. Sir Edward Mansell's 1677 document stated that Sir Richard Beaupre was knighted in 1681 but his "fortune was ruined when Sir Edward Stradling defaulted on a debt for which Bassett and

<sup>68</sup> This case has been briefly mentioned in several preceding chapters and is examined in detail here.

<sup>69</sup> Marie Trevelyan, *From Snowdon to the Sea*, John Hogg, London, 1895, p. 380-427.

<sup>70</sup> J. R.S. Philips, *The Justices of the Peace in Wales and Monmouthshire 1541-1689*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1975, p. 304-308.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Bassett was listed as an acting justice of the peace for the Brecon Circuit, along with Thomas Stradling senior and Thomas Stradling junior for the 14 May sessions in 1677 and all these commissions were renewed in May 1678. See J.R.S. Philips, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p.419-427. The cases do not appear in the NLW, Great Sessions 22/238 and 22/239 (1668) files or the NLW, Great Sessions 22/258 and 22/259 (1678) amongst the Glamorgan Plea Rolls. The case is discussed in Chapter I Contextualising the Welsh Witch in the Early Modern World, *Witchcraft Historiography*, in relation to witchcraft and ethnicity.

<sup>73</sup> J. Gwynn Williams, "Witchcraft in Seventeenth-Century Flintshire." *Journal of the Flintshire Historical Society*, Part 1 in Vol. 26, 1975-76, p. 16-33, Part 2 in Vol. 27, 1975-76, p. 5-37.

<sup>74</sup> Philip Jenkins, "The Glamorgan Gentry in 1677." *National Library of Wales Journal*, Vol XXV, No.1, Summer 1987, p. 62.

a number of other local gentry had gave surety."<sup>75</sup>

Richard Basset was no friend to the old Catholic families of Glamorgan either as he was responsible for the committal of William Lloyd as a popish recusant or Jesuit. William Lloyd was arrested at the home of John Turberville of Penllyn, of whom Richard was also no friend. Richard Basset was also a juror at William's trial in Cardiff on May 5th 1679 "Who had committed Lloyd and taken recognizances against him."<sup>76</sup> The reasons for Rachel's sentence may never be known but Richard Basset's reaction was certainly extraordinary. The legality of the entire procedure is questionable as the oral history indicates that Rachel was given to the people to be burned at the Beltain fire.

A substantiated case of a woman regarded as being a witch in Glamorgan is that of Ann Richmond,<sup>77</sup> of whom mention was made in the 27th May, 1762 manorial court roll which outlined the recommendations being presented by the thirteen resident jurors, one of which was the poor state of repair of her cottage.<sup>78</sup> The information substantiates the point that, even though the community and the authorities knew that Ann was a witch, no legal action was taken against her for such practices and, unlike other hereditary and generational accusations elsewhere <sup>79</sup> neither her son or any of his descendants, of either sex, were brought to court for magical, supernatural or witchcraft practices although they were accused of other misdemeanours.<sup>80</sup> The *Diary* of William Thomas provided extensive evidence of communal attitudes towards witches and conjurors in Glamorgan.<sup>81</sup>

In a recent article, Suggett <sup>82</sup> has stated that there were nine cases of witchcraft for the Brecknock Circuit, one in the 1560s, one in the 1590s, one in the 1610s, two in the 1630s, and two in the 1690s. However, these cases have been instanced by circuit only and individual counties are not specified. No specific Courts of Great Sessions

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<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>76</sup> M.C. O'Keefe, "Three Catholic Martyrs of Breconshire." *Brycheiniog*, Vol XVII, 1976-77, p. 63.

<sup>77</sup> Mention of whom has been made in Chapter VIII in relation to her son William Jenkin, a famous conjuror.

<sup>78</sup> Fonman Collection of Manorial Documents Court Rolls for Barry 1762-1767 Glamorgan Record Office (1762).

<sup>79</sup> Examples of which in England included the Pendle Forest witches in Lancashire and the Chelmsford witches in Essex.

<sup>80</sup> Stewart Williams, *South Glamorgan a county history*, Stewart Williams Publishers, Barry, South Glamorgan, 1975, pp.141, 146.

<sup>81</sup> R.T. Denning (abridged and edited by ) from a transcript by J.D. Davies and G.H. Rhys *The Diary of William Thomas 1762-1795*, South Wales Record Society and South Glamorgan County Council Libraries and Arts Department, Cardiff, 1995. This work is held on closed access at Cardiff City Library.

<sup>82</sup> Richard Suggett, "Witchcraft Dynamics in Early Modern Wales." in Michael Roberts and Simone Clarke (eds), *Women and Gender in Early Modern Wales*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2000, p. 77.

records for each case are detailed in either the text or the footnotes, making it impossible to follow up the cases cited. Although "witchcraft" seems to have been used as an all-inclusive term in this work, witchcraft as words cases number only two for Brecon, one in 1634 and another in 1690 in the quarter sessions, one for Glamorgan in 1730 and none for the county of Radnor.<sup>83</sup>

## II. The Chester Circuit.

The Chester Circuit oversaw the cases for the counties of Denbigh, Flint and Montgomery. Gaol files additional for some missing years for all three counties are located at NLW, Great Sessions 33 as these were all previously unlisted and removed from Wales 28, 'Papers in Causes', variously numbered.<sup>84</sup> Records for Denbigh are considerable as the Plea Rolls begin in 1541 and are almost continuous until 1830.<sup>85</sup> Prothonotary Papers pre-1660 begin in 1548 and are almost continuous until 1660, and post -1660 papers exist for almost every sessions until 1830.<sup>86</sup> Gaol files for Denbigh begin in 1545 with some gaps in the early years until 1565 when the records are consistent until 1830.<sup>87</sup> Quarter Sessions records for Denbigh begin with the roll of 1643. Records for the Chester Circuit are therefore considerably more plentiful than those surviving from the other circuits.

### Denbigh

The first recorded case of witchcraft as *malefice* in the county of Denbigh was very detailed and concerned a woman named Gwen verch Ellis<sup>88</sup> who was tried before the Courts of Great Sessions in 1594 for bewitching a yeoman, Lewis ap John who had since died, supposedly as a result of Gwen's activities.<sup>89</sup> The case is extremely important. Not only is it the first case in which a woman was accused of *malefice* witchcraft and so charged in court, it also occurs very early in the witchcraft case timeframe for Wales. Most other cases occur much later in the century and more cases appear in the 1610-90s than in Elizabethan Wales. The details of Gwen verch Ellis' case, due to the 1594 date, probably provide the clearest picture of Welsh popular beliefs and customary practices pertaining to witches before, and relatively soon, after the Acts of

<sup>83</sup> Please see Appendix I Witchcraft as Words Court Transcripts.

<sup>84</sup> The reason for the existence of NLW, Great Sessions 33 has been outlined at the beginning of this chapter, quoting Glyn Parry.

<sup>85</sup> Glyn Parry, *op. cit.*, p.32-39 (NLW, Great Sessions 21).

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p.54- 55 (NLW, Great Sessions 13) and p.55- 60 (NLW, Great Sessions P).

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, p.111-117 (NLW, Great Sessions 4).

<sup>88</sup> The case is transcribed in full in Appendix II Witchcraft as *Malefice* Cases. I would like to thank Assoc. Prof. G.R. Quaipe for his assistance with the transcription of this case and also Mr. Robyn Gwyndaf, Museum of Welsh Life, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, for his discussion of the case with me in 1994 and 1998 and for providing the Welsh transcription of the same case done by Nia Watkin Powell, University of Wales at Bangor.

<sup>89</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/10-15 NLW Denbigh Gaol Files (1594) Great Sessions for Denbigh 36 Elizabeth.

Union. This is particularly important when related to views which describe the Welsh witchcraft experience in terms of borrowings from England,<sup>90</sup> or as almost non-existent despite the explicit concerns of Welsh clerics.<sup>91</sup> Jenkins has, perhaps, put the situation most succinctly: "In Wales, in spite of the widespread belief in sorcery and witchcraft, witchcraft trials in the seventeenth century were decidedly few, with the principality suffering neither the trauma of extreme intolerance nor the anguish of bloody persecution."<sup>92</sup> Initially, the evidence suggests that Gwen was regarded as a healer by her community but this view changed and her activities were viewed from a very different perspective after the death of Lewis ap John, in a manner somewhat similar to circumstances which arose in Hungary<sup>93</sup> and France.<sup>94</sup>

Person/s unknown lodged a case against Gwen in the ecclesiastical courts, an unusual aspect of this *malefice* witchcraft case in early modern Wales as evidence suggests that almost all other cases were lodged directly in the Courts of Great Sessions. Examined before the Bishop of St. Asaph on the 12th June, 1594, Gwen was accused of "*witchcraft, charming, sorcerie and soothsaying supposed to be practiced and used by her...*"<sup>95</sup> Gwen was questioned by the Reverend Father in God William, Lord Bishop of St. Asaph, saying that her income was derived from spinning and making linen cloth and "*also by making plasters and salves for hearts that are diseased*" for which she was paid in wool, corn, cheese and butter. Curing, according to Gwen, was her chief source of

<sup>90</sup> Richard Suggett, "Witchcraft Dynamics..." op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>91</sup> Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997, p. 459- 460.

<sup>92</sup> Geraint H. Jenkins, "Popular Beliefs in Wales from the Restoration to Methodism.", *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, Vol. 27, 1977, p. 447.

<sup>93</sup> In Hungary, not only cunning folk but also the witch was supposed to be able to heal and trial evidence showed that if the witch was forced to heal either by violence or intimidation, she removed the charm she had cast. On this logic, if the cunning person had undertaken the magical healing which lifted the bewitchment, the cunning person could easily be accused of having bewitched the person as well because the same devil is healing her who had also caused her illness, a suspicion which was strengthened when cunning folk boasted that they could heal as well as harm. This was a necessary but dangerous promotional activity for furthering their professional prestige. Such ambiguities could, therefore, lead to the cunning person being accused as a witch when a healing was unsuccessful. On the other side of the coin, the successful healer could also have their success brought in evidence against them at trial and be accused on the basis that "they were doing a sort of teamwork with the witches, asking them to bewitch people so that they would have clients to heal." The information relating to the witch and the cunning person was obtained under torture in eighteenth-century Hungarian confessions. (See Gabor Klaniczay, "Hungary: The Accusations and the Universe of Popular Magic." in B. Ankarloo and G. Henningsen (eds) *Early Modern Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, Oxford University Press, Clarendon, 1990, p. 254-155, quote p. 255.)

<sup>94</sup> The French cases concentrate on *maleficium*, as sabbats and the devils pact are not emphasised. The majority of accused were magical healers (*guerisseur*), individuals whom the courts regarded as charlatans, essentially because their practices, which attempted to release another from bewitchment, were contrary to the belief that only the instigator of the *malefice* could undo the spell. Trials of these people centred on the charges, which were astronomical, which they had attempted to gain for their lifting of the bewitchment. ( See Alfred Soman, "The Parlement of Paris and the Great Witch Hunt (1565-1640).", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 2, 1978, p. 31- 44, at p. 43.)

<sup>95</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/10.

income.<sup>96</sup> Gwen was asked if she herself, or any other whom she knew, had practised or used witchcraft, sorcery or soothsaying in order to help or hurt any man or beast and she stated that she had used the charms for the last ten years and *"thereby hath helpen some diseased children and also beasts as well as by the same charming as also by salves, drinke and plasters."* Gwen was asked what the charm she used was and she replied, reciting the charm in Welsh.<sup>97</sup>

The St. Asaph examination of Gwen established that she was considered to be a charmer and healer by members of her community. The church court information raises some unexplained inferences concerning a written paper found in the house of a possibly bewitched person, Mr. Mostyn. Testimony regarding the nature of the paper at Mr. Mostyn's implies that it may have been a charm paper, although later secular court transcripts refute this suggestion, showing that it was a prayer/ Bible text. Gwen disowned any knowledge of the paper which, it eventuated, was written by the son of Jane Conway, Hugh Holland. Gwen's case was the only witchcraft as *malefice* case for which records apparently exist in both the ecclesiastical court and the secular court but why the case was moved from one court to another is not clear from the records.<sup>98</sup> All the information Gwen had given in the St. Asaph ecclesiastical court was recorded in the Great Sessions record where the examiners asked her: *"of whom she learned these words for charming saith that she learned the same of her sister Elizabeth verch Ellis what is died these 15 years last past."* Gwen herself volunteered that many people came to her to ask for help for men, women and children as well as for sick beasts and that she helped them. Both she and the people who came to her believed that she could help them.

The second part of the case concerning Gwen verch Ellis was in the secular courts and occurred on the 10th of July 1594 before three justices of the peace, John Hanmer and Roger Puleston for Flint and John Edwards for Denbigh.<sup>99</sup> "The examination of Gwen verch Ellis the supposed witch taken at Flint the 10th day of July 1594..."<sup>100</sup> Gwen was examined and confined to gaol. The Witchcraft Act under which Gwen was being tried was that of 5 Eliz., c16 (1562) which made provision for several penalties for conjuration

<sup>96</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/10.

<sup>97</sup> Fifteen lines of Welsh follow. NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/10 and NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/11 are the records of the ecclesiastical examination, all of which are located with the Courts of Great Sessions papers NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/10-15.

<sup>98</sup> The St. Asaph records are no longer extant for 1594.

<sup>99</sup> The case was being heard in Denbigh but two of the justices of the peace were from Flint but they were also acting for the courts of Great Sessions in Denbigh. John Hanmer was a justice for Flint only but Roger Puleston was listed as a justice of the peace for Flint and Denbigh. John Edwards was a justice of the peace only for the county of Denbigh. See J.R.S. Phillips, *op. cit.*, for Flint 1594, p. 98 and for Denbigh 1594, p. 60.

<sup>100</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/12.



or invocation of wicked spirits and for witchcraft, enchantment, charm or sorcery,<sup>101</sup> which may account for the avenues of enquiry followed throughout her trials: charming, her religious persuasion,<sup>102</sup> fortune-telling and witchcraft practices.<sup>103</sup>

Gwen was asked about her relationship with Jane Conway. The inference at this juncture was that Gwen was being accused of charming and not activities associated with witchcraft as *malefice*. Later questioning however, implied that Gwen may have been a

<sup>101</sup> Henry Charles *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft*, Thomas Yoseloff, New York, 1957, Vol III, p. 1306.

<sup>102</sup> Initially tolerant of Catholicism, the Elizabethan government changed its attitude as the reign progressed. Government concern prompted Statute 23 and 27 Elizabeth (c.i.) and, after the 1585 war with Spain, new statutes increased the recusancy fine to twenty pounds per month although the rate of conformity did not noticeably change until the execution of the Earl of Essex in 1601 as his influence had ensured immunity for many Catholics in Wales. (William Raleigh Trimble, *The Catholic Laity in Elizabethan Times 1558-1603*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1964, p.166-173.) Presentments and recusancy certificates for Denbighshire begin in 1581 and, between 1581-1624, there were 135 listed recusants, 86 of whom were from the gentry and yeomen classes of Wrexham. In the Hundred of Chirk there were 61 recusants listed between 1581-1625, 19 in the parishes of Llangollen, 1 in Llansantffraid-Glyn-Ceiriog and 41 in Chirk. Most of the Chirk recusants were members of the Edwards family of Plas Newydd or their servants and retainers. John Edwards was a Justice of the Peace in 1613 and, although he refused the oath for the 1606 statute against recusants, he was never prosecuted. Eventually John Edwards appeared in court and had to promise the Council of the Marches that he would discipline his family and his tenantry but he did not change his stance and his son and grandson continued the Catholic tradition of the Edwards family until after the Civil War. (Thomas Kennedy, "Roman Catholic Recusancy in Denbighshire." *Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions*, Vol. 42, 1993, p.30.) It was well known that the family and its tenants were "addicted to Catholicism", none of his children were baptised in the local church and his family had its own burial grounds at Plas Newydd. (Emyr Gwynne Jones, "Catholic Recusancy in the Counties of Denbigh, Flint and Montgomery, 1581-1625.", *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1945, p.114-118.) Isaled in the parish of Henllan in Denbighshire listed 49 recusants between 1595-1624, there were 68 recusants in the parish of Llansantffraid-Glyn-Conway between 1581-1624 and 26 recusants in the parish of Llandrillo-yn-Rhos in 1592. The majority of Catholics were to be found in Ruthin, one of the six Hundreds of Denbighshire, 151 from 1588-1624, mostly from the yeomen and labouring classes with three gentry in that number. (Emyr Gwynne Jones, op. cit., p.119-120) The Pugh family of Penrhyn in west Denbighshire were the centre of recusancy in that part of the county. Robert Pugh and his Catholicism "inspired a considerable following in the Creuddyn peninsula." and he was a sheriff for Caernarvonshire in 1558 and a sheriff for Denbighshire in 1562. (Thomas Kennedy, op. cit., p.31.) Robert Pugh died at home just after the accession of James I.

Flintshire was the most Catholic of the Welsh counties, having 1,200 recusants in the 1582-1624 period. Most of these were located in the Hundred of Rhuddlan in the parishes of Bodffrai and Tremeirchion, in close proximity to St. Asaph. The lesser gentry of the county were tinged with Catholicism, especially amongst the womenfolk of each household represented in the recusant lists. In the Bodffrai parish in 1609, there were 31 women out of 44 recusants cited. (Emyr Gwyn Jones, op. cit., pp. 124, 120-122.) Such a situation was an example of the outer conformity of the head of the family and the non-conformity of the women of the household. Women could not hold office and, prior to the Act of Grace, were not subject to oath swearing to the Crown and the Protestant church. In the parish of Holywell in Coleshill, where the shrine of St. Winifred was located, there were 53 recusants between 1601-1621 and, over a thirty-four year period 41 recusants were located in the parishes of Flint and Coeshill. Maelor had 35 recusants concentrated in the parishes of Overton and Bangor with another 14 at Mold. (Emyr Gwyn Jones, op. cit., p. 120-122.)

<sup>103</sup> For a different perspective concerning the trial of Gwen verch Ellis, see Richard Suggett, "Witchcraft Dynamics..." op. cit., p. 85.

Catholic as Gwen acknowledged everything that had been said at her examination before the Lord Bishop of St. Asaph to be true.<sup>104</sup> The justices asked Gwen what pictures she had in her house and Gwen said she had one of "*Christ rising from the dead of brass or tin and a bell without a clapper.*" When asked where she had got the items, Gwen replied that she had inherited them on her sister's death some sixteen years before and, when "*demanded whether she did use the same image and bell in performing her charms saith she doth not.*"<sup>105</sup>

Gwen's *malefice* activities are not mentioned until the third part of the case, the testimony from witnesses taken on the 30th August, 1594 before William Wynn and John Lloyd, both justices of the peace for Denbigh. The first witness was William ap Griffith/Gruffyd ap William who was also a bailiff in Denbigh. He testified that he had heard that Gwen verch Ellis was a soothsayer and charmer (although he does not say that he had heard that she was a witch) so he sent word to her that "*he and some company with him would shortly come and drinke in her house and that if she had skill in soothsaying she would know what time he would come thither without any further warning.*"<sup>106</sup> In company with Robert Evans, Owen ap Robert ap William, John Lloyd ap--- ap William and one Hugh ap William Miller, he went to Gwen's house and called for drink for all the company. Gwen refused the demands several times, setting her back against the door of the chamber in which the drink was kept. Robert Evans, seeing this, "*with his left arm thrust her before the door, then she the said Gwen said that she would revenge upon them any injury they should offer.*" Gwen then commanded her maid to fetch some drink, which the maid did and when that was finished, Gwen herself fetched more drink.

Presenting the drink to them in a great goblet containing about two quarts of drink, it was not long before William ap Griffith ap William and the rest of the company "*espied a great fly stirring to life in the cup*" which some members of the company assumed to be Gwen's devil, a creature which seemed to be "*bigger and more ugly than any other fly.*" Some of the company then emptied the contents of the goblet onto the floor, an act which further raised Gwen's ire and she again uttered threats against some of the men. The fly could not be found and it then became apparent to all the company that Robert Evans had broken his arm without any violence being offered. William asserted that both he and the rest of the company were sure that Robert's broken arm was a result of Gwen's actions, "*for the performance of her revenge which she had promised.*" William ap Griffith ap William's testimony was the first in which it was implied that Gwen was a witch. It was the mention of the fly, associated with Robert's injury and the implication that it was Gwen's devil which may have re-defined the nature of the

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<sup>104</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/12.

<sup>105</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/12 .

<sup>106</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/13.

accusations lodged against her.<sup>107</sup> However, it should be noted that the fly as the devil's minion was not questioned by any of the justices and no further mention was made of it until the testimony of John Lloyd ap--- ap William.<sup>108</sup>

William ap Griffith ap William's wife did not share her husband's negative views regarding Gwen. William testified his wife had had a child and had been unwell for some time and was still not yet fully recovered. Much to William's astonishment, he had arrived home one evening to find Gwen verch Ellis standing over the cradle, looking at his child. She left immediately on his request and he had asked his still bed-ridden wife what that witch (William used the word 'witch' in this part of his testimony) was doing in his house. His wife had said to him "*that it was told her that she the said Gwen could help her and that therefore she was sent for unto her.*" William's wife then told him that Gwen had come, saying that she could take away his wife's pain if William's wife believed that Gwen could take away the pain. His wife had asked him to leave Gwen alone but, because of Gwen's reputation for charming and soothsaying, by means of which she had harmed man, woman, child and beast, William, as a bailiff, had taken her (into custody).<sup>109</sup>

John Lloyd ap --- ap William supported the testimony of William ap Griffith ap William concerning the fly, admitting that he had implied to the company that the fly must be Gwen verch Ellis' devil.<sup>110</sup> Margaret verch Morris testified that, in the course of a conversation between Gwen and herself, Gwen had mentioned that she had caused Robert Evans' broken arm because of the injury that was done to her and that she was also responsible for the condition of William ap Griffith ap William's wife. Margaret herself was sick in bed and Gwen had helped her although Margaret went on to say that she had been told to ask Gwen for her help as Gwen was known for her knowledge concerning both man and beast but whether Gwen "*did harm or good this deponent knoweth not.*"<sup>111</sup>

Ellen verch Richard's evidence against Gwen concerned the death of her son. Ellen testified that six years ago, Gwen's husband Lewis ap David ap Gwyn (now dead) had worked for Ellen's husband and both Gwen and Lewis had also lived near them. Ellen's son Lewis ap John fell out with Gwen and struck her, very shortly after which, he "*fell to be frantic and beside himself whereunto he was afterwards troubled for the four days next before his death.*" During this time, Ellen's neighbours told her that Gwen had said

<sup>107</sup> Flies were not generally regarded as familiars in witchcraft testimony. Matthew Hopkins, the Witchfinder General could only locate imps which were rats, cats, dogs, toads, mice and frogs or amalgamations of the same. See R. Deacon, *Matthew Hopkins Witch Finder General*, Frederick Muller Ltd., London, 1976, p.87-105.

<sup>108</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/13-14.

<sup>109</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/13.

<sup>110</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/13.

<sup>111</sup> NLW, Great Session 4/9/4/13-14.

she was the cause of his illness and that she could help him if she was asked to help. Ellen eventually went to Gwen's house and returned with Gwen to her own house. Ellen asked Gwen's forgiveness for the wrong her son had done to her but Gwen replied that it had been done to her and that Ellen had left it too late to come and see her as, if Gwen had been asked earlier, she would have come and helped Ellen's son.

Gwen then told Ellen that her son would live to a certain day within a month or two and Ellen "*certainly remembereth that her said son departed this life the very day that the said Gwen had appointed and told this deponent.*" Ellen admitted that, long before the death of her son, her neighbour Lykie verch John (?) wife of William ap Griffith ap Hugh(?) had told her that Gwen had caused Lewis ap John to go mad in revenge for the injury that he had done to Gwen and that Gwen could, if she wished, make him well again. It was this information which had prompted Ellen to go and ask Gwen to help and that she was sure that "*Gwen was the cause of her said son's sickness and death.*" <sup>112</sup>

The whole process of the personal protection phase as an antidote to witchcraft as *malefice* is encapsulated in the testimonies of this case. Ellen's son had harmed Gwen who had reacted by inflicting *malefice* on him. Ellen, as Lewis' mother, had come to ask Gwen to lift the bewitchment by coming to bless her son as Ellen acknowledged that her son had been in the wrong. The process was further alluded to specifically in the testimony of Ellen's friend, Lykie verch John (?) who supported Ellen verch Richard's account, saying that Gwen had visited her and told her that Ellen would make amends to Gwen for the treatment her son Lewis ap John had meted out to Gwen. Lykie, who knew that Lewis ap John was by then demented, went to Ellen's house and told her to go and ask Gwen to come and help as Gwen herself had said that she could help Lewis ap John.<sup>113</sup>

The testimonies against Gwen continued: John ap Hugh ap William, a labourer of Denbigh, testified that on Sunday next after Candlemas Day last past, (1593) he had been commanded by his master Roger ap (-- court clerk's shorthand) to go and fetch Gwen verch Ellis in order to help Hugh ap Roger as he was "*then sore troubled.*" John had collected Gwen from her house and, on the way to Roger's house, they passed the house of Hugh ap John ap Rees when "*the said Gwen verch Ellis said that she and her husband did sometimes dwell there and that one Lewis ap John the son of John ap Rees had then abused her and stricken her and that therefore she prayed unto her god that the said Lewis might be brought down himself and that the same her request was granted and that she had effected her purpose.*" John ap Hugh went on to say that he had told Hugh ap John ap Rees, the brother of Lewis ap John, what Gwen verch Ellis had said.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>112</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/14.

<sup>113</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/14.

<sup>114</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/15.

Griffith ap Hugh of Bettnis (?) added his testimony, saying that his widowed mother had lost an axe and they had gone to "*Gwen verch Ellis to know tidings of that axe which was lost, a hoop(?) of rye was promised her in case she could hear where the axe was which she undertook to do*". Gwen told them where to find the axe but the axe was not found exactly where she had said it would be. The family had, therefore, not paid Gwen the hoop of rye and she had been angry about the non-payment. Griffith's brother, David ap Hugh, then became sickly and Griffith had gone to get Gwen. Gwen "*charmed the said David with salt and gave him to drink after which time the said David became very sick and upon Ascension Day died.*" Griffith was convinced that his brother had died from Gwen's ministrations.<sup>115</sup>

The nature of the paper, as previously mentioned, was the subject of much questioning, but it was clarified in the testimony of John Lloyd ap John ap Griffith who stated that he had met Hugh Holland of Conway who declared that he had been responsible for the paper/gospel previously attributed to Gwen.<sup>116</sup> Both Griffith and John ended their testimony with statements concerning the reputation of Gwen verch Ellis, saying that she was a soothsayer and a charmer and that people from many and various places came to see Gwen.

The witness statements in the case against Gwen verch Ellis were very detailed and showed clearly that Gwen was regarded as being able to work magic and that she indulged in activities which many considered indicated she was a witch. But there were also many undertones in the testimonies. In each case, the witnesses gave information about why they were accusing Gwen as well as information as to why Gwen may have reacted to their actions by bewitching members of their families as she did. Every witness who provided testimony on the 30th August also provided information which indicated that an action on a member of their family's part had probably instigated Gwen's reactions. In other words, Gwen had not afflicted any person without some just cause, her punitive action was a response to another's punitive action. The *malefice* problem had arisen mainly as the result of the death of Lewis ap John whose mother had failed to follow the customary responses when she believed her son was bewitched by Gwen.

Mixed in amongst all this testimony was the emphasis on the material possessions which Gwen had inherited from her sister: a bell without a clapper and a crucifix. The case had possible overtones of recusancy and Roman Catholic practices. Perhaps these were the underlying reason for the concentration on both the image/pictures, the clapper and the papers with writing by the Bishop and the justices of the peace. The recitation of the charm which Gwen verch Ellis used also raised questions about the link between her activities and Roman Catholicism, a point which was further supported by the initial examination of Gwen verch Ellis taken before the Bishop of St. Asaph in June, 1594.

<sup>115</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/15.

<sup>116</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/15.

The case may possibly have begun as a recusancy case and moved into a witchcraft as *malefice* case when it became apparent that there was more to the problem than a clapper and a crucifix. <sup>117</sup>

The case is also important because it is the only witchcraft as *malefice* case which mentioned the woman accused as a witch having a devil (a term which probably meant that she had a familiar). In Gwen's case, the familiar was thought by the bullying drinkers to be a huge fly, as large as a bumble bee. No further mention was made of this fly/devil in the testimonies and issue was not taken. What was apparent however was that Gwen verch Ellis did not fit the typical figure of the witch so characteristic of witchcraft cases in England : she was not a widow, she was not old, she was not poor, as the testimony of William ap Griffith indicated that Gwen herself employed a maid,<sup>118</sup> and she had a reputation which leaned on the side of healing rather than as a practitioner of *malefice* in her community.

A set pattern of responses emerges from this case, a pattern which underlines the continued use of customary methods to contain the Welsh witch: the accused woman was wronged by various members of her community and she responded by inflicting *malefice* upon either them or members of their families. Realising their actions had resulted in *malefice*, the parties sought out Gwen to effect a reconciliation. Those who provided witness statements against Gwen had been unable to effect a satisfactory reconciliation, most particularly Ellen verch Richard, the mother of Lewis ap John. Suggett<sup>119</sup> makes the claim that Gwen verch Ellis was "arraigned for murder by witchcraft and sentenced to hang." The Witchcraft Act of Elizabeth under which Gwen was tried was that of 1563 which made the penalty for *maleficia* a year's imprisonment if the bewitched had not died. However, no execution statement pertaining to Gwen verch Ellis appears in the records even though the death of Lewis ap John was attributed to her *malefice* actions. This, combined with the lack of evidence for the execution of women accused and found guilty of witchcraft as *malefice* in the Courts of Great Sessions records for this or any other circuit in early modern Wales, makes Gwen's execution more unlikely than likely.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>117</sup> St. Asaph cause papers have disappeared. Early seventeenth century cases were found in the ecclesiastical precedent book held at the West Sussex Record Office. Details of Gwen verch Ellis's case were extant only in the records of the Great Sessions. See NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/10-15 NLW Denbigh Goal Files (1594) Great Sessions for Denbigh 36 Elizabeth . See Footnote 109 for the reactions of the English state to issues of recusancy and Roman Catholicism.

<sup>118</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/13.

<sup>119</sup> Richard Suggett, "Witchcraft Dynamics..." op. cit., pp. 85 and 102, footnote 19.

<sup>120</sup> I have reiterated this point, made previously, as there are no court documents which support the statement and Suggett provides no Courts of Great Sessions record references for the judgement and execution. In my discussions in 1994 with Mr. Glyn Parry, Keeper of the Great Sessions records for over 25 years at the National Library of Wales, he was adamant that executions for witchcraft occurred in only one Welsh county and that was Anglesey, between the years 1653-1655. As Suggett's reference (footnote 19) is Nia Watkin Powell (University of Wales at Bangor), rather than a court document, ascertaining the veracity of the information is difficult.

Another record of witchcraft as *malefice* for the county of Denbigh is located in the Denbigh quarter sessions files for 1672-1673.<sup>121</sup> Sarah Poole's petition, located amongst the papers of the Clerk of the Peace, Thomas Pritchard of Halton and Chirk Castle, was submitted at the Hilary Quarter Sessions held for Denbighshire in 1671. Sarah Poole came from Wrexham Vechan, a township of the old parish of Wrexham which exists now in name only. Sarah Poole had assaulted several of her neighbours and had been bound over to keep the peace. Her petition was her response to the parish constable keeping a constant watch on her and she asked that this be stopped because her actions had only been reactions to a woman named Elizabeth Parry, whom Sarah claimed had provoked her. She cited Elizabeth Parry as a practitioner of the black arts with an ability to call up the devil.

On the 14th of January 1672-3, Sarah Poole<sup>122</sup> lodged her petition against Elizabeth Parry alias Gill.<sup>123</sup> Sarah claimed that in the previous November, Richard Roberts had attempted to kill her and that his wife, Katherine Gill, had told her that Roberts had regretted that he had not succeeded. Sarah claimed that she was now in trouble with the law simply because she had tried to defend her child against four people, including Elizabeth Parry. Sarah Poole further deposed that twelve years previously Elizabeth Parry had visited her *"to Scold about Some triviall orration and I desired her to refrain for awaking the Child(sic), and shee answered the Devill Bless him and thou also: whereupon the Child dyed before nine oclock the same night and I myself fell sick and so continued three yeares after'."* This event was witnessed by Laury Joseph and Dorothy Owens. Sarah continued her petition, citing another incident concerning Elizabeth Parry *"as she was going by the milking place of Edward ap Evan, of Wrexham vaghan there was a Woman Milking and Shee said the Devil Bless the work, whereupon the Cow fell down upon her and like to have smothered her, the same things will be justified by Phillip Fouler and his wife, Orsilla Fouler. And the Said Elizabeth Parry not long ago came to my house and Scandalized me with right filthy and uncivil Language and likewise knocked me down upon both Knees and Cursed me, whereupon I fell sudonly (sic) sick and so continued Seven days."*<sup>124</sup>

The "blessing" uttered by Elizabeth Parry, both on the child and on the work in progress, was almost the exact opposite to the traditional Welsh blessing procedure. It was "a custom of Welsh people to say "Bless you!" in the vernacular and it is meant as an appeal to God on behalf of someone, oneself, or one's fields. Turning their faces to the sun, people would take that as a blessing and a morning blessing protected people

<sup>121</sup> These cases were apparently common in the quarter sessions courts but it was not common to cite the black arts and the Devil in such cases. See Leslie Davies, "The Black Arts in Wrexham." *Transactions of the Denbighshire Historical Society*, 19, 1970, p. 230-232.

<sup>122</sup> The case is transcribed in full in Appendix II Witchcraft as *Malefice* Cases.

<sup>123</sup> NLW Chirk Castle B29a Denbighshire Quarter Sessions Files Hilary 14th January 1672/3 No. 3 Sarah Poole v Elizabeth Parry, the Petition of Sarah Poole.

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*

from the evil eye.”<sup>125</sup> There was an obvious dislike between the two women although Sarah Poole appears, from the records, to have been a difficult person to live near and Elizabeth Parry was not the only person who had difficulties with her as Sarah had been cited as a scold before the Quarter Sessions. The cursing procedure mentioned was a ritualised process, a counter-magical activity, and it is interesting that Elizabeth cursed Sarah, the inference being that Sarah's version of events was perhaps somewhat different to the reality as Sarah appeared to be a very difficult person with whom others in the community were rapidly losing patience. The outcome of the case is not known.

### Flint

Courts of Great Sessions records for Flint are numerous. The Plea Rolls begin in 1541 and are, in the main, consistent until 1830.<sup>126</sup> Prothonotary Papers pre-1660 run from 1542 to 1659 and post -1660 papers from 1660 to 1830.<sup>127</sup> Gaol Files for Flint begin in 1542 and are consistent for almost every year until 1830.<sup>128</sup>

Witchcraft cases for the county of Flint are generally well known from the work of J. Gwynn Williams.<sup>129</sup> Witchcraft as *malefice* cases for Flintshire were heard in the Courts of Great Sessions and began with the case of Dorothy Griffith of the parish of Llanasa<sup>130</sup> who was examined for witchcraft in 1655-1656. The examinations were taken before Ralph Hughes esquire, one of the justices of the peace for the county of Flint on 21st February 1655.<sup>131</sup> The case concerned the unusual behaviour of William Griffith and various witnesses testified to both his behaviour and his mentioning that Dorothy Griffith was responsible.

Dorothy Griffith was sent for the next morning and, on her arrival, William Griffith asked Roger Thomas' wife to make her “*drink before she came in sight of him, which she accordingly did, and being come unto him the sayd Dorithy uttered good words tending to prayer for him and protesting that she had done him no harme, but this examinant sayeth that within a short tyme after the said Dorithy Griffith had soe done the sayd William Griffith threw of the bedd clothes and risse and came to himselfe and was able to go home with his father.*”<sup>132</sup> Dorothy's actions follow the reconciliation procedure as,

<sup>125</sup> Marie Trevelyan, *Folk-Lore*, op. cit., p. 240.

<sup>126</sup> Glyn Parry, op. cit., p. 1-8 (NLW, Great Sessions 30).

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22-24 (NLW, Great Sessions 13) and p. 25-29 (NLW, Great Sessions P).

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103-110 (NLW, Great Sessions 4).

<sup>129</sup> Witchcraft studies for Flintshire were undertaken and published by J. Gwynn Williams in two papers published in the *Journal of the Flintshire Historical Society*, Part I in Vol. 26 and Part II in Vol. 27, 1975-76.

<sup>130</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/2/18-19 Great Sessions for Flint (1655-56) at Flint on the 7th April 1655-56.

<sup>131</sup> J. Gwynn Williams, J. op. cit. Vol. 27, 1975-76, p.34-37 has the full transcription of the case against Dorothy Griffith.

<sup>132</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/2/18.



whether she had inflicted *malefice* on William Griffith or not, he believed that she had and after she blessed him with a prayer, he was well enough to get up and go home.

Edward Griffith of Picton's testimony provided a lot more detail concerning the activities of William Griffith and Dorothy Griffith. Edward stated that he and William had gone to enquire after William's ship which lay at anchor at Poynt of Ayre (Point of Ayr ) near Llanhassaph (Llanasa?) which was the usual place for ships to lie at anchor. Both Edward and William went to an alehouse near the sea and called for a pot of ale. Whilst they were there, Dorothy Griffith of Picton came to them and William Griffith "*asked her whether hee had ever offended her father or any of his children and wished her to speake unto them for to lett him alone and hee would bee noe way offensive unto them. And the sayd Dorithy tould him that she would tell them therof when she came home, whereupon she departed and the sayd William Griffith, before the sayd pottle of drinke was drunke of, went away about his sayd business.*"<sup>133</sup>

Dorothy Griffith (Dorithy/ Dorothy Griffith/Gruffydd) was committed for felony and was discharged on her own bail at the 7th April sessions. Another entry for the 13th October sessions stated that Dorothy Griffith, who was committed on suspicion of witchcraft and was bound over to the October assize, had made default and a *scire facias* was issued for return to the next assizes. The Gaol Calendar entry for 13th October 1656 states "Ignor. last sessions. Bailed by herself in 40 l."<sup>134</sup> This sessions was held before John Bradshawe and Thomas Fell, both justices of Flint.<sup>135</sup>

An interesting development in the case arose when a petition was lodged on 31st March, 1655-56 with the Lord Chief Justice, John Bradshaw, of Chester and Flint. The petition was lodged by Dorothy Griffith who had then been in gaol for seven weeks. The petition stated that the case against her had come about through malice and spleen "*which hath continued for several yeares betweene the prosecutors of the said Dorithy and her family, as may appeare before your Lordshippe in diverse accions querrells and affrayes. May it further please your Lordshippe seriously to consider the great malice of*

<sup>133</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/2/18.

<sup>134</sup> C. L'Estrange Ewen, op. cit. ,p.423, citing the Flint Gaol Book, vol.3, p.163, 168 and Gaol Calendar Wales 4/985/3. ( Now NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/3).

<sup>135</sup> The Thomas Fell referred to was the husband of Margaret Fell, the supporter of George Fox who was the founder of the Quakers. Prior to his duties in Flintshire, Thomas Fell had just completed a circuit of the English assize court for Cheshire where a woman had been accused, examined and executed for witchcraft practices. The Palatinate Court of Great Sessions at Chester, first examined by Cecil L'Estrange Ewen ( *Witchcraft and Demonianism*, Heath Granton, London, 1933, p. 413-422), showed that there were sixty-nine charges of witchcraft between 1589-1675 although these were concerned mainly with conjuring offences, sorcery and prophesying. As J.A.Sharpe ( *Instruments of Darkness Witchcraft in England 1550-1750*, Penguin Books Ltd, London, 1997 edition, p.121-122.)points out, the first indictment for witchcraft as *malefice* was not presented until 1613 and it was only in the 1650s that witches were accused of *malefice* activities which led to the death of any person. Of the forty -seven people accused, eleven were found guilty and of these, seven of these were executed, one in 1631, three in 1653 and the other two in the 1650s.

one William Griffith, beinge the cheefe enemy of your petitioner was accused by him as hee went out of an alehouse conffirming with an oath that he would doe harme unto Griffith the Dedwydd or some of his children (meaneing the father of your petitioner) and accordingly brought false accusacion against her without any cause or ever suspected as may appear by the annexed certificate."<sup>136</sup> The petition was successful, accompanied as it was by a certificate of support for her case. The certificate, signed by thirty-one men, some of whom were leading parishioners of Llanasa, in favour of Dorothy Griffith, asserting her innocence and alluding to enduring difficulties between the families of the two parties, was instrumental in securing her release and underlines the importance of community reaction when a woman was accused of witchcraft practices in the Courts of Great Sessions.

The support Dorothy had from her neighbours, friends and other community members also underlines the fact that the community was probably well aware of the feud between the family of Dorothy Griffith and the family of William Griffith. Dorothy Griffith was released. As Gwynn Williams attests, some of the major political and gentry figures supported Dorothy Griffith and, even more striking, was that the members of the community who did support her were from diverse religious backgrounds. In fact it was "a remarkable testimony to the sense of fairness of the chief parishioners of Llanasa that they unequivocally came to the aid of a defenceless spinster, so often the victim of persecution in less favoured communities."<sup>137</sup>

A witchcraft as *malefice* case was brought against Anne Ellis of Penley in 1657 and seven people <sup>138</sup> testified against her before Andrew Ellis, one of the justices of the peace for Flint.<sup>139</sup> The case against Anne Ellis for witchcraft practices contained very strong evidence but this case also highlights the communal response associated with early modern Welsh reactions to a woman accused as a witch when she was before the courts.

Much of the testimony against Anne concerned her dealings with local children, some of whom she had apparently bewitched, one to death. Elizabeth Jeffrey had heard that Anne Ellis was thought to have done harm to the son of Elizabeth Taylor and Elizabeth therefore thought that Anne may have been responsible for her daughter's illness. Elizabeth went to Anne's house to ask her to come and see her daughter and Anne came and blessed the child who recovered. About a month after her daughter's recovery, Elizabeth was talking to Anne about the incident when Anne replied that "*shee could goe to them that could put any desease upon any one.*" Not long after this, Elizabeth's daughter fell sick again, in a manner similar to her previous illness, "*beeing*

<sup>136</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/2/1.

<sup>137</sup> J.Gwynn Williams, *op. cit.*, Vol. 26, p. 32.

<sup>138</sup> For a full transcription of this case see J. Gwynn Williams, *op. cit.*, Vol. 27, p. 30-35.

<sup>139</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/5 Great Sessions for Flint ( 1657) Sessions for Flint at Flint 28 September 1657 Examination of Anne Ellis of Penley for witchcraft.

*taken with a swelling all over her body and being soe deseased the sayd childe toulde her mother that it was allwayes soe when this examinant fell out with the sayd Anne and that her sayd daughter dyed of the same distemper aboute Whitsunday was twelvemonth last past. "*

Elizabeth Jeffrey also testified that Margaret, the daughter of William Hughes of Penley, came with other children to Anne's house and ate some of her bread when Anne was absent. When Anne had come home, she was very angry. Elizabeth asked Anne " *not to curse the sayd children or to do them any hurte, whereat the sayd Anne made noe answere but muttered to her selfe.* " Elizabeth further added that "*when the sayd Anne is displeased she doth hurte.*" When Elizabeth heard that Margaret Hughes had fallen ill, Elizabeth brought Anne to the Hughes' house to see the child and " *the sayd Anne entered the chamber where the child was sicke in bedd and put her hand on the child and asked " How does thout ? She replied, " Ver sicke." The sayd Anne, putting her hand uppon the childe, sayd., God blesse thee, thou shalt mend after this.* " Elizabeth further said that she had heard ill reports of Anne eight years before and had only had Anne in her house more out of fear than love and that, when she had taxed Anne about cursing Richard Hughes, who had been a cripple for eight years, Anne replied " *Why did he pisse downe her chimney ? "* 140

Edward Ffoulke, a labourer of Penley, was examined on the 6th June 1657 and gave evidence about a calf of his which he thought Anne had bewitched. When Ffoulke mentioned this to his neighbours, " *they sayd, " God send , noe one hath looked on him with an ill hart.* " Ffoulke eventually sent for Anne who arrived and asked Ffoulke " *to have noe ill thought of her and went with him to the sayd calf and sayd 'God blesse thee and all the cattle as he had .'"* Anne then went to Ffoulke's house and had meat.<sup>141</sup>

Susan Addams (sic) of Penley was certain that Anne had bewitched her cow and calf as Susan's daughter remembered that she had denied Anne Ellis milk. Susan suspected Anne " *because of the talke of her neighbours and went to her, the sayd Anne, and tould her she had a cowe sike 3 weeks. The sayd Anne heareing her say soe, sayd, 'God blesse your cow', and this examinant went in and within an houre or two the cow did eate as well as shee did and recovered sudainely, and further can not say."*<sup>142</sup>

Margaret, the wife of John Barnatt, was sure that her child had become ill because Anne had asked Margaret " *for releife, which shee had although not of the best.*" The child " *fell a shriking pittiful for the space of a quarter of an howre and when they sayde childe came to herselfe sayd 'Dady the catt was uppon my backe and hath made me bleede', and in which distemper shee continued a day or two. And being advised by some neighbours*

<sup>140</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/5/f.17 Examination of Elizabeth Jeffreys of Penley.

<sup>141</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/5/ f.18

<sup>142</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/5 f.19.

*this examinant desired her husband to fetch the sayd Anne Ellis to say, ' God blesse the childe', which shee did severall tymes and would have touched the same childe, but the childe turned away and would not let her, and further cannot say.*"<sup>143</sup>

Gwen Hughes, a labourer from Penley, stated that Anne had wandered about Penley and made her living from begging and knitting stockings. According to Gwen " *many people used to give the sayd Anne at their doore more than to any other begger out of feare she might doe them or their cattell hurte, as severall tymes the cattell of some of the neighbours falling sike strangely the said Anne being sent for they recovered suddainly.*"<sup>144</sup> Gwen also said that she was aware that Anne was responsible for some hurt inflicted upon John Birch, late of Overton Forren, over a year ago. Gwen had refused to give meat to Anne when she had demanded it and, that same day, Gwen's breast fed baby immediately fell sick after Anne had left. Gwen suspected that Anne had bewitched the child and Elizabeth Jeffrey promised to make Anne come and bless the child although Anne refused to do this for four days. In the four days, the child cried out and shrieked and would not eat anything but, after Anne visited, the child recovered immediately and was soon in perfect health.

Gwen Hughes went on to say that Elizabeth Jeffrey had told her several times that Anne had hurt her daughter and that she was afraid of Anne because she thought Anne was a witch. It was Gwen's daughter who had eaten the bread at Anne's house and Gwen described what happened to the child. Gwen had "*offered the sayd Anne satisfaction. And the sayd childe fell sike uppon Sunday night and uppon Munday morneing ther appeared under the left arme of the sayd childe a great lump of the bignesse of a hen's egge, continueing in great paine skenking, crying and lying uppon her face trembling. And uppon Tuesday this examinant went to a Justice for a warrant against the sayd Anne, dureinge which tyme this examinant's husband sayd the sayd Anne and Elizabeth Jeffreyes had bine with the childe, and after the child did begin to mende and this examinant's husband further tould her that the sayd Anne did blesse the sayd childe. And Elizabeth Jeffry (sic) hath severall tymes toould this examinant that when the sayd Anne is displeased she doth hurte, and further can not say.*"<sup>145</sup>

Elizabeth, the wife of Richard Taylor, testified as to her son's<sup>146</sup> injury. In 1649, her son, Richard Hughes, had been playing with Anne's children and "*the sayd Anne cursed this examinant's son and the sayd Anne prayed that he might be lame and that aboute half a yeare then next following this examinant's sonne was playing againe with other children at stoole ball at the house of the sayd Anne, she being within, and that on a suddaine as*

<sup>143</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/5f.20.

<sup>144</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/5f.21.

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.* The testimony of Gwen Hughes' husband can be found in NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/5f.21 v.

<sup>146</sup> It was Elizabeth's son who had urinated down Anne's chimney although the mother herself did not mention why Anne might have inflicted *malefice* on her son.

*he was strikeinge the ball he stricked strongly and sate down and could not rise without helpe but complaines very much of greate paine and ever since he hath continued in greate paine and is very lame soe that he can not stirr himselfe or rise out of beed without much helpe.*"<sup>147</sup> Elizabeth also mentioned John Byrch (sic) of Overton Forren who had fallen out with Anne, adding that his children had effected their own bewitchment cure by burning some thatch from Anne's house under their father's nose.<sup>148</sup>

The case did not end there as Anne Ellis escaped from custody, the implication being that she was assisted in her escape. Thomas Barnatt, a constable from Penley, gave evidence on 3rd August, 1657, testifying that he had been sent word of Anne's whereabouts by Alice Chester, a widow from Overton, to the effect that she was then in the parish of Renberrie in the county of Chester. Thomas Barnatt and his fellow constable Edward Weaver went to the place and found Anne at the house of Roger Pottmore of Kingswood in the parish of Renberrie (Wrenbury in Cheshire). When examined concerning her escape, Anne stated that she had been persuaded to escape from custody by three people: William Hughes of Penley, Rece Toy and Elizabeth Jeffrey. She had taken their advice, "*being terrified with the apprehension of imprisonment, and further sayth not.*"<sup>149</sup>

Anne Ellis was examined on 3rd June, 1657, and admitted to all the accusations of *malefice* activities made against her. The document was signed by Anne Ellis and she was committed to gaol by Andrew Ellise but escaped from the constable again.<sup>150</sup> On 28th September, 1657 Anne Ellis was among the prisoners at the Great Sessions of the County of Flint, on trial for witchcraft. She bailed herself at 200 pounds and appeared again on 12th April, 1658 at the Spring Sessions. The indictments against her were those of Susan Addams, Elizabeth Jeffreys, Gwen Hughes and Elizabeth Taylor. Those of Susan Addams and Elizabeth Jeffreys were declared no true bills and those of Gwen Hughes and Elizabeth Taylor were declared true bills but the jury panel found Anne Ellis not guilty and she was acquitted.<sup>151</sup>

The testimony of both Anne and her accusers underlines the concept of containment of the witch's *malefice* according to customary practices: a procedural response surrounding bewitchment; conciliation and reconciliation was undertaken by all the accusers. The

<sup>147</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/5/f.22.

<sup>148</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/5/f.22v. This personal antidote response was given in full in Chapter VI Personal Protection, The First Phase of the Welsh Antidote to Witchcraft as *Malefice*.

<sup>149</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/5/f.23.

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> Cecil L'Estrange Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism*, Heath Granton, London, 1933, p. 424. Citing the Calendar of Prisoners at the Great Sessions of the County of Flint, *Flint Gaol Book*, vol.3, p.184; Plea Roll, NLW, Great Sessions 30/247/m.26; NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/6. The trial records are located at NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/25,26,30,32,33. These records are now re-catalogued as NLW, Great Sessions 30/247/m.26; NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/6 and NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/25,26,30,32,33.

community had a very clear view of Anne's abilities and attempted to rectify any damage their actions or words may have caused. When Anne was not treated well, she retaliated with *malefice* but, when appeased she lifted her curse through a hands-on blessing or a word. Communal fear of Anne's abilities was apparent but, despite this, Anne was assisted by members of the same community to escape the constable and goal on two occasions and her final court hearing resulted in acquittal. The court case made Anne admit to her *malefice*, an admission with which the community and justices seemed to be satisfied despite the fact that the evidence against her was considerable. However, even though her actions were seen by the community to have caused death and harm to others, Anne's community did not exhibit any willingness to see her harmed. This was indicated by their efforts to secure her release.

Anne Ellis was one of the few women accused of *malefice* witchcraft in early modern Wales who did fit the stereotypical picture of the witch: she was poor, she had a long reputation for harming others amongst members of her community, her employment was static and she begged for food and accommodation. Although her marital status was not mentioned, she had several children but was not, however, an old woman. The result of her case, acquittal, was not unusual for women accused of witchcraft in early modern Wales. The court case elicited an acknowledgement of guilt from Anne, underlining the reason for the trial as the last of a three-phase process. Inter-personal and communal harmony had been restored because the accused witch had admitted her guilt in court.

### Montgomery

Records for the Courts of Great Sessions for Montgomery begin with the Plea Rolls which exist from 1541 to 1830.<sup>152</sup> Prothonotary Papers pre-1660 run from 1551 to 1660 and post 1660 papers from 1661 to 1830.<sup>153</sup> Gaol files for Montgomery begin in 1554 with some early gaps until 1561 and are then continuous until 1830.<sup>154</sup> Quarter Sessions records for Montgomery begin with the Hilary rolls of 1613/14. The county had six slander and defamation cases citing witchcraft and one case which mentioned the devil as the reason why a woman had deliberately set alight a barn, burning it to the ground.<sup>155</sup> A case of enchantment<sup>156</sup> was also lodged but no individual was accused of witchcraft. Great Sessions plea rolls records for Montgomery from 1562-1704 and

<sup>152</sup> Glyn Parry, op. cit. , p. 6-73 . (NLW, Great Sessions 24).

<sup>153</sup> *ibid.*, p. 89-91. (NLW, Great Sessions 13) and p. 91-95 (NLW, Great Sessions P).

<sup>154</sup> *ibid.*, p.119-125 (NLW, Great Sessions 4).

<sup>155</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/151/2-4 NLW Gaol Files for Montgomery in which Ellen Thomas was accused by her employer, John Brunt of Llundyman, of burning down his barn. Ellen admitted it and said that the "Debill" had been responsible for her actions.

<sup>156</sup> This case was mentioned in Chapter I Contextualising the Welsh Witch in the Early Modern World, *Witchcraft Historiography*. NLW, Great Sessions 4/129/4 Great Sessions for Montgomery (1579) in which David Lloid ap John of Mynod, a gentleman, lodged a case of enchantment and bewitchment against Gruffyd ap David ap John and others before Sir John Throckmorton. These men had abducted his daughter and Gruffyd had forced her to marry him even though he was already married. The case is discussed in Chapter IV The Welsh Law of Women.. as it is a kidnap and rape case.

Prothonotary Papers from 1551- 1750 have not yielded any witchcraft as *malefice* cases to date.<sup>157</sup>

The oral history relating to witches, conjurors, the magical and the supernatural in Montgomery is found in the works of Elias Owen,<sup>158</sup> particularly his series of articles from the 1890s in *Montgomeryshire Collections*,<sup>159</sup> entitled "Folk-Lore, Superstitions, or What-Not, in Montgomeryshire." In 1882, Owen tells of putting people in the well of Ffynnon Elian,<sup>160</sup> bewitched butter churnings and cheese,<sup>161</sup> and a spell-breaking incident where a woman asked the parson to break her bewitchment. He, not knowing what to do, prayed and read some of the Bible to her, after which she claimed to be cured.<sup>162</sup> Another article details the activities of conjurors, citing incidents of stolen property recovered, a thief discovered and a witch who bewitched cattle revealed by conjuration.<sup>163</sup> In 1894, Owen published another article in *Montgomeryshire Collections* which provides considerable information about witchcraft, witches and their activities. The witch transforming into a hare to steal milk from her neighbours, a woman cursed by a witch for refusing to give away her husband's best coat, and a woman who drew blood on another to stop a bewitchment are all mentioned.<sup>164</sup> Edward Harner published an article in *Montgomeryshire Collections* in 1877<sup>165</sup> which gives accounts of the personal protection actions undertaken by the populace as antidotes to witchcraft as *malefice* : horsehoes nailed to the door, drawing blood, putting a red hot spit into milk which would not churn into butter, reading a Bible passage or consulting a conjuror.<sup>166</sup>

### III. North Wales Circuit.

The North Wales circuit, part of the original Principality of Wales prior to the Acts of Union, heard the cases for Anglesey, Caemarvon and Merioneth. Records for the Courts of Geat Sessions, Plea Rolls in Anglesey run from 1509 to 1517, then in 1576

<sup>157</sup> Glyn Parry, Glyn op. cit., p. 66 - 73 for Plea Rolls ( NLW, Great Session 24) and p.89- 94 for Prothonotary Papers ( NLW, GreatSessions13 ).

<sup>158</sup> Elias Owen, *Welsh Folk-Lore : A Collection of the Folk-Tales and Legends of North Wales*, First published in 1888 by Woodall, Minshall and Co., Oswestry. Republished by EP Publishing Limited, East Ardsley, Wakefield, 1976.

<sup>159</sup> This journal is sometimes referred to as *Collections Historical and Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire* but is more often called *Montgomeryshire Collections*, a journal published by the Montgomeryshire Historical Society.

<sup>160</sup> *ibid.*, Vol XV, 1882, p.133.

<sup>161</sup> *ibid.*, p.134.

<sup>162</sup> *ibid.*, p.153.

<sup>163</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. XVI, 1883, p.151-155.

<sup>164</sup> Elias Owen, " Montgomeryshire Folk-Lore." *Montgomeryshire Collections*, Vol. XXVIII, 1894, p. 328-330.

<sup>165</sup> Edward Harner, "Parochial Account of Llandloes." *Montgomeryshire Collections*, Vol.X, 1877, p. 231-312.

<sup>166</sup> *ibid.*, p. 235-238.

and 1621. Beginning again in 1626, the records are not continuous until these ceased in 1830.<sup>167</sup> Prothonotary Papers are all post-1660 and begin in 1703, then from 1730 to 1830.<sup>168</sup> Gaol files for Anglesey do not begin until 1708 and are inconsistent until 1730-1830.<sup>169</sup>

### Anglesey

Anglesey is the only known county to date in which women were accused of *malefice* witchcraft before the Courts of Great Sessions, found guilty and executed in early modern Wales. Precisely how many women were executed is uncertain because the verdict records are not complete. There was more than one case in which a woman was accused but no more than one woman per year in the 1652-1655 period. One of these women, Margaret verch Richard, was definitely executed in 1655. Margaret's case is also very unusual because the Great Sessions records do not have any testimony from either the witnesses or the accused attached to the verdict, the only surviving court document. The records, which appear to be entire in this case, contain only a verdict which amounted to a court statement of guilt, and which was signed by the justice of the peace. The only extant document is, in reality, a statement of Margaret verch Richard's guilt and sentence of execution.<sup>170</sup>

The case of Margaret verch Richard,<sup>171</sup> a widowed woman from Anglesey, is very rare in early modern Wales because it is, to date, the only case where a woman was found guilty of witchcraft practices in a Court of Great Sessions and executed for the crime. Although women in other Welsh counties were found guilty of witchcraft practices, they were not executed.<sup>172</sup> There are, therefore, no records which provide detailed descriptions of the practices of which Margaret was accused or which made the people suspect that she was a witch and no direct statement from Margaret verch Richard herself. The case papers consist of a declaration which stated that Margaret verch Richard was a witch because she had caused the death of Gwen, the wife of Owen Meredith, therefore she should be dealt with according to the crime of witchcraft as premeditated harm. Gwen had become ill on the last day of October in 1654 and had died on the last day of December in the same year. The text mentions that Margaret had caused her neighbours considerable discomfort through the use of her *malefice*, and

<sup>167</sup> *ibid.*, (NLW, Great Sessions 16) p. 130 -132. The first plea roll 1509-1517 is PRO:WALE 16/1.

<sup>168</sup> *ibid.*, (NLW, Great Sessions P) p. 137-139.

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*, p.175 (NLW, Great Sessions 4).

<sup>170</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Glyn Parry, Assistant Keeper, Department of Manuscripts and Records at the National Library of Wales, for this information. An expert on the Great Sessions records, Mr. Parry pointed out that these cases are the only known executions in the Great Sessions records for witchcraft in Wales during the early modern period. All the executions occurred in Anglesey over the 1652-1655 period but I could only substantiate one execution with absolute certainty.

<sup>171</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 16/7 Great Session for Anglesey (1655) Margaret verch Richard of Beaumaris 20th August 1655 at Beaumaris.

<sup>172</sup> Evidence for this exists in cases from the counties of Denbigh, Flint, Carmarthen and Pembroke, details of which can be found in this chapter.



mention was made of Margaret's ability to induce "payning" or pining, wasting and consuming illnesses in 1654. Gwen Meredith was the only named person whose death was attributed to Margaret's presumed *malefice* activities. Margaret was tried before a jury but made no declaration in her defence other than to plead "Not guilty" and throw herself on the mercy of the court. Margaret verch Richard was sentenced to be hanged for witchcraft in Anglesey on the 20th August 1655.<sup>173</sup>

The lack of witness testimonies is not the only unusual aspect of Margaret's case, as no other witchcraft as *malefice* case for early modern Wales mentions the renunciation of God or assumes that the individual before the court had made a spiritual alliance with the devil. This case and its outcome seems to have more in common with the figures of the witch and the devil in English, and particularly Scottish, trials. The concepts of renouncing God and the use of acquired devilish powers to cause harm, as cited in Margaret's case, were very similar to the devil/familiar/selling one's soul aspect of the Matthew Hopkins' trials in the Essex trials at Manningtree.<sup>174</sup>

Margaret stated that she was innocent and, accordingly, placed herself at the mercy of the court, allowing them to determine her fate. On the basis of other witchcraft cases Margaret might have expected this to be a safe course of action. However, her case is perhaps indicative of what could happen to Welsh women accused of witchcraft practices when confronted by a jury and justices of the peace who chose to disregard the customary response to women so charged in the rest of Wales. Elsewhere, the case was heard, all witness statements considered and the accused woman admitted her guilt, the jury brought in a guilty verdict, the case was declared "Ignoramus" and/or the accused was acquitted. Margaret did not admit her guilt and, much like those accused of witchcraft at Salem in 1692 who did not admit their guilt, she was executed. However, the evidence for this case suggests that Margaret was not being tried by individuals sympathetic to the more common Welsh judicial response to witchcraft as *malefice* cases.

The court document for Margaret verch Richard's case provides little evidence for the reasons which may have influenced the jury's verdict. Margaret's relationship to any person, family, justices of the peace or jury members was not known. The case is in fact far more reflective of the Puritan approach used elsewhere in England during the Civil War period than it is representative of the prevailing Welsh approach to witchcraft as *malefice* cases. One of the reasons for such a deviation could, perhaps, be related to the political and religious climate of Anglesey in 1655. Geographical location may have been the key to Margaret's case as it may have become enmeshed in the prevailing religio-political climate of both Anglesey and England in the 1650s. The majority of

<sup>173</sup> The full transcription of this case is located in Appendix II Witchcraft as *Malefice*.

<sup>174</sup> See Richard Deacon, *Matthew Hopkins Witch Finder General*, Frederick Miller Ltd., London, 1976 particularly Chapters 5, p. 75-86, 6, p.87-105 and 7, p.106-123 for detailed descriptions of the link between the Devil, women, familiars and the sale of one's soul.

Welsh people were Royalist supporters during the Civil War but those few who were Parliamentary supporters rose to prominence during the later years of the Civil War and during the years of the Commonwealth. The military control of Anglesey was, as always, of considerable consequence both during and after the Civil War because of the county's close proximity to Ireland from which reinforcements could be brought. Depending on which side was in control, this proximity was either a threat or an advantage.

As the Parliamentary presence was quite formidable in the county during and after the Civil War, this probably influenced the political orientations of the Anglesey gentry. The political ambitions and economic outlook of the Anglesey gentry were, therefore, likely to be of considerable importance in the light of witchcraft cases because in "small political units exercising *de facto* sovereignty there were often no other institutions to check the obsessions of those in power."<sup>175</sup> The evidence suggests that witchcraft as *malefice* cases in the rest of early modern Wales display the power of the community to limit judicial obsessions.

Perusal of the personnel who sat on the commission for the justices of the peace in Anglesey for this period emphasises the likelihood of a more conservative Protestant/Puritan response to witchcraft accusations in the county. The commission which was responsible for the trial of Margaret verch Richard was specifically renewed to include Colonel James Berry who joined a commission which was already full of Parliamentary supporters and known Puritans from the gentry of Anglesey. The depth of these individuals' religious commitment to the Puritan form of Protestantism may have been superficial, their adherence may have been governed more by personal economic and political gain. Nevertheless, it was known that Colonel James Berry was responsible, along with George Twistleton, for ruling Wales with an iron hand from 1653

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<sup>175</sup> G.R.Quaife, *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage: The Witch in Early Modern Europe*, Croom Helm, London, 1987, p.117.

until the Restoration in 1660.<sup>176</sup>

Both Margaret verch Richard and another accused woman, Maud verch Hugh ap Hugh (see below) were tried by a court which consisted almost entirely of committed supporters of Oliver Cromwell's Commonwealth and those who had supported the Parliamentary cause in the Civil War. A local Welsh witchcraft case had moved, theoretically, out of its locale and was now lodged before a judiciary which represented the new Puritan Commonwealth. Elsewhere in early modern Wales "the middling sort of people often played a powerful role as mediators in the exercise of justice, and ... they often did not automatically or instinctively adapt the values of the governing elite."<sup>177</sup> The irony was, however, that the Puritan/Parliamentary military consul in Scotland had the opposite effect on the outcome of witchcraft cases in Scotland as General Monk brought about a cessation of witchcraft trials. Although Monk was a Puritan, he did not hold the witchcraft beliefs so prevalent amongst the members of the Scottish kirk. Why a similar type of rule by the English military consul for Wales, Colonel James Berry, led to the opposite result in Anglesey is not known. Margaret verch Richard's case could, perhaps, be viewed more as a reflection of the link between demonology and the state's "determination to impose the fundamentals of Christian

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<sup>176</sup> On 12th December 1655 the commission for the justices of the peace was renewed in Anglesey and the members of the commission were almost a who's who of the new English Parliamentary political regime. Members of the commission were: W. Lenthall, a Speaker of the House of Commons in 1649; Oliver Cromwell, Lord General; J. Bradshaw who had been President of the Council in 1649; Bulstrode Whitelocke Commissioner of the Great Seal in 1649; Richard Keble who was a Justice of the Great Sessions in 1647; J. Lisle who was another Commissioner of the Great Seal in 1649; the Earl of Denbigh; H. Rolle who was a Chief Justice of the Upper Bench in 1647; Oliver St. John, a Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas in 1650; J. Wilde who was a Chief Baron of the Exchequer; W. Littleton and Edward Bulstrode, Justices of the Great Sessions; Edmund Prideaux, the Attorney General in 1647; J. Jones; Nicholas Bagnall; Thomas Mytton, a Parliamentary colonel; Owen Wood; Thomas Madryn, made *custos rotulorum* on 27th July 1653; Richard Meyrick; W. Bould; Richard Owen; J. Wood; Richard Bolton senior; Hugh Courtney; George Twistleton; Piers Lloyd; Richard Owen Tudor; Owen Holland; Edmund Glynn; Robert Lewis; Thomas Swift; J. Sydenham; and Colonel James Berry. The members of the commission who formed the quorum, were Lenthall, Cromwell, Whitelocke, Keble and Lisle, Denbigh, Bradshaw, Rolle, St. John, Wilde, Littleton and Bulstrode, Prideaux, J. Jones, Thomas Mytton, Owen Wood, Hugh Courtney, George Twistleton, Piers Lloyd, Owen Holland, Edmund Glynn, W. Bould, Richard Owen Tudor, Richard Bolton and J. Wood. Hugh Courtney was a member of parliament for Anglesey and had been appointed to represent Wales at the Barebones Parliament in 1653. He had been the governor of Anglesey in 1651 and the Council of State had appointed him a *Militia* commander for North Wales in 1651. Colonel George Twistleton (or Twisleton) was the governor of Denbigh, a position granted to him after his successful siege of Denbigh Castle during the Civil War and he was an M.P. for Anglesey from 1654-55 and 1656-8 and had been one of the High Court of Justice members who tried Charles I. See W.R. Williams, *The Parliamentary History of the Principality of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Present Day 1541-1895*, Published for the author by Edwin Davies and Bell, "County Times" offices, Brecknock, 1895, Number 237, p. 4-5.

<sup>177</sup> Tim Harris, "Problematising Popular Culture." in Tim Harris (editor) *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500-1850*, Macmillan, London, 1995, p. 17 quoting Peter King "Decision-Makers and Decision-Making in the English Criminal Law, 1750-1800." *Historical Journal*, XXVII, 1984, p. 25-58.

belief and practice on ordinary people,"<sup>178</sup> an imposition of beliefs and reactions to a woman accused as a witch, mirrored in some other Puritan communities of the mid seventeenth century. Understanding the reasons for the death of Margaret verch Richard is complicated by the lack of comparative material either in the counties of the North Wales circuit or in other Welsh circuits.

Another Anglesey case, against Maud verch Hugh ap Hugh in 1652 may have originally begun as a slander case which Maud lodged against her slanderer, as this is indicated by the declaration submitted with her case. However, when compared with the court transcripts of witchcraft as *malefice* cases in other counties, Maud verch Hugh ap Hugh's slander case transcripts are almost exactly the same as those of full trials for witchcraft practices. Maud's documents initially appeared to be following the same procedure as that of other witchcraft as words cases in the Courts of Great Sessions, but issue was taken<sup>179</sup> with Maud's declaration, quite a common procedure in witchcraft as words and witchcraft as *malefice* cases. However, the fact that one execution was known to have occurred in Anglesey during this 1652-55 timeframe makes the analysis of Maud's case even more important. Its similarities to witchcraft as *malefice* case transcripts has prompted the inclusion of Maud's case in the witchcraft as *malefice* case studies group, most particularly because Maud's slander case was the only slander case in which the words " *also to bring her the said Maud in danger of losse of her life and estate ...*" occur. This indicated that Maud herself felt that her situation could have a potentially fatal outcome. At the sessions held at Beaumaris in Anglesey on 16th August 1652, Maud verch Hugh ap Hugh,<sup>180</sup> a widow, brought a case for 100 pounds against a yeoman named Richard Prees of Penmyndd and, through her attorney, William Thomas, Maud lodged a declaration.<sup>181</sup> The declaration goes on to say that the slander had resulted in Maud's neighbours avoiding her as they would no longer associate or talk to her. As a consequence, Maud had brought the suit in an effort to clear her good name.

<sup>178</sup> Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997, p.530 a point made in reference to what occurred in " Calvinist Scotland, the Catholic Netherlands and north-east of France, the duchy of Luxembourg, Hungary, and the areas covered by the Mediterranean Inquisitions." also p. 530.

<sup>179</sup> That is, someone challenged and then formally opposed her plea of "Not Guilty" in court.

<sup>180</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 16/5 Great Sessions for Anglesey (1652) Deposition No.5 Anglesey Plea Rolls, Roll 8.

<sup>181</sup> Declaration: And whereupon the said Maud hath been from the tyme of her nativity hitherto a woman of good name, fame and credit and from then free and untouched with ye crime of witchcraft, sorcery, or any other hateful or hurtfull offence so has hitherto been reputed so among her neighbours, yett the said Richard imagining, and intending not only to injure and oppress the said Maud unjustly to oppress ... her good name and reputation aforesaid among her neighbours and others to hurt and scandalize, but also to bring her the said Maud in danger of losse of her life and estate on the.... day of ....at Bewmares in the county aforesaid, the said Richard being in company with one John Morgan, on espying the said Maud passing by also pointing at her, these false, malicious and defaming words in ... hearing of the said John Morgan and of diverse others understanding the Welsh tongue did speak " Dymma r witch a witchiodd fyngwas theg am lloie i er ys dwy fflynedd yn myned hebio.' (Here is ye witch that bewitched my coves and calves these two yeares passing by). (The case has been transcribed literally, keeping all the original spelling and words.).

The case is also the only witchcraft as words case for Anglesey found for the pre-1700 period in the Courts of Great Sessions records. The only other witchcraft cases for Anglesey were lodged in 1718 and 1732, and both were very specific witchcraft as words cases. The records provide certain evidence that one woman was executed for Anglesey in 1655, a reality which tended towards the suspicion that Maud verch Hugh ap Hugh was probably one of the women understood to have been executed for witchcraft practices in Anglesey. Perhaps, like Dorti from Merioneth, the woman cited in the following pages in this chapter, Maud was in fear of being killed by a mob rather than execution. Details surrounding Dorti come from oral history as do the details of Rachel Fleming's fate from Glamorgan. However, Maud may have also been more fearful of the authorities as she testifies that she was in danger of loss of her estate as well. The case of Margaret verch Richard illustrates a political situation which may have influenced the local elite towards treating Welsh women accused as witches more along the property acquisition lines instanced in England and on the Continent.<sup>182</sup>

### Caernarvon

The second county which came under the jurisdiction of the North Wales circuit was Caernarvon and witchcraft cases of any description are uncommon for this county. Courts of Great Sessions Plea Rolls for Caernarvonshire exist from 1550-1830 but are not continuous<sup>183</sup> and Prothonotary Papers for the county exist for the year 1649 but do not begin again until 1703 through to 1830.<sup>184</sup> Gaol files for Caernarvon are only for 1622 and do not begin again until 1718-1830.<sup>185</sup> The records of quarter sessions for Caernarvon are extensive and a calendar of the records was begun in 1956 for the years 1541-1558<sup>186</sup> and the work has been ongoing.<sup>187</sup> However, there are no records of witchcraft as *malefice* cases in the quarter sessions records from 1541 to 1800. Records indicate that there was one witchcraft as words case brought before the courts, as late as 1754.

Actual cases for witchcraft as *malefice* have not been found in the court records although mention is made of two possible cases in other archival records. The Calendar of State Papers (Domestic), contains the record of a letter sent on the 2nd July in 1611 to the

<sup>182</sup> I have been unable to find any further documentation relating to the outcome of this case. Maud may have feared for her life at the hands of her community. ( I would like to thank Professor Helen Fulton, University of Sydney, for raising this thought ).

<sup>183</sup> Glyn Parry, op. cit., p. 142-144 ( NLW, Great Sessions 20 ).

<sup>184</sup> *ibid.*, p. 150-153 ( NLW, Great Session 13 for 1649 and NLW, Great Sessions P for 1703 onwards ).

<sup>185</sup> *ibid.*, p.176 (NLW, Great Sessions 4).

<sup>186</sup> W. Ogwen Williams (editor) *The Calendar of Caernarvonshire quarter sessions records*, Vol. I, 1541-1558, published by Caernarvonshire Historical Society for Caernarvonshire Joint Records Committee of Quarter Sessions and County Council, Caernarvon, 1956.

<sup>187</sup> A specific year of records is published annually by trainee archivists and librarians as a pre-requisite for the completion of their degrees and this collection is held in the Manuscripts Room at NLW, Aberystwyth.

Bishop of Bangor and the Judges of Assizes in the County of Caernarvon.<sup>188</sup> The letter requested information concerning reports of witchcraft occurrences in Caernarvonshire. The Justices of the Great Sessions for Caernarvon for 1611 were Richard Barker and Lewis Prowde,<sup>189</sup> who were asked to act upon information in an effort to search out the truth of a report that witchcraft had been committed against six young maids in the county.<sup>190</sup>

The other reference to witchcraft in Caernarvon is located in the Wynn of Gwydir papers.<sup>191</sup> Sometime in either February 1621 or 1622 Sir John Bodvel, who lived in the county of Caernarvon, wrote to his father-in-law, Sir John Wynn, to tell him that Griffith Hughes "*by reason of a sickness in his house these 18 years, has apprehended two of Bodvel's tenants named as Ritherch ap Jevan and Lowri verch Jevan, and committed them to gaol on a charge of witchcraft.*"<sup>192</sup> Griffith Hughes, according to the letter, had committed the two to gaol where they were to remain without bail. Sir John's letter outlines the situation to Sir John Wynn as Bodvel was in a difficult predicament since he was both the landlord of the accused and one of the justices of the peace who would, in all likelihood, hear their case. Sir John Bodvel may, however, have followed the procedure of absenting himself from the trial. Plea Rolls for Caernarvonshire are not extant for 1621 or 1622 and the Prothonotary Papers for the county do not survive, other than for the year of 1649, until 1703.<sup>193</sup>

The details of the case and the fates of Ritherch ap Jevan and Lowri verch Jevan, who were probably brother and sister as they both had the same patronym of 'Jevan' and were referred to as "ap" and "verch" meaning "son of" and "daughter of", are unknown. Sir John Bodvel noted that both had been good tenants of his and were honest people with good reputations and the tone of the letter was somewhat disbelieving. An interesting point about the information was that Griffith Hughes had tolerated the supposed activities of Ritherch and Lowri against "*his house*" for eighteen years before acting, on his own behalf, to end their supposed activities. Hughes's actions may have had something to do with his position as a justice of the peace for the North Wales Circuit, a position he took for Caernarvon in 1617 and retained until 1623 (although he should not be confused with another Griffith Hughes, the Chancellor of Bangor).<sup>194</sup>

<sup>188</sup> Calendar of State Papers ( Domestic ), 1611-8, p. 53.

<sup>189</sup> J.R.S. Phillips, *op. cit.* p. 24.

<sup>190</sup> The outcome of this incident was unknown and no reference to the six young maids, witchcraft or an investigation has been found.

<sup>191</sup> Calendar of the Wynn Papers (Wynn of Gwydir) 1515-1690, NLW. No. 1009 1621/22, 12th February, p.159.

<sup>192</sup> J.R.S. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 22-25.

<sup>193</sup> Glyn Parry, *op. cit.* p.142-144 (NLW, Great Sessions 20 ) and p.150-153 (NLW, Great Sessions 13 for 1649 and NLW, Great Sessions P for 1703 onwards).

<sup>194</sup> J.R.S. Phillips, *op. cit.* p. 22-25.

There is a record of a person by the name of J. Bodvel who served as a justice of the peace on the North Wales Circuit for Caernarvon from 1616 and was a member of the quorum on 26th February 1621 and at each session thereafter until 1625.<sup>195</sup> The case brought by Griffith Hughes would have brought the two justices of the peace for the Caernarvon circuit into conflict because Ritherch ap Jevan and Lowri verch Jevan were tenants of Bodvel's and, as the letter showed, he had had no cause to suspect either of any wrong doing. The letter does not contain sufficient information from which to draw any conclusions and the case is complicated by the fact that no other information can be located in the court records. Comparisons with the other two counties on this circuit are difficult as Anglesey has only the cases of Margaret verch Richard and Maud verch Hugh ap Hugh and there are no witchcraft cases of any type for Merioneth.

### Merioneth

Locating records of witchcraft accusations and prosecutions for the county of Merioneth is fraught with problems, the most obvious of which is the scarcity of records. Courts of Great Sessions records for Merioneth consist of the Plea Rolls which run from 1547 to 1830 although these are not continuous.<sup>196</sup> Prothonotary Papers no longer exist for the pre-1660 period, but are found for 1682 to 1830.<sup>197</sup> Gaol files exist for 1513 only and begin again in 1702 and cover intermittent years until 1830.<sup>198</sup> Quarter sessions records for early modern Merioneth are no longer extant as all records prior to 1733 have been lost. Examination of the 1733-65 quarter sessions records has not revealed witchcraft related cases of any type.<sup>199</sup> This means that ascertaining whether any cases dealing with witchcraft, either as witchcraft as *malefice* or as witchcraft as words ever came before the courts is almost impossible.

Establishing the nature of witchcraft for the county remains, therefore, very much open to question, particularly as the scarcity of court cases for the whole of the North Wales circuit make comparisons difficult. Evidence for witchcraft in early modern Merioneth is entirely dependent upon oral histories, antiquarian writings and diaries from the period. Oral histories of witchcraft occurrences therefore become very significant although, the factual basis of the oral histories are difficult to substantiate. The case of Dorti,<sup>200</sup> a seventeenth

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<sup>195</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26-27.

<sup>196</sup> Glyn Parry, *op. cit.*, p.156-158 (NLW, Great Sessions 23).

<sup>197</sup> *ibid.*, p. 164-167 (NLW, Great Sessions P).

<sup>198</sup> *ibid.*, p.178 (NLW, Great Sessions 4 ).

<sup>199</sup> Keith William-Jones (editor) *A Calendar of the Merioneth Quarter Sessions Rolls, Vol. I: 1733-65*, Merioneth County Council, 1965.

<sup>200</sup> This oral history was referred to in a preceeding chapter. See Mary Corbett Harris, "Legends and Folklore of Llanfachreth Parish." *Journal of the Merioneth Historical Society*, No.5, 1965-68, p.12. Also cited as NLW MS 8424B. Dafydd G. Ifan, "Witches grave on the banks of a Welsh Lake." *Country Quest*, May, 1987, p.9. I am grateful to J.M. Griffiths, County Librarian, County Offices, Caernarvon, Gwynedd (in 1988) for drawing this article, and supplying it, to my attention. W.J. Hemp, "Two Cairns." *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society*, 1944, No. 5 , p.101-102; O.M. Edwards, *Yr Hwiangerdii*, p. 72, 1911; and Frank Ward *Lakes of Wales*, 1931.

century Merioneth witch, underlines the importance of oral history information concerning witchcraft in early modern Wales, particularly as Dorti's case represents the only witchcraft information currently available for Merioneth. The case is quite different from cases of witchcraft which existed in other Welsh counties.

Dorti was a well known witch who lived at Llyn Treowyn Uchaf in the parish of Llandecwyn in Merioneth in the seventeenth century. What she actually did to deserve her fate was not recorded but Dorti was apparently put to death by the local people. This case represents the only known incident<sup>201</sup> in early modern Welsh witchcraft where community justice in the form of execution was carried out. The method used to execute Dorti was also unusual as the people placed her in a spiked barrel filled with tar and set it on fire then threw the barrel from the top of the cliff. Prior to the sixteenth century on the Isle of Man, suspected witches were placed in spiked barrels and rolled down the mountain called Slieau Whallin to the town of St. John's below. The same type of punishment was used in the Norse communities in their homelands but Dorti's was the only recorded instance of the procedure outside these and the Isle of Man.<sup>202</sup> Mary Corbett Harris, Elias Owen and *The Diary of Elizabeth Baker* provide more evidence of witchcraft and witch-beliefs in Merioneth.<sup>203</sup>

The North Wales circuit provides little evidence for witchcraft activity in the three counties under its jurisdiction but the experience of witchcraft in Anglesey does not resemble the patterns which court records have indicated prevailed in the rest of early modern Wales. Records for Caernarvon do not yield any witchcraft as *malefice* cases and the lack of records for Merioneth compounds the problem of ascertaining what the nature of witchcraft may have been in these three counties.

#### IV. Carmarthen Circuit.

##### Carmarthen

The Carmarthen Circuit of the Courts of Great Session heard cases for Carmarthen, Carmarthen Borough, Cardigan, Pembroke and Haverfordwest County and Borough. Records of the Courts of Great Sessions for Carmarthenshire are good, the Plea Rolls begin in 1541 and exist for nearly every year until 1830.<sup>204</sup> Prothonotary Papers pre-1660 are intermittent from 1543-1659 whilst post-1660 Prothonotary Papers run from

<sup>201</sup> As at the time of writing in 2002.

<sup>202</sup> David Craine, *Manannan's Isle*, printed for The Manx Museum and National Trust, Robert Maclehouse and Co. Ltd., University Press, Glasgow, 1955, p.14.

<sup>203</sup> Mary Corbett Harris, "Legends and Folklore.." op. cit., p.12-13. Elias Owen, *Welsh Folk-Lore: A Collection of the Folk-Tales and Legends of North Wales*, First published in 1888 by Woodall, Minshall and Co., Oswestry. Republished by EP Publishing Limited, East Ardsley, Wakefield, 1976, p. 228-230. Thomas Ben Bowen, *The Old Order based on The Diary of Elizabeth Baker (Dolgelley 1778-1786)*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1945, p. 43-49.

<sup>204</sup> Glyn Parry, op. cit., p. 299-305 (NLW, Great Sessions 19).



1662 to 1732.<sup>205</sup> The remaining 1732 to 1830 Prothonotary Papers are located in NLW, Great Sessions 28.<sup>206</sup> Carmarthenshire Gaol Files run from 1692 to 1830.<sup>207</sup>

The first witchcraft as *malefice* case for Carmarthen resembles that of Ritherch ap Jevan and Lowri verch Jevan, Sir John Bodvel's tenants.<sup>208</sup> At the sessions held for 14 August 1654, an indictment was lodged against Joan Roger, a widow and against her son, David John, a husbandman, both of Pembry. <sup>209</sup> This case differs from others as both a woman and a man were accused of bewitchment activities although "witchcraft", as a term, was not used. The indictment stated that on 6 February 1653 these two individuals had bewitched John Thomas, who had then languished until 18 February 1654. The depositions of August 1654 stated that John Thomas was returning from visiting friends at night in the company of Joan Roger and her son David John. John Thomas said he "*saw some black things,*" although what he actually saw was not mentioned. After this sighting, he "*grew unruly*" whilst in bed in the house of Joan Roger, and had languished for a year after his bewitchment. The indictment was endorsed and stated to be a true bill <sup>210</sup> but the outcome is unknown.

A particularly significant case in Carmarthen concerned two women who were charged together in a witchcraft as *malefice* case brought before the court in 1656. The relationship between the two women is not specified in the court documents but, as one was old and the other young, and as their surnames were the same, they were probably mother and daughter. Gwenllian David was a widow and information in the transcripts indicates that she was an old woman. The testimonies against Gwenllian David or Lys Hier of Llangadock and Margaret David or Maggie Hier of Llangadock began in June, 1656 and were taken before John Powell Esq., a justice of the peace for Carmarthen. <sup>211</sup>

The witness testimonies<sup>212</sup> against both women provide considerable detail concerning their activities and the use of protective devices by those suffering from their *malefice*. The witnesses against Gwenllian David obviously regarded her as a witch and were concerned mainly with the methods used for the cessation of *malefice* activities through

<sup>205</sup> *ibid.*, p. 316 (NLW, Great Sessions 13), p. 316-317 (NLW, Great Sessions P).

<sup>206</sup> *ibid.*, p.318.

<sup>207</sup> *ibid.*, p. 376-378 ( NLW, Great Sessions 4).

<sup>208</sup> Discussed in the Caernarvon section of this chapter. See Calendar of the Wynn Papers NLW 9058E, No.1009 Letter of Sir John Bodvil to his father-in-law, Sir John Wynn of Gwydir. This case is transcribed in full in Appendix II Witchcraft as *Malefice* Cases.

<sup>209</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/718/2 Great Sessions for Carmarthen (1654).

<sup>210</sup> Cecil L'Estrange Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism*, Heath Grantton, London, 1933, Appendix E, p. 423.

<sup>211</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/719/2/48, 49,50, 51, 52, 53, 54,55 Great Sessions for Carmarthen (1656).

<sup>212</sup> A full transcription of this case is located in Appendix II Witchcraft as *Malefice* Cases. I would like to thank Assoc. Professor D. A. Kent for his assistance with the transcription of this case in 1995.

the use of witch butter.<sup>213</sup> Anne Morgan detailed her bewitchment and Margaret's hands on blessing for her relief, while Rees Bowen was also blessed by Margaret after he had become paralysed. Gwenllian Rees and David Thomas Jenkin, as well as Gwenllian Owen, also mentioned how helpful Margaret could be when it came to cures and healing.<sup>214</sup> Margaret, like Gwen verch Ellis, seems to have been regarded as a healer more than a *malefice* practising witch by her community. Certainly the witness testimonies provide far more detail pertaining to Margaret's efforts to assist rather than harm others.

Loss of ale brewings was another accusation laid against Gwenllian David as Gwenllian Bowen, the wife of Morgan Rees, told how Gwenllian David was in the habit of coming to her house whenever she was brewing, with the result, she claimed, that she "*was in loss either for her work or her Ale out of her barrel or other vessels. and knew not which way she had lost it but suspected that it was done by witchcraft of the said Gwenllian David because of the bad fame and report that was spoken of her in the County.*"<sup>215</sup> Loss of ale brewings was a common accusation laid against witches in other areas of the British Isles<sup>216</sup> but, despite all the evidence presented against Gwenllian and Margaret David, the court did not punish these women. In the case of Gwenllian David, despite all the testimony against her and the two several bills of Indictment preferred against her, she was released. One of the bills was for the bewitchment of John Rees Bevan and the second was for the bewitchment of David John Rudderch's cow. The bill was declared "ignoramus" by the Grand Jury and, although the decision was declared untrue by both accusing parties and their thirteen witnesses, the jury verdict was upheld and Gwenllian was allowed to go free. Similarly, Margaret David was indicted, acquitted and discharged of bewitching John Rees Bevan and Jane Lewis, the wife of David John Rudderch even though the bills were declared true, endorsed and supported by fourteen witnesses.

The Gwenllian and Margaret David/Hier case contains very strong evidence in support of the use of protective personal devices when members of the community were threatened by the *malefice* of the witch. The evidence concerning the witch's butter and the use to which it was put provides support for popular beliefs and the efficacy of customary practices when confronting *malefice*. All those involved in the witch's butter testimonies were certain of the facts surrounding the incident but it was interesting that, even though the procedure was followed, Gwenllian was still brought before the courts;

<sup>213</sup> The methods have been discussed in Chapter VII Personal Protection, The First Phase of the Welsh Antidote to Witchcraft as *Malefice*. A full transcription of this case is located in Appendix II Witchcraft as *Malefice* Cases.

<sup>214</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/719/2/52

<sup>215</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/719/2/55.

<sup>216</sup> See Sally Hickey (nee Parkin), "Livestock Deaths, Plant Ingestion and Witchcraft in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Britain." MA(Hons) thesis, University of New England, Australia, 1988, p. 85 - 142 for English cases of loss of ale brewings and p. 143-166 for cases from Ireland, Scotland, the Orkney and Setland Isles, and the Isle of Man.

perhaps it had only stopped Gwenllian's *malefice* against Margaret Rogers and her husband, Thomas John. Accusations were made against both women who were brought to court together, the inference perhaps being that the community was attempting to regulate activity which the women had been undertaking for far too long. Whatever the motives for the court case, the result was the survival of Gwenllian and Margaret David.

### Cardigan

Court records for Cardigan, another county on the Carmarthen Circuit, contain one witchcraft as *malefice* case. Cardigan Plea Rolls exist from 1541 -1830.<sup>217</sup> Prothonotary Papers pre-1660 begin in 1546 through to 1630 but are not extant for every year in this period.<sup>218</sup> Post -1660 Prothonotary Papers are available for most years until 1658 and Prothonotary Papers from 1660-1732 are almost continuous.<sup>219</sup> Prothonotary Papers from 1732-1830 are located at NLW, Great Sessions 28.<sup>220</sup> Gaol Files for Cardiganshire are extant from 1542-1830.<sup>221</sup>

The witchcraft as *malefice* case for the county of Cardigan concerned a woman named Catherine Rees<sup>222</sup> and the evidence brought against her in 1693 was considerable.<sup>223</sup> Catherine <sup>224</sup> Rees was the wife of John Hugh, and several people presented evidence against her. According to Erasmus Thomas, a labourer, Catherine and some acquaintances had carried him around all night and he had no idea what was happening to him.<sup>225</sup> The examinant was very much bruised by the encounter and, from that time on, "*And at other times when they should happen to fall out both, he gave her the terms of Witch She being not at all Concerned at him for Calling of her by that name nor any manner of Contradiction given unto him for the Same at any time. And the said examinant further Sayeth that the neighbours there about give a very bad report of her Complaining that when ever any of them happened to fall out with her, they always observed that some mischance or crosses should befall them.*"<sup>226</sup>

John Jenkins testified how, four years previously, David Thomas, who had since died, had fallen out with Catherine Rees and she had reacted by bewitching him which,

<sup>217</sup> Glyn Parry, op. cit., p. 346-351 (NLW, Great Sessions 18).

<sup>218</sup> *ibid.*, p. 361 (NLW, Great Sessions 13).

<sup>219</sup> *ibid.*, p. 362 (NLW, Great Sessions 13), p. 362-363 (NLW, Great Sessions P).

<sup>220</sup> *ibid.*, p. 363-364.

<sup>221</sup> *ibid.*, p. 386-389 (NLW, Great Sessions 4).

<sup>222</sup> A full transcription of this case is located in Appendix II Witchcraft as *Malefice* Cases.

<sup>223</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/886/15 (693) NLW Gaol files for Aberteifi, Cardigan Gaol File (1693) The case of Katherine or Catherine Rees of Cardigan.

<sup>224</sup> Throughout the testimonies her name was spelt with a "C" although the initial examination statement referred to her as Katherine.

<sup>225</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/886/15.

<sup>226</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/886/15.

according to John, had caused David's death.<sup>227</sup> Information in the testimony of Richard Lloyd, a groom, detailed his numerous visits to the conjuror, Richard Bloome, in an effort to cure his deformed daughter. At one of these meetings with Richard Bloome, Richard Lloyd was told that a woman of his neighbourhood who was "*of Short Stature , which --- throw dice upon a Booke, pretending to be a fortune teller, And one that had a pyde eye, had occasioned that sickness and deformity to the said deponents' daughter And had charged the said deponent that when ever he met her to call her by the name of Witch not regarding the place to be ever so publick. And the said Richard Bloome engaged before witnesses to have --- the said deponent from Any damage that he might Incurre thereby.*"<sup>228</sup>

Throughout the testimony of Richard Lloyd, reference is made to a Richard Bloome whose actions were probably those of a conjuror, although this was not stated explicitly. This is the only Welsh witchcraft as *malefice* case which mentions a person by name who could be considered as a conjuror. As Richard's daughter remained ill, it became apparent that neither Richard Bloome nor any other had been able to un-witch Richard Lloyd's daughter. The description of the witch given to Richard Lloyd by Richard Bloome was very precise and it can only be assumed that it fitted Catherine Rees as no evidence concerning her looks or eye colour was evident in the witness statements. Sarah Lloyd, Richard Lloyd's wife, corroborated her husband's testimony except to say that Sarah "*upon an Information of an ill Report given to the said Catherine of being a witch, asked her daughter whether she had seen her that day Shee fell Sick or nooe And her daughter --- that she had seen her, And the deponent Sayeth that upon a Late Quarrel which happened between her and the said Catherine, she did very much suspect her to doo her daughter mischief, being a woman of ill fame as aforesaid.*"<sup>229</sup>

Neither parent provided any evidence of having gone to Catherine to ask for a blessing, so perhaps this was one group of people who preferred to opt for the communal antidote as a first avenue of defence against rather than trying any available personal antidotes. Whatever their decision, their actions had not cured their daughter and neither had those of Richard Bloome. The outcome of the case is unknown and the lack of either witchcraft as words cases or witchcraft as *malefice* cases for Cardigan makes a comparative analysis impossible as Catherine's case is the only witchcraft case for the county of Cardigan located in the records from 1542-1830.

### Pembroke

Court of Great Sessions records for Pembroke, Plea Rolls run from 1542 to 1830.<sup>230</sup> Prothonotary Papers pre-1660 run from 1558-1659 and post 1660 Prothonotary

<sup>227</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/886/15.

<sup>228</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/886/15.

<sup>229</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/886/15.

<sup>230</sup> Glyn Parry, op. cit. p. 321-326 (NLW, Great Sessions 25).

Papers are extant from 1660 to 1732.<sup>231</sup> Prothonotary Papers for 1732 to 1830 are located at NLW, Great Sessions 28. <sup>232</sup> Gaol Files for Pembrokeshire exist from 1547 to 1830.<sup>233</sup>

Several witchcraft as *malefice* cases are located in the records for Pembroke. In 1607, a grand jury presented Katherine Lewis of Gumfreston, a spinster, (that is, she was a spinner of yarn "as illustrated by the metamorphosis of the term 'spinster', from one who spins to an unmarried woman."<sup>234</sup>) otherwise known as Katherine Bowen, the wife of a yeoman named Thomas Bowen of Tenby, for witchcraft practices.<sup>235</sup> The Witchcraft Act of 1604 was enacted <sup>236</sup> against people engaging in conjuration, witchcraft and dealing with evil and wicked spirits, all of which were activities which, on a second offence, became a felony. The 1563 Witchcraft Act of Elizabeth had made the penalty for *maleficia* a year's imprisonment if the bewitched had not died but James' Act changed the penalty to death by hanging for the same offence. All other aspects of the magical remained, as a first offence, punishable by a year's imprisonment and appearances in the pillory. Most importantly, James' Witchcraft Act changed the emphasis from *maleficia* to that of the pact with the devil which, if proved, brought the death penalty.<sup>237</sup>

The case of Katherine Lewis is the only *malefice* case in which the legal formula of the 1604 Act appears to have been used as the examination of Katherine Lewis began with what was, for early modern Wales, an unusual introduction: She "*By the instigation of the Devil performed diabolical artes called witchcrafts, enchantments, charmes, and sorceries at Gumfreston on 27th June in that year.*" By reason of which Richard Brownynge/Browning of Gumfreston suffered "*great loss in his goods and chattels.*"<sup>238</sup> The intent clearly was to follow the premise laid down in James I's Witchcraft Act which had emphasised the pact with the devil rather than *maleficia*.

The testimony against Katherine Lewis contained many instances of belief and counter-magical activity undertaken by those who thought they were bewitched. She was accused of bewitching pigs but had, at the owner's request, come and blessed the

<sup>231</sup> *ibid.*, p. 341 (NLW, Great Sessions 13), p.342-343 (NLW, Great Sessions P).

<sup>232</sup> *ibid.*, p. 344.

<sup>233</sup> *ibid.*, p. 379-384.

<sup>234</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, "The hidden investment": women and the enterprise." in Pamela Sharpe (ed) *Women's Work The English Experience 1650-1914*, Arnold, London, 1998, p. 240.

<sup>235</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 33/6/5-6 (1607) Great Session for Pembroke (shire) Katherine Lewis of Gumfreston, spinster OR Katherine Bowen, wife of Thomas Bowen, a yeoman of Tenby.

<sup>236</sup> Acts:1 James I, c.12.

<sup>237</sup> Acts: 9 Geo. II, c.5

<sup>238</sup> Francis Green, "Pembrokeshire in By-gone Days." *West Wales Historical Records, The Annual Magazine of the Historical Society of West Wales*, IX, 1920-23, p. 126-127. Green notes that this case occurred "in the south of the county, and close to the district in which charming still prevails."

pigs.<sup>239</sup> She had come, accompanied by her husband "*who brought with him a staff with a pick in it. (doubting as it seemeth) she should have had some hurt offered unto her. And at her coming farther she fell a railing and cursing and so departed.*"<sup>240</sup> Katherine's testimony corroborated Richard Browning's and his wife Elizabeth thought the *malefice* had been inflicted because Katherine was unhappy with the foodstuffs given to her by Elizabeth.

However, Elizabeth's motives may have been quite different. Katherine testified that she and the wife of John Adam Fischer had gone to the Browning house where they had bread and cheese given to them by his wife. Whilst there, they "*had some speech together concerning a child that the said Richard Browning had by one Dobbins daughter.*" Katherine stated that Elizabeth Browning had asked both women about the young child. After this event, Browning's wife had sent for Katherine. Katherine, accompanied by her husband, who took a pick with him, went to see what was the matter. When they reached the house, Browning's wife had accused Katherine of bewitching the pigs, "*and that she suspected this examinant had done some hurt unto her and wished her to help her sows again or else she would be sorry for it.*" Katherine had declared that she had done no hurt and that she had no "*knowledge of witchcraft*" and wished no-one to think of her as such a woman. Katherine and her husband then returned to their home and she also declared that she could not remember seeing any sows, pigs or other animals at the Brownings' house on the day that she was supposed to have harmed the animals.<sup>241</sup>

Elizabeth Browning's testimony makes it clear that Katherine obviously felt she had been unjustly accused as she reacted very vehemently according to Elizabeth's testimony: "*she fell upon her knees cursing and railing and said with great oaths she had but a life to lose and if she were not a witch herself she would cause them that should do it. And thereupon this Examinant saying she would have some of her blood, the husband of the said Katherine having in his hands a hay pick saying these words 'If thou take her blood I will have thine for it for I thought of such a matter before I came hither.'*"<sup>242</sup> This was a clear reference to blooding the suspected witch, one of the personal antidotes to witchcraft as *malefice*.<sup>243</sup>

Maud Adam, a servant of Richard Browning, added her testimony which supported that of others although she made no mention of the actions of Elizabeth's attempt to take Katherine's blood nor any mention of the reaction of Katherine's husband. Maud did, however, present a different picture about Katherine's "cursing" as Maud stated that

<sup>239</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 33/6/5.

<sup>240</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 33/6/5.

<sup>241</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 33/6/6.

<sup>242</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 33/6/6.

<sup>243</sup> This is discussed in Chapter VI Personal Protection, The First Phase of the Welsh Antidote to Witchcraft as *Malefice*.

Katherine, after responding to the two or three messengers sent to get her "*came and being charged with the bewitching of them she fell down on her knees and wished she might never enjoy any thing if she did any hurt unto them.*"<sup>244</sup> The belief in the power of the spoken word, when used as a curse, cannot be underestimated in early modern society.<sup>245</sup> The actual cursing was a ritualised affair, the curser had "to kneel and bare the bosom in calling down a curse upon persons."<sup>246</sup> Whether Elizabeth or Maud's account was correct, the effect of the incident was quite profound on those involved. Katherine's case underlined the importance of the use of personal antidotes to witchcraft: malefice had occurred, a blessing had been given, blooding the witch had been threatened and a cursing had been used. The outcome is unknown.<sup>247</sup>

Another witchcraft as *malefice* case for Pembroke also provided evidence of the use of personal antidotes, particularly those of confrontation and reconciliation attempts and blooding the witch. The case concerned a woman named Olly Powell.<sup>248</sup> The information about her trial was contained in a letter dated February 1693/4 so the actual trial date could have occurred in 1692 or 1693 or 1694. The outcome of the trial is known as Olly Powell survived her accusations. John Edwards states in his letter that he has recounted the cases "*to the best of my remembrance they with such strong superstition but which I have heard said and they sworn for myself examined, her tricks before tryal are nothing to what she have since done, by reports...*"<sup>249</sup> John Edwards has then crossed out eight lines so heavily that these cannot be transcribed. The witness statements against Olly Powell were detailed according to Edwards who elaborates on some of the fourteen witness depositions against her.<sup>250</sup>

Henry Phillips, a coalminer, brought Olly to court on a charge of witchcraft. His testimony indicated that he had insulted Olly and she had bewitched him. Phillips took matters into his own hands and confronted Olly and she blessed him.<sup>251</sup> However, Phillips became ill again and asked for another blessing, which was forthcoming. One of his children then

<sup>244</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 33/6/6.

<sup>245</sup> This is discussed in Chapter VI Personal Protection, The First Phase of the Welsh Antidote to Witchcraft as *Malefice*.

<sup>246</sup> T. Gwynn Jones, *Welsh Folklore and Folk-Custom*, Methuen and Co. Ltd, London, 1930, p.136.

<sup>247</sup> See Chapter VI Personal Protection, The First Phase of the Welsh Antidote to Witchcraft as *Malefice*.

<sup>248</sup> Bodleian Library MS: Ashmole1815 f.r-v. Letter written in February 1693/4 by John Edwards, then a justice of the peace for Pembroke to Alexander Forde, his Archdeacon then at Jesus College. The letter

details the case of Olly Powell. If extant court records concerning the case of Olly Powell exist, these should be located in the NLW, Great Sessions for Pembroke 1693/4 Sessions held in April 1693 (NLW, Great Sessions 4/800/1); OR August 1693 (NLW, Great Sessions 4/800/2); OR August 1694 (NLW, Great Sessions 4/800/3); OR September 1694 (NLW, Great Sessions 4/800/4).

<sup>249</sup> Letter of John Edwards, p. 2 (the pages are unnumbered).

<sup>250</sup> A full transcription of the letter is located in Appendix II Witchcraft as *Malefice* Cases.

<sup>251</sup> *ibid.*, p.1.

became ill and Phillips was convinced that Olly was responsible. He again confronted Olly "*requesting why she so continually plagued him and desiring her to say God bless his childe, she answering it was his own fault then instead of blessing his childe cursed him, on which Phillips (sic) said he would have some of her blood, and after long struggling and much fairer words she putt forth her hand and bid him to do his worst, he should have no blood of hers, he took a naile out of his pocket and thrust it thrice in the same orifice through the flesh which is between the thumb and forefinger and, with much squessing forced an inconsiderable drop out which she perseaving said, get thee gone before thou wilt be at home thy childe will be well which accordingly happened...*"<sup>252</sup> This testimony is an exact account of blooding the witch in an effort to solve an ongoing *malefice* problem, despite the witch having given several blessings on request.

One witness stated that Olly had bewitched her ducks, another's furze rick was apparently destroyed by Olly's *malefice* and another was attacked by Olly at night when Olly had crept into her house searching for and, when caught, demanding, food. Another witness denied Olly oats which he was then sowing and, shortly after this, he lost sixteen cattle which had "*died strangely*" although no details were given.<sup>253</sup> Olly certainly had no qualms about making her point. In another testimony, a woman said that, "*as she satt by her husband's corpse before he was interred, Olly came through all the company to her openly and said if she had given her a quarter of the goose which she had killed last Christmas tide her husband should have been living and working with his fellow labourers, this man stood in such dread of Olly that when his fellow workmen at Jeffreson say there comes Olly he would fall atrembling all over*"<sup>254</sup> The last witness stated that Olly had cursed his cow not long after he had bought the animal. He took the animal to Olly for a blessing but she told him it was too late as he should have given her salt and bread. The cow died.<sup>255</sup>

Evidence for Olly's *malefice* activities was very strong but, for whatever reason, she was not punished for her *malefice* as she was out in her community when John Edwards wrote his letter. The crossed out lines at the bottom of the last page may have perhaps thrown some light on why Olly was not convicted. Henry Phillips had to ask for a blessing three times and blood Olly before he and his child were free of the *malefice* afflicting them. The last witness mentioned in Edwards' letter indicated that Olly was well aware of the power she had in her community, acknowledged it and made use of that power. However, the procedures common in witchcraft as *malefice* cases in Wales were followed: the witch was refused something she asked for or was spoken to rudely and the person responsible was afflicted with *malefice*. In this case, however, the confronted witch was reluctant to give her blessing, reinforcing her point to extremes, but,

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252 *ibid.*, p.1.

253 *ibid.*, p.2.

254 *ibid.*, p.2.

255 *ibid.*, p. 2.



eventually, the situation was resolved in most cases. No doubt, like the woman whose husband was then dead, some members of the community wanted Olly Powell stopped and took her to court in order to make her stop.

### Haverfordwest

The only witchcraft case of any type for Haverfordwest County and Borough occurred in 1655. Golly Lullock was indicted for witchcraft practices on the 20th August in 1655 at Haverfordwest when Henry Arrundell and Robert Williams brought an indictment against her. <sup>256</sup> The indictment was supported by six witnesses and stated that a week previously Golly Lullock of Haverfordwest, had bewitched one sow worth 6 shillings and one black coloured nag worth 6 pounds belonging to Henry Arrundell. Golly Lullock was also accused of bewitching four pigs worth 5 shillings each which belonged to Robert Williams. Robert Williams' pigs died on 18 August at Haverfordwest but the survival or otherwise of Henry Arrundell's animals was not mentioned. The indictment was unsuccessful as Golly Lullock was found "Not guilty" even though the endorsed bill was stated to be true and six witnesses had supported the testimony of Arrundell and that of Williams. "Golla (sic) Lullock was committed by the Mayor until she entered into a recognizance with sufficient sureties for her personal appearance at the next sessions of the peace of the said town."<sup>257</sup>

Witness and court transcript documents provide evidence of the use of both personal and communal antidotes by the participants in these witchcraft cases. This lends weight to the concept that the reason for so few witchcraft as *malefice* cases in early modern Welsh courts rests on the efficacy of these customary practices in resolving the *malefice* issue. The witch was taken to court as a last resort, to make it plain to the woman accused as a witch that she must stop her activities because the community could no longer tolerate her *malefice*. The accusers were not expecting and did not want the court to bring in a verdict to execute the witch. They expected the court to put the woman through a process which would make her reconsider the severity of her maleficent activities and her non-compliance with standard customary procedures. The accusers wanted a guilty verdict because this forced the witch to acknowledge her actions, an acknowledgement which she had previously refused when confronted by her accusers at the personal and communal level.

Only when these earlier phases had failed did the woman, suspected as the witch responsible, have a court case lodged against her. Courts were used when the community no longer felt that the witch was controllable, when the witch had taken the maleficent actions too far and therefore threatened the harmony of the community. Acknowledgement of the wrong done by the witch was, as has been previously shown, the first step in restoring the balance between the victim and the witch. Without

<sup>256</sup> NLW, Great Sessions 4/ 789/4 Great Sessions for Pembroke (1655) Great Sessions held for Pembroke at Haverfordwest 20 August.

<sup>257</sup> Cecil L'Estrange Ewen, *Witchcraft ...*, op. cit., p. 423.

acknowledgement, the victim could not proceed to undertake restitution towards the witch and receive the witch's blessing, resulting in the lifting of the *malefice*. Faced with the effects of ongoing *malefice*, the victim sought to obtain the witch's blessing by resorting to the conjuror. If this also failed, the victim had to endeavour to reach agreement with the witch and the only avenue through which this could then be achieved was a case in court.

Court testimonies and witness statements provide evidence which indicates that both the witch and the accusers recognised that a procedural response was required from them both in order to effect a resolution. The point was that all participants in Welsh cases endeavoured, diligently in some cases, to work towards a resolution. Witchcraft as *malefice* cases in Wales, as elsewhere, concerned punitive action taken by one person against another. Where the Welsh situation diverges however, is the emphasis the Welsh participants placed on both the accusers and the accused's punitive actions, making both parties responsible for their punitive actions, and not limiting the responsibility to the accused witch alone. The witch usually inflicted the *malefice* upon an individual or that individual's animals because the witch herself felt wronged. The witch's actions had, therefore, been caused by the victim's inaction or lack of response to a request from the witch. The witch often appeared to have been justified in her maleficent actions because of certain events: a child urinated down a chimney, a hoop of rye was not forthcoming as payment for a service rendered, a young man struck her, a child ate the witch's bread without permission, or a woman had not been neighbourly enough to assist the witch, and so on. The witch responded by inflicting her *malefice* but her community recognised that the witch had a right to respond as she did so because she had been wronged. Given the evidence in many cases, there is every reason to suppose that the witch inflicted her *malefice* in the almost certain knowledge that the victim would respond to her through the use of customary practices. Both parties acknowledged that each had a role in, and was responsible for, resolving the problem created by both.

A significant feature of the Welsh cases, therefore, was that the victims recognised that they had been at some fault; that they were partially, if not entirely, to blame. The witness statements outlined the fact that those who had suffered from the witch's *malefice* were often very well aware of the reasons the witch had inflicted the *malefice* upon them. As a consequence of their actions, the victims then sought to rectify the situation by asking the witch for her blessing, a request usually accompanied by the offer of goods or a meal if she would come and effect the blessing. In all the cases cited, the witch responded by blessing the afflicted person/animals. Dispute seems to have arisen only when and if the victims left the asking of the blessing too late to effect a cure, or refused to acknowledge their part in the creation of the problem, and the afflicted person or animal consequently died. Such situations occurred in the cases of Gwen verch Ellis, Katherine Lewis, Margaret David, and Olly Powell. Some witnesses however, such as Elizabeth Browning and William ap Griffith/Gruffyd ap William, appear to have demanded far more of the accused witch than customary procedure considered

appropriate.

One of the most striking aspects of many of the cases is the inter-connectedness between the victims and the witch. Even those who thought that they had lost family members to the witches' *malefice* were still on reasonably good terms with the witch. Elizabeth Jeffrey testified against Anne Ellis of Penley because, amongst other things, she attributed her daughter's death to Anne's *malefice*. Nevertheless, Anne Ellis lived with Elizabeth Jeffrey both before and after this event and she was still living in Elizabeth's house when she was tried for witchcraft practices in 1657 and it was Elizabeth, among others, who had encouraged her to escape from custody. Lyckie verch John had made it very clear to Ellen verch Richard that her son would die if Ellen did not go and ask Gwen verch Ellis to come and bless him very soon. Ellen's son did die and Ellen herself said that, when she eventually went to ask Gwen to come and bless her son and apologised to Gwen for her son's actions, Gwen told Ellen that it was too late, that Ellen had left it for too long to ask for a blessing for her son. Both Margaret Rogers and her husband were distressed when they learned how much pain Gwennllian David was in because of the knife that had been thrust through the witch butter on the doorpost of their house. Margaret Rogers testified that her husband insisted that the knife be removed from the witch butter in order to bring relief to Gwennllian David. The only case which pointed to a woman who was almost entirely vindictive and harmed because she wished to exert her power was Olyly Powell. However, the perceptions of John Edwards and the evidence provided in his letter are not the same as having the complete court transcripts of the fourteen witnesses who spoke against Olyly.<sup>258</sup>

Similarly, the witch herself exhibited genuine kindness towards individuals even though she had cause to resent other members of the same family. Gwen verch Ellis was angry at the non-payment for her services by Griffith ap Hugh and his mother but she still came when asked, to help Griffith's brother, David ap Hugh, when he became ill sometime later. Margaret David was very angry with Gwennllian Owen's husband, Lewis Walter, when she came to see Gwennllian and found that she had obviously suffered a bad beating from her husband. Margaret offered to help Gwennllian solve her problem for good but Gwennllian did not want her husband dead and only half followed the procedure Margaret suggested to her, in consequence of which, Gwennllian trod on the linseed and herself became lame. William ap Griffith ap William acted very poorly towards Gwen verch Ellis, virtually setting her up in an effort to prove whether she was or was not a witch but Gwen went to William's wife after she had suffered a hard childbirth and attempted to help her although William sent Gwen from the house despite his wife's request that Gwen stay and assist her as best she could.

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<sup>258</sup> Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft Stories of Early English Witches*, Routledge, London, 1999, reiterates this point, citing the problems inherent in establishing a true picture of what occurred in the trial process when "multivocal and edited accounts" in the narrative style are the only records available for analysis of witchcraft. See Chapter 2 Witchcraft trials and a methodology for reading them, p. 50-77, quote at p. 50.

Community perception of the witch is highlighted throughout the witchcraft case studies, as is the witch's perception of her place within the community. Witchcraft as *malefice* court cases in early modern Wales were the means of resolving the irresolvable since the parties had reached an impasse. The thesis contends that court cases were the final antidote to witchcraft as *malefice* which the community had available but that the resolution they were seeking was the maintainance of inter-personal and communal harmony. The authority of Welsh customary law did not, however, regard the death of an individual as part of that process.

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## Chapter IX Conclusion

Witchcraft cases in the records of the Courts of Great Sessions were of two distinct types, witchcraft as words and witchcraft as *malefice*. Both were brought before a criminal court, an unusual occurrence for witchcraft slander and defamation cases in early modern Europe. This indicates that witchcraft cases before the courts in early modern Wales may have been lodged for reasons which are dissimilar to those witchcraft cases lodged in other church and secular courts. The case studies have shown that there were far more witchcraft as words cases in the Courts of Great Sessions than there were witchcraft as *malefice* cases but these cases remain as slander cases.

Witchcraft as words cases are cases in which a woman took another person to court for having said, before witnesses, that the woman was a witch. In the Courts of Great Sessions, such cases were termed "slander" but such cases lodged in the ecclesiastical courts were termed "defamation." Cases lodged in the Courts of Great Sessions were for a specific sum of money, the financial compensation which the slandered person was seeking from the slanderer. In the ecclesiastical courts, the defamed was seeking an acknowledgment of the defamation from the defamer and was lodging the case to seek punishment of whatever spiritual nature the court deemed to be of sufficient punishment. There are five Welsh defamation cases heard in the ecclesiastical courts but these all occur after the 1700s and are only for the spiritual punishment of the defamer. These are the cases which reflect the norm for other witchcraft as defamation cases in England and in the Netherlands.

Slander, because it had the potential to cause a breach of the peace, was an indictable offence and, as such, would proceed to the Quarter Sessions courts but these courts could only hear cases for compensation below 40 shillings. If more than 40 shillings was asked for, the case had to go to the Courts of Great Sessions. The person lodging the case determined how much compensation to ask for and most witchcraft as words cases were lodged with considerable sums requested, anything from a few pounds up to one thousand pounds. This means that the woman knowingly lodged a witchcraft as words case in the Courts of Great Sessions with more than 40 shillings compensation requested.

The point is that the cases were not only tried in a criminal court but were also subject to the Witchcraft Acts of the English state after 1536-1543. Under this authority, these cases should have been tried as criminal cases because, under English law, they were criminal cases and witchcraft, of whatever nature, was a crime against the state. However, the cases remained as slander cases and were tried accordingly: the objective of the case was financial recompense for damage done to the slandered. Whether the slandered woman was a witch or not was never questioned by the members of the judiciary whereas elsewhere, such as the Netherlands and England, similar cases were

lodged in the ecclesiastical courts, not the criminal courts and were for recognition of damage done to a reputation for which the defamed sought some form of penance from the defamer if the case was proved. The cases were never investigated from the perspective of establishing the veracity, or otherwise, of the slander.

The important aspect of the witchcraft as words cases in Wales is that these concern women. There was no case in which a man considered himself slandered as a witch and took court action. Following the evidence of Welsh popular beliefs, this was unlikely as only women were considered to be witches in early modern Wales, a belief substantiated in the linguistic, feminised, term for witch, *wits*.

Apart from the gender significance, another important aspect which the case studies show is that every case was brought by the slandered woman and her husband, if she had one, against the slanderer and her husband, if she had one. Under English law, a married woman was required, as the slandered party, to bring her case accompanied by or in conjunction with her husband. It was not, however, necessary to bring the case against the slanderer, if it was a woman, accompanied by her husband. Under the customary laws of Wales however, the importance of bringing a case as a married woman, citing her husband's status, against another married woman, also citing her husband's status, was paramount. Welsh customary law however, officially ended with the Acts of Union (1536-1543) but the case evidence indicated that, despite this, there was a reason for the precise format used in the lodgement of such cases.

The reason can be located within the pre-1536 traditional customary laws of the Welsh people. Witchcraft as words cases were lodged in a manner related to the Welsh concepts of *sarhaed* and were undertaken with the object of upholding the honour and monetary value of that woman's honour in the eyes of her community. The social and cultural place of Welsh women had been ensconced in a series of traditional customary laws which had existed for hundreds of years prior to the writing down of these laws, known collectively as the Laws of Hywel Dda. Within these laws was a specific tractate, the *Law of Women*, which recognised the rights of women from their births to their deaths and sought to cover all aspects of their rights, particularly financial, in the intervening period.

The financial obligations afforded women by others on their marriage, dissolution of marriage, abandonment by a husband, a husband's adultery, spinsterhood and widowhood were all detailed in the *Law of Women*. No mention, however, was made of any law relating to witchcraft, the supernatural or its agents in any of the Laws of Hywel Dda. Within these customary laws, the reasons why witchcraft as words cases were lodged in the criminal rather than the ecclesiastical courts, becomes much clearer.

The parameters of a woman's life in terms of the law began on her marriage, not because the law only recognised her on her marriage but because marriage concerned the merging of two distinct kin groups, an economic transaction which could place the

woman at risk. As she was no longer ensconced within the protection of her natal kin group, the laws sought to protect her rights if her new kin group proved less than protective. This is where the laws pertaining to *sarhaed* become so important in relationship to witchcraft as words cases. *Sarhaed* was the honour price of each woman and it was calculated according to the last man with whom she had lived. Welsh customary law worked on the principle of compensatory payments for any wrongdoing or harm done to the individual rather than execution or death. *Sarhaed* was the woman's honour price, which had a calculated financial worth for which she must be compensated if any harm, whether physical or verbal insult, was done to her.

No Welsh woman of any status could attract *sarhaed* in her own right as the compensatory payment was based on the perceived social position of her male next of kin or, if she were married, her husband. *Sarhaed* explains the formula used by plaintiffs in witchcraft as words cases. The woman and her husband brought a case against another woman and her husband. By this means, the accused established both her and her accuser's *sarhaed* value. *Sarhaed* also explains why the witchcraft as words, now defamation and not slander, were brought by the woman alone in the ecclesiastical courts. The defamed women brought a case by herself against the person who defamed her, be it a man or a woman. Financial compensation could not be claimed in the ecclesiastical courts, only restitution of personal and spiritual honour.

The link between *sarhaed* and witchcraft as words case lodgement is significantly defined when a single woman brings a case. Jane Jones actually brought three cases, two in 1673 as a single woman and a third in 1684 as a married woman. In one of the 1673 cases, she brought damages of 100 pounds against a man who had called her a witch. The second case had no damages attached and was brought against Katherine verch Eubule, a single woman, who had also called her a witch. In 1684, Jane Jones brought a case, now with her husband Edward Lloyd, seeking 500 pounds in damages against another man. Her marriage had increased Jane Jones' *sarhaed*/ honour value by a considerable amount.

Widows brought actions for damages against the slanderers, their honour price determined by their deceased husbands and sometimes by their sons. Margaret Collyns brought such a case against David Mabb in 1634. The example of individual women bringing cases against other individual women was not, however, a common practice and damages were generally not specified as in the case brought by Jane Meredith against Joan Miris, both from Montgomery.

In early modern Wales, the person who was wronged and who did not take action was regarded by society as the guilty party. It was the responsibility of the person who had been slandered to clear her name since the slander was a direct challenge to her honour which compromised her social place and status. Proof or otherwise of witching activities was never required of the slandered woman. Witchcraft as words cases were concerned

only with the personal honour and status of the woman. It was irrelevant whether the woman was or was not a practising witch. Even if the slander was true and the whole community knew the woman was a witch, the woman would be unable to retain her social place if she let the slander pass.

All participants, the victim, the slanderer and the members of the judiciary were aware of the motives governing the lodgement of the slander case. Procedure was followed according to the concepts of Welsh customary law pertaining to *sarhaed*, in a court system which was governed by English law, under the Witchcraft Act of James I which stated that witchcraft was a criminal act and should be tried accordingly. In the criminal Courts of Great Sessions, witchcraft as words remained as slander cases, no individual was tried for the crime of *malefice* witchcraft. This, despite the fact that documentary evidence gave every indication that the slandered woman was, in all probability, engaging in maleficent activities.

Witchcraft as *malefice* cases were those cases in Wales which were tried as criminal witchcraft cases. These cases also concern women as there is no record of a man being brought to court accused as a *malefice* practising witch. This also correlates with Welsh popular beliefs as, accompanying the feminisation of the witch, was the belief that only women were witches in early modern Wales because only women practised *malefice*. The woman accused as a witch was brought to court by one or a number of accusers. She was tried and the evidence presented against her after which, in every case, she was found guilty of practising *malefice* witchcraft. In every case, the accused woman also admitted her guilt in her own testimony but no pressure was brought to bear on her to do so. Witchcraft as *malefice* cases in the records of the Courts of Great Sessions provide precise information about the person who was accused of *malefice*.

Specific characteristics were associated with Welsh women slandered as a witch or accused of *malefice*. The witch was not one of the marginalised poor. She was usually married, had an income of her own which gave her a measure of economic independence from her husband, she was generally in a long term relationship with children of varying ages, and lived in a nuclear family situation. All the characteristics associated with the demonisation of the figure of the witch are not evident in Welsh popular beliefs or in evidence from court records. Familiars, paps, teats or the devil's mark are not, therefore, an aspect of Welsh witchcraft and there is no evidence that the witch indulged in shape transformation, other than in oral histories, nor did she attend sabbats or esbats.

Her pre-trial experience, other than being confined to gaol, was not characterised by sleep deprivation, interrogation, lack of food and water, or any other form of torture initiated for the purpose of exacting a confession. No Welsh witch was stripped naked and searched for evidence of her pact with the devil and groups of matrons were not employed as searchers for the reporting of evidence to the court. Witch-prickers did not



feature in Wales. The demonic element was not evident in Wales as the witch was tried for her maleficent practices but these were not considered to be related to the devil. Welsh witchcraft cases concerned only the accused woman who was never interrogated in order to elicit the names of others, her possible associates, who may have been practising witches. Without the devil pact and the witches gatherings, connotations of group activity were not evident.

Witchcraft in early modern Wales was not regarded as a communal activity, it was a personal activity. Witchcraft as *malefice* court cases exemplify the fact that Welsh communities understood that the woman as witch used her *malefice* for very different reasons from those other societies associated with the devil. The witch used her power usually for the purpose of reminding someone of the harm they had first done to her. Essentially, the *malefice* of the witch in Wales was regarded more by the community as a reaction of the witch, not as an action she undertook for no reason. If the woman had power, she used it to make her point about a wrong done to her. In all *malefice* cases, the accused woman always admitted her *malefice* actions, she never denied her responsibility.

One of the significant aspects of witchcraft as *malefice* cases was the extraordinary lack of consequences, both legal and communal, for the woman. The verdict was couched in such a manner that the woman survived. Court records indicated that other people, including officers of the court and members of the woman's community, made every effort to ensure that the woman survived. This was done through petitions, letters from leading figures in the community, and court personnel who declared the bill *Ignoramus*. Gaolers sometimes let the woman escape as in the case of Anne Ellis who fled over the border to Chester. Courts of Great Sessions jurisdiction ceased at the border but Anne was persuaded to return, and was found guilty, but the case was dismissed.

The significance of these cases in relation to witchcraft in the early modern world can be found within the case records themselves. In every witchcraft as *malefice* case, witness statements provide ample and detailed evidence of a series of actions which the witness had undertaken when confronted initially by the *malefice* of the witch. These actions occurred months and sometimes years before the accusers lodged a case against the woman in the Courts of Great Sessions. Such actions became more defined and a pattern of behavioural responses emerged. Moreover, the statements showed that it was only when these behavioural responses had been unsuccessful that the sufferers eventually resorted to lodging a court case. Using witness statements, it becomes apparent that two specific phases of behavioural response were available and used as an antidote to witchcraft before a court case was lodged.

The first phase of the antidote to witchcraft was personal as the sufferer could take full responsibility for counteracting the actions of the witch. The personal phase required the sufferer to confront the suspected witch in order to establish if she was really

responsible. Confrontation was face to face, person to person as the victim was asking for confirmation from the witch that she was personally responsible for the damage suffered. Having ascertained the source, the victim could then proceed.

The witch also had options as she could either admit that she was responsible or she could deny her responsibility. If the witch conceded that she was responsible, the sufferer usually asked her to lift the bewitchment through a hands on or verbal blessing and the situation was resolved. Resolution only occurred when the witch had had an opportunity to state why she had subjected the victim to maleficent damage and the victim acknowledged that he or she had committed a wrong towards the witch. When the victim provided restitution for the wrong done, the witch lifted her *malefice*. Sometimes the witch refused to lift the bewitchment. *Malefice* was the means whereby the witch re-empowered herself and re-asserted her position in her community.

Participants viewed the situation in terms of inter-personal disharmony. In order to restore harmony, all parties had to work towards rectifying the problem since no one party was to blame. Accordingly, if the inter-personal disharmony could be restored, the problem was resolved and the parties concerned, all of whom had equal power in the situation, rectified the imbalance in their social relationship.

The response of the Welsh witch was reactive: she responded to another's action inflicted upon her by using her *malefice*. The only motive of the witch was a reaction to an action, a response caused by another. No Welsh case evidence existed where it can be shown that the witch was acting out of motiveless, unreasoned spite. Gwen verch Ellis reacted to William ap Gruffyd's rudeness when he and his party entered her house uninvited and demanded drink in an intimidatory manner. Anne Ellis acknowledged that she had lamed Richard Hughes because he "had pissed down her chimney". Katherine Lewis of Gumfreston in Pembrokeshire had been insulted by all of her accusers and had reacted to their insults by inflicting *malefice*. Olly Powell, also from Pembrokeshire, reacted by bewitching those coal-miners who had insulted her when she was collecting coal from the coal dump.

Welsh people placed considerable emphasis on establishing the reason for the *malefice* and court transcripts indicated that there was always a reason. There was, therefore, not only an expectation that the witch would react to an injustice done to her, it was also anticipated that she would react since such a reaction was considered a natural response. The situation which had developed thus placed the responsibility for solving the problem firmly in the hands of the person who had initially inflicted the wrong on the witch.

The use of personal protective mechanisms came into play when the witch refused to lift her bewitchment or when an individual wanted to protect him or herself from bewitchment activities. A selection of personal protective devices was available to anyone who found

themselves, their family, or their livestock, in such a position. Personalised procedural responses included the use of witch's butter, witch's bottles, blooding the witch, chalk flagstone ornamentation, iconographic protection of the house, and the use of holy wells, among others.

The point of all this activity was the need for all injured parties to make the witch acknowledge her guilt. Without acknowledgment, admission of her guilt, reconciliation could not be achieved. Without reconciliation, neither could the cessation of the effects of *malefice* be achieved. Eliciting a reconciliation in order to achieve cessation was the fundamental process which formed the basis of the Welsh people's response to witches in their communities. This admission and reconciliation process can be directly related to the customary law of the Welsh people : compensation had to be made to a wronged individual or his/her kin in order to avoid bloodfeud and vendetta. All parties involved had to take responsibility and so did their respective kin group because the kin group actually paid the blood debt on behalf of the member of their kin, not the individual who had committed the offence. However, the whole process could not begin until the guilty party admitted his/her guilt. Until this occurred, the reconciliation process was void.

Nevertheless, in witchcraft as *malefice* cases, resolution between the two parties was not always achieved through the personal phase and the parties moved into the second or communal phase of the antidote to witchcraft. The communal phase occurred when the individual responsible for harming the witch asked another, usually the conjuror, to achieve reconciliation with the witch on his/her behalf. The conjuror was the paid link between the personal and communal protective antidotes available to the community and was responsible, in the main, for the creation of charm papers for individual protection.

Acting as the designated conciliator and arbiter in the dispute, the conjuror's employment usually, but not always, resulted in a resolution of the dispute to the satisfaction of all parties. Conjurors were not regarded as cunning folk, healers or charmers in Wales as these individuals were deemed by popular culture to have roles which were very distinct from that of conjurors. Conjuring in Wales was also gender specific as these individuals were always men. The case of Gwen verch Ellis provided details of three visits made to the conjuror by the father of the child she had bewitched, all of which were unsuccessful.

The conjuror was either successful or he proved to be unable to stop the *malefice* of the witch. It is at this juncture that transcriptual evidence indicated that the sufferers took the case to court. Women who were witches appeared in court charged with *malefice* when the community had to take such action as a last resort because court was the last phase available to them to stop the *malefice* of the witch. The objective of the court case in early modern Wales was, therefore, to make the witch acknowledge her guilt, admit to her actions, an acknowledgment which she had previously refused when confronted by her accusers at a personal and communal level. As the accused woman always admitted

her guilt in court, the entire process had achieved its aim: the witch acknowledged her guilt, reconciliation between all parties eventuated and there was no need to execute the woman who had been found guilty. The Welsh people's continued use and reliance on the customary means of resolving such conflictual situations ensured that the witch survived.

The evidence suggests that the Welsh woman accused as a witch survived because she and her victims had recourse to so many other antidotes provided by traditional customary practices. In the case of the Welsh woman slandered as a witch, customary law ensured that the slander case for being a witch was heard in regard only to the honour and the financial compensation dictated and required by that honour. In witchcraft as *malefice* cases, the continued recourse to customary personal and communal options limited the necessity to resort to the courts, the reason why there are so few witchcraft as *malefice* cases in early modern Wales. When the case finally came to court and the witch was found guilty, execution was not necessary because the witch acknowledged her guilt, the motive behind the court case initially and, more importantly, all participants knew what was required when the court case was lodged.

Witchcraft in early modern Wales concerns the degrees of experience of authority with which all the participants had to contend. The cases indicate that the experience of English state authority was largely subsumed by the experience of Welsh custom. Custom, as customary law and customary practice, provided a framework within which Welsh people could respond to witches and witchcraft in such a way that inter-personal and communal harmony was maintained. It is precisely because Welsh people retained and used the principles of their customs that women slandered and accused of witchcraft in early modern Wales experienced a response in court which reflected the importance of their social place and cultural status. Witchcraft in early modern Wales was gender specific, an experience which was a determining and positive factor for Welsh witches. Customary practices and the customary Law of Women were authorities which clearly remained of greater significance to Welsh people than the authority of the English state.

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## GLOSSARY

**advenae** the term for incomers in South Wales, those who were usually of foreign origin who were not native born.

**agweddi** the portion of the dowry given to the husband on the morning after the wedding i.e. when the marriage was consummated and when no fault was found with the bride. It was also the term used for the sum of money or goods, the amount of which was fixed according to a woman's status, which had to be paid to her if her marriage was terminated within seven years through no fault of the woman's.

**amobr** the purchase price of the bride, a payment due to the lord of a woman when she was given in marriage or when the woman had shown that she had lost her virginity either through pregnancy or through open cohabitation.

**argyfrau** a dowry which was given to the married couple by the wife's kinfolk and which the woman was entitled to retain if she left her husband.

**ap** or son, sometimes "mab". **Mab** becomes **ab** before vowels and **ap** before consonants.

**awenyddion** the term used by Gerald of Wales to describe the Welsh soothsayers who went into trance states to answer questions posed to them in consultations.

**briant** the word means status.

**cantref** the hundred, a term for a part of a territory within a shire or county which administered justice locally. In Wales, the cantref was the larger of the two types of territory as the commote was the smaller.

**cymorth/commortha** help, assistance, aid, relief, support, the person or thing that affords help. A gathering together of people for a benevolent purpose i.e. a fund raising where the person in need brews ale and all those who wish to support that person come and pay money for a drink, ploughing a neighbour's land, contributing towards a marriage through a bidder and bidding. A way of giving assistance to those in need.

**consurio** a term for which there were many spellings: **consuriwr**, **consurwr**, **consierwr** and **consurwyr**. The literal translation was conjuring but the meaning in Wales implied that conjuring was divination or the use of magic and was a term which referred to the actions of the conjuror, the male magical practitioner in Wales and was only used in reference to men

**cowyll** literally, the term for maidenhood-fee, the term for the payment or gift that a man gave to his bride after the marriage was consummated and was similar to the morning gift.

**cymydau** or commotes. The thirteenth century Princes of Gwynedd had divided their area into commotes or **cymydau** since medieval Gwynedd did not have a village or manorial court system wherein numerous nobility were supported by coerced labour.

**cynnwys** the term given to the device used by the Welsh to circumvent the prohibition in the Statute of Wales (Edward I) concerning the inheritance rights of sons whom the Church regarded as illegitimate. The Acts of Union imposed primogeniture on the Welsh although **cynnwys** was widely practiced in the early modern period.

**cywyras** the word used for a husband's mistress. The Welsh woman was entitled to kill

or injure her husband's mistress with her two hands and remain free without having to pay compensation to the kin of that mistress. However, this did not mean she could kill the mistress wherever the mistress was, the wife could only kill the mistress if she found the mistress in her matrimonial home or bed.

***dilysrwydd*** or ***diweirdeb*** a chastity payment which a woman who was raped was paid by the rapist because he had taken stolen her virginity.

***dirwy trais*** a penalty fine which a rapist had to pay to the king because the rape was classified as a "uionon" which was terminated prior to the seven year legitimate marriage period had elapsed.

***galanas*** or enmity, the word for payment in money or goods according to the agreed value of the economic worth of the killed or maimed individual. This arose in blood feud situations where the offence was regarded as an offence against the kindred group and was not regarded as a public disorder. The two parties involved were expected to, and did, negotiate compensation between themselves. Literally means the compensation payment used to heal a feud.

***gowyn*** the compensatory payment a woman would receive if she found her husband with another woman and which she was also entitled to if she left her husband for another man.

***gwarch*** hag or witch.

***gwely*** or the name given to the extended male patrilineage. Welsh law inhibited land acquisition/accumulation as each man had to divide his wealth equally amongst all male heirs in an extended male patrilineage.

***malefice*** premeditated harm, intentional harm meted out to another by the Welsh woman as witch

***potel y dyn hysbys*** the name for the small glass bottles in which charm papers were placed.

***rhaglaw*** one of the two officials who governed the commotes or *cymydau*.

***rhingyll*** one of the two officials who governed the commotes or *cymydau*.

***rheibio*** to bewitch or to curse, witchcraft.

***rheibiwr*** a male witch.

***rheibes*** a female witch.

***sarhaed*** insult, the term given to an injury concerning or implying insult, the compensatory payment for the insult or injury which varied and was assessed on individual status i.e. that individual's status in society.

***uchelwr*** or ***uchelwyr*** meaning the "high-man" or noble. New class of landed gentry which arose after the Princes of Gwynedd integrated the social and political spheres in the thirteenth century. These men were members of the bureaucracy created by the integration process and were rewarded with grants of land and property, a move outside the prevailing traditional pattern. The land or property was granted in perpetuity, a concept totally alien to the Welsh law in regard to property as, under Welsh law, land was only held for an individual's lifetime, not for generations as the new class of *uchelwyr* or noblemen now held their land and property.

**verch** means daughter ie. Margaret verch Richard, Margaret, the daughter of Richard.

**witscraftt** Welsh early manuscript form of the English **witchcraft**.

**witsio /wits** Welsh form of the English for witch **witch** used in conjunction with or as a replacement for **rheilbwr/rheilbes** although it only refers to female witches when used in Wales.

**y ceffyl pren** "the wooden horse" the Welsh form of the skimmington or riding the stang wherein the community took justice into its own hands and policed the wife-beaters, cuckolded husbands, infidelity and domestic violence.

**y dyn hysbys** or **y gwr cyfarwydd** means the knowing one and is another term for conjuror or wizard.

**ymenyn y witsis** or **ffwng ar goed marw** the Welsh words for witch's butter, the fungus *Exidia glandulosa* used by an individual to protect him or herself or any living thing from bewitchment.

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**Appendix I****Transcriptions of Witchcraft as Words Cases: Court Circuits****Brecon Circuit****Brecon***Great Sessions*

1634 wife and husband against a man, man spoke words: witch

*Quarter Sessions*

1690 woman against one woman and two men, all spoke the words: witch plus

**Glamorgan***Quarter Sessions*

1730 man against a woman, woman spoke words: bewitchment. Case for misbehaviour, causing a breach of the peace, not witchcraft

No cases for **Radnor**

**Chester Circuit****Denbigh**

1604 wife and husband against wife and husband, woman spoke words: witch

1604 wife and husband against wife and husband, woman spoke words: witch

1610 wife and husband against wife and husband, woman spoke words: witch

1610 wife and husband against man, man spoke words: witch

1627 wife and husband against man, man spoke words: witch

1655 wife and husband against man, man spoke words: witch

1673 woman against woman, woman spoke words: witch plus \* witch second

1684 wife and husband against man, man spoke words: witch plus

1712 woman against man, man spoke words: witch plus \* witch second

**Flint**

1605 wife and husband against wife and husband, wife spoke words: witch

1610 woman against man, man spoke words: witch

1615 wife and husband against wife and husband, wife spoke words: witch

1617 wife and husband against wife and husband, wife spoke English words: witch

1635 widow against man, man spoke words: witch

1660 woman against wife and husband, wife spoke words: witch plus

1666 woman against man, man spoke words: witch

1677 widow against man, man spoke words: witch plus \* witch second

**Montgomery**

1635 wife and husband against wife and husband, wife spoke words: witch

1636 wife and husband against wife and husband, all spoke words: witch

1648 woman against wife and husband, wife spoke words: witch

1651 wife plus husband against man, man spoke words: witch

1650-5 woman against widow, widow spoke words: witch

1662 wife and husband against wife plus husband, both spoke words: witch

**North Wales Circuit****Anglesey**

1652 widow against man, man spoke words: witch (Maud verch Hugh ap Hugh)

1718 wife and husband against man, man spoke words: witch plus

1732 wife and husband against man, man spoke words: witch plus

**Caernarvon**



1754 wife and husband against wife and husband, wife spoke words: witch plus  
\* witch second (case also cited as being before the Spiritual court of Bangor)

No cases for **Merioneth**

**Carmarthen circuit**

No cases for **Carmarthen**

No cases for **Cardigan**

**Pembroke**

*Great Sessions*

1623 wife and husband against wife and husband, ? spoke the words: witch

1634 widow against man, man spoke words: witch

1634 widow against man, man spoke words: witch

1638 wife and husband against wife and husband, woman spoke words: witch plus

1661 wife and husband against wife and husband, both spoke words: witch plus

1783 woman against man, man spoke words: witch plus

*Quarter Sessions*

Year ? wife and husband bound over for speaking of a wife: witch plus

**Witchcraft as Words Cases: Ecclesiastical Courts**

**Ecclesiastical Courts**

**Peculiar of Hawarden Consistory Court**

1666-85 woman against woman, woman spoke words: witch

No cases for **Bangor**

No cases for **St. Asaph**

No cases for **St. Davids**

**No cases for Archdeaconry of Brecon**

**Llandaff**

1712 wife against woman, wife spoke words: witch plus \* witch second

1722/24 wife against wife, wife spoke words: witch plus \* witch first. Witness depositions attached.

1722 wife against wife, wife spoke words: witch plus \* witch second

1722 wife against wife, wife spoke words: witch plus \* witch first

No cases for **Court of Arches (appeals)**

**Witchcraft as Words Cases: Primary Source Transcriptions**

**Brecon Circuit**

**Brecon**

Henry Probert Esq. and his wife Elizabeth brought a case against John Griffith, a clerk, for 1000 pounds at the sessions for Brecon on 16 March 16 Charles I in 1634. The defendant stated that Griffith had spoken in English to David Jones, another clerk, at St. Davids on 13 August 10 Charles I of and concerning Elizabeth

"Mrs. Probert is a weech and hath beweeched my father in lawe Edward Games and beweeched my uncle John Games, gent."

An elaborate declaration was attached to this case but the outcome is unknown.

A second slander case was located in the quarter sessions records for Brecon in the Brecon Quarter Sessions Rolls for 1690. The details of the case were very brief, giving only the names of three people, one woman and two men. At the Trinity Quarter Sessions on 17th July, 1690

Jane Rees of Llandetty -- 10.0.0  
 Rees Watkin of the same -- 5.00  
 William Rees -- 5.00  
 To ye peace of "Scolding, calling  
 a neighbour woman, fayden  
 a witch and other good terms".

The case sought to have Jane pay the sum of 10 pounds whilst the men were to pay a sum of 5 pounds each, probably because Rees Watkin and William Rees, also of Llandetty, were giving Recognizances (standing surety) to ensure that Jane Rees appeared before the courts. Richard Jeffreys, the Justice of the Peace before whom the recognizance was lodged, signed the roll, and the Latin words "Non- Solv Exoneratur" meaning literally, "he got off scot free" were added.

No more details were provided, the name of the woman who brought the charges against Jane Rees was not stated. Records for the following quarter sessions do not refer to this case again and existing records for the Courts of Great Session for Brecon were few: 154 files from 1560-1650 exist for Brecon. The Great Sessions records for Brecon are no longer extant for 1690 and, if the case did proceed to the Great Sessions from the quarter sessions, this can no longer be verified.

### **Glamorgan**

An interesting case for Glamorgan was located in the Glamorgan Quarter Sessions roll Midsummer 1730 "C" No.39. It was the only case located for the slander of witchcraft when the words were spoken against a man although the case was listed as a misbehaviour case, not a slander case and no damages claim was made.

On 14 July 1730, Margaret the wife of John Richards was brought to court by William Williams of Llansamlet at Neath in 1730 on a charge of malicious slander as she was accusing him of bewitching six of her oxen and threatening "*to have his blood for fear that he should come to bewitch them tomorrow again.*" Articles were exhibited against Margaret, the wife of John Richards, for uttering these Welsh words to Rachell William concerning her son William Williams of Lansamlet.

"Rachell, Rachell, Rachell, ble which mochen i ag oedd ar y Maes, ble may ef, i mi gael y gwade ef rhag ofn iddo ddwad ith i rheibo nwy y forry etto, mi vynna y croggy ef gwanna beth y costa i mi."  
 (Rachell, Rachell, Rachell, Where is Will thy Son who lay hid in a Ditch and that bewitched my Six Oxen that were on the Ground: where is he that I have his blood for fear that he should come to bewitch them tomorrow again.)

The articles stated that the complainant, William Williams "*is a person of good and honest fame and Reputation and as such hath behaved from the time of his Nativity without any Charge or Imputation of Witchcraft or any other Evill Crime of that Nature.*" Throughout the record, it was made clear that Margaret was considered to *disturb the peace and quiet of the said William Williams in a very angry looking manner on or at the Twelve Day of February in the third year of His Majesties Reign unto the habitation of the said William Williams at Llansamlett in the said county to look for the said Williams and his Mother and there utter and express unto Rachell William the Mother..... in the hearing of His Majesties Subjects Who understood the Welsh Language...."*  
 The outcome is unknown.

### **Radnor**

None

### **Chester Circuit**

### **Denbigh**

The slander cases for Denbigh began in 1604 and concerned a woman called Agnes

verch Maddock who lodged several cases over a number of years. Agnes verch Maddock, wife of David ap Roger brought a case against John Rice of Wrexham and his wife Margaret for 30 pounds. Margaret had spoken these Welsh words to Agnes on 1st April that year at Wrexham " Agnes verch Maddock syth yn witch ag a vy benna witch ar a troidodd ddair irioed." ( Agnes verch Maddock ys a witch and hath been the chiefeste witch that ever did treade the grownde.) The plea was not guilty but issue was taken with the plea.

At the same sessions Agnes and her husband also brought a case for 30 pounds against Randle ap Robert of Wrexham, yeoman, and his wife Margaret. Similarly, on the same day and at the same place, Margaret had said "Ni edryches: v yth yn dda ir pen fym i yn hy Agnes verch Madocke bledig mae hi wedi vy witchio i." (I have never looked well sythince I have ben in the house of Agnes verch Madocke for she hath bewitched me." The plea was not guilty but issue was also taken with this plea.

The bill of costs for April 5 James I brought a verdict for the plaintiff although this verdict was not enrolled. Damages were assessed at 2d and the total bill of costs was 4 pounds 16s 7d and the court allowed 4 pounds 4s.

The matter may not have ended with this court ruling as, six years later another case was brought by Agnes verch Maddock against Randle ap Robert and his wife Margaret of Wrexham. David ap Roger and Agnes verch Maddock, his wife, brought a case for 40 pounds against David Jones and Katherine, his wife. Agnes stated that on 17th September 8 James I at Wrexham, Margaret said of Agnes "Witche (wyty)." (Thou art a witch.). David and Catherine/Katherine entered a plea through their attorney.

*Plea: David and Catherine, by their attorney, come and deny the force and wrong etc. Abd say that the aforesaid David and Agnes ought not to have or maintain their action against them, because they say on the day when the words were supposed to have been spoken there was a certain conference had and moved between the said Catherine and the aforesaid Agnes of and concerning a certain rumour and report about the aforesaid Agnes current among her neighbours, that is to say: that the said Agnes previously had offered bended silver to a certain statue or idol called "LLanelyan Kymyan" for intercession in that the curses of the aforesaid Agnes had prevailed against her enemies and adversaries and their goods and chattels, and of and concerning a certain cow of the same David Jones which cow had died suddenly after the curses of the same Agnes against the same David and Catherine and their goods and chattels. And of and concerning another cow of one John Boodle with whom and with his wife aforesaid Agnes had quarrelled a little before and had cursed them and their goods and chattels, and afterwards one cow of the aforesaid John Boodle died suddenly, about which the aforesaid Agnes on the said same day and year said to the said Catherine that she had power to suddenly cause and subtly destroy her enemies and their goods and chattels, upon which words the aforesaid Catherine said to the same Agnes, because of her virulent power: "Yr ydw fy yn tybyed dy fod dy yn wythch." (I think that you are a witch.)*

*Without this, that the aforesaid Catherine spoke, stated or broadcast to or of the aforesaid Agnes the aforesaid words mentioned in the aforesaid declaration in manner and form as the aforesaid Roger and Agnes have alleged above. And this etc.*

*Order: Oct 9 James 1 "It is ordered by the cort that the parties assentes, that this matter and all other matters, suts and variances depending between the said parties shallbe referred to the order and determynacion of Mr. Morgan Broughton and Mr. Thomas Trafford, and in default of order to be taken by them then to the umparedge and order of Mr. Roger Puleston. And ether parties to stand to and performe such order as the shall take therin, and all sutes, accones and appeals depending between the said parties in all cortes as well temporall and spiritual to be staied until the first day of the next Great Sessions and of further order to be taken ether by the said gentlemen or by this cort.*

*And in default of order to be taken by said gentlemen, then they to certifie this cort in whome they fynd the default, whereby the said Justices may take further order therein. And the prothonotary to deliver to the said gentlemen copies of such examinacions as remayne in this cort to be by them considered of if they do require the same. And the copies of the same deposiciones to be brought back againe to the cort if the said gentlemen make no end therein."*

Agnes verch Madocke (sic) was indicted for being a common litigatrix and a disturber of the peace at Wrexham on 3 October 8 James I and at other places. William Owen of Wrexham gave a pledge for traverse, the plea was not guilty. Endorsed David Jones, prosecutor 'Billa vera against Agnes verch Madocke for a scowle.'

However, Agnes verch Maddock and her husband had lodged another case at the 1610 sessions against David Jones himself alone, and this case was also for 40 pounds. Agnes claimed, that on the 31st July 8 James I at Wrexham, David Jones said, in Welsh to Agnes that she was

"Witche oyty ag fo ddarfy...." (Thou art a witche...)

A plea and order was returned in October 9 James I, the outcome for Agnes was the same as that of the case which she had lodged against David Jones and his wife Katherine.

At the autumn sessions for Denbigh in 1627, Edward ap Edward and Barbara, his wife, brought a case against John Thomas Wynne for 100 pounds. In a declaration, the defendant stated that on 1st April 3 Charles I at Gwaynynog "spoke of the plaintiff Eliz. these scandalous Welsh words."

"Barbara Parry am iiy gadtynodd i." (Barbara Parry hath bewitched me.)

The outcome is unknown.

The case was unusual because it raised questions as to the actual identity of the woman who brought the case. The case mentioned a Barbara and an Elizabeth but, whether the "Eliz." referred to was a mistake by the clerk or whether it may have some link to another woman remained unclear. The clarification became important because there was an extant record of an Elizabeth Parry in a 1671 quarter sessions case which was also for Wrexham. Elizabeth had a petition lodged against her by Sarah Poole in which Sarah claimed that Elizabeth had bewitched Sarah and her child. The time difference between the two cases was considerable, 46 years, but there was a possibility that Barbara and Elizabeth may have been related, perhaps mother and daughter, or possibly that they were one and the same person.

John Eare and his wife Margaret brought a case against Thomas Williams of Ruthin, a tailor, for 100 pounds. In a declaration (m.22a), Margaret stated that Williams had spoken these words to her on 13th February 1654 at Ruthin

"Witch wyti, mi ath profa di yn witch, dy di am witchaist i pedair blynedd."

(Thou art a witch, I will prove thee a witch, thou hast beewitched mee foure yeares.)

A plea of not guilty was returned but issue was taken. The Declaration was filed in the autumn papers for 1655.

Jane Jones brought Katherine verch Eubule to court claiming 100 pounds in damages. On 16th December 24 Charles II at Ruthin, Katherine verch Eubule, whilst talking to Jane's mother Lawry verch Evan, stated

"Lladrones diod a witch vront y diw dy verch di."

(Thy daughter is a stealer of drinke and a filthy witch.)

The next case before the court after Jane Jones v. Katherine verch Eubule was that of Jane Jones versus Reginald Owen who had told Jane's brother, Robert John ap Edward, that his sister Jane was a thief and broke John Owen's seller (cellar). The outcomes of both cases are unknown.

Eleven years later, Edward Lloyd and Jane (Jones), his wife, brought a 500 pound damages claim against Henry Powell at the sessions held in March 36 Charles II. The details of the case were contained in a declaration:

*Declaration: And thereupon the aforesaid Edward and Jane, by Evan Vaughan their attorney, complain that, whereas the said Jane now is a true and faithful subject of the lord king, and from the time of her nativity has behaved herself and for the whole of the aforesaid time has not been guilty, accused or suspected of witchcraft, fornication or adultery and was and is reputed among her neighbours and other subjects of the said lord King: and from the time of her marriage with the aforesaid Edward, her husband, for eleven years has lived chastely without (t) infraction of the conjugal sacrament: nevertheless the aforesaid Henry on the last day of February last past in the open street at Ruthin, in the presence and hearing of many faithful subjects of the said lord king well understanding the Welsh language, falsely and maliciously (and) with a loud voice spoke to and of the same Jane these Welsh words, that is to say:*

*"Witch ddrug llygatyn-wraig wit ti ( meaning the same Jane ), ti ( meaning the same Jane ) a llygatynaist fy mhleintin ( meaning the child of the same Henry ), hwr ddrwg gastgyn haig yn gorwedd dan din pawb dan din y caie, hwr feddw, pittain drwg yn codi y gwyr oi (g) gwlae odd i wrth i gwraedd i horwa dan din y caie, puttein John Ellis and John Williams."*

*Which words signify in English*

*"Thou (meaning the same Jane ) art a wicked witch, thou ( meaning the said Jane ) didst bewitch my child ( meaning the child of the same Henry ), wicked whore, proud bitch, lying under every bodyes breech under the hedges, drunken whore, naughty queen yt raisest ye husbands out of their beds from their wives to wander under hedges, John Ellis and John Williams whore."*

*By which false and malicious words so spoken the said Edward and Jane say that they are damnified and have damage to the value of 50 pounds. And therefore thy bring the suit etc.*

*(Counsel's signature:) Eubule Thelwall*

The outcome is unknown.

Jane and Edward employed an attorney to present their case and questions could be raised as to the possible relationship between the counsel, Eubule Thelwall, and the slanderer in the first case, Katherine verch Eubule, perhaps father and daughter.

Catherine Salusbury, a spinster, brought a case against John Jones, gentleman, in 1712. Catherine stated that, on 20th August 9 Anne at pa. Llanelian, John Jones had spoken both to her and about her ( then and now unmarried and a pure, chaste and honest virgin) these scandalous Welsh words

*"Pittan witch boeth wyt ti."*

*(Thou art a whore and a burnt witch.)*

The outcome was unknown. It took Catherine two years to lodge her case against John Jones. The incident took place in 1710 (9 Anne) and was heard in court in (11 Anne) and was not accompanied by any damages claim.

### **Flint**

The majority of the slander cases for Flint were for the slander of being called a witch in a public place, only three of the nine cases were for being called a witch in combination with either a drunk and/or a whore.

John Thomas ap John ap Howell and his wife Jane brought a case against Thomas

Hughes and his wife Elizabeth for 200 pounds. Elizabeth Hughes had spoken these Welsh words on 3 August, 1605, presumably at Hawarden.

"Wiche yew dy wraig dy, ag may vy a safa yn y hyng ag a brova y bod hy yn wich."  
(Thy wife is a witch, and I will stand in yt and will prove that shee is a witch.)

The outcome is unknown.

Eleanor Gravel brought a case against John Preson for 100 pounds stating that he had used scandalous Welsh words against her at Flint on 24th January 6 James I

"Witch ydiw hi, y mae hi yn vy witchio i ar y ddair."

(She is a witch, she doth bewitch me upon the earthe.)

The outcome of this case was known as, at the April sessions in 1611, damages of 13s and 4d were assessed for the plaintiff although the total bill of costs was estimated at 3 pounds 9s 5d.

John ap Rees and Anne his wife brought a case for 100 pounds against Roger Thomas and Jane, his wife. It was claimed that Jane had spoken to Anne on 10th March 12 James I at Bangor, saying these scandalous Welsh words

"Yr hen witch y diw gwraig John ap Rees Gwraig John ap Rees sydd hen witch."

(John ap Rees his weif is an ould witch. The weif of John ap Rees is an ould witch.) The outcome is unknown.

William Banyon and his wife Katherine brought a case for 40 pounds against William Starkie and his wife Anne. Anne, on 10th June at Hawarden that year, had said to Katherine "Thaw art a witch." in English. The use of English rather than Welsh was unusual in such cases. The outcome was known as the verdict was for the plaintiff and assessed damages at 20s but the 1618 bill of costs, the total of the plaintiffs' costs was for the sum of 3 pounds and 14s 6d.

Elizabeth Skasbrig, a widow, brought a case, by herself, for 100 pounds against William Moores. Elizabeth stated that on 31st May 11 Charles I at Hawarden, Moores had spoken these words in English

"Shee is a witch and shee hath witched mee my goods and cattles."

The outcome is unknown.

Ursula Parry, a spinster, brought a case for 100 pounds damages against John Jones and his wife Magdalene in 1660 because Magdalene had, on 15th August 12 Charles II, at Brynbiachan, spoken these words to Ursula in Welsh

"Witch ydiw Ursula Parry, ag hee a witchodd fi am plentyn oddair yn traed."

(Ursula Parry is a witch, and she did bewitch me and my child off our feet/legges.)

Ursula stated that, at the same time, Magdalene had also spoken other scandalous Welsh words

"Landrone s wyt ti Ursula Parry"

(Ursula Parry, thou art a theefe). The outcome is unknown and the document was damaged.

Mary Taylor, whose marital status was not recorded, brought a case against Richard Street for an unspecified amount of damages in 1666. Mary declared that on 22 July 18 Charles II at Monicett (?), Richard Street had spoken these scandalous English words

"Thou art a witch, I will prove thee and I have thee burnt att a staike."

The outcome was unknown. Richard Street seemed to have a reputation for poor behaviour as this assault case for which he was indicted was against the town constable for Moore, one Thomas Starkie/ey. A petition against Richard Street from one William Starkie/ey exists in the same file and raised the question as to whether it was the William Starkie/ey involved in the 1617 slander case against him lodged by Katherine Banyon.

The slander case of Alice Lloyd, a widow, was the final slander case for Flint and Alice brought a case for 40 pounds against James Morgan. She declared that on 4th June

that year at Mould, Morgan had spoken these Welsh words to her and about her  
 "Potten yw ti a wich yw ti."

(Thou art a whore and thou art a wich.)

The outcome is unknown but the case was one of the few in which the "witch" part of the slander came after the slander of being a whore. In almost all other cases the "witch" aspect is the first mentioned, not the last.

### Montgomery

In 1635, Morris Pryce and his wife Catherine brought a case for unspecified damages against Evan David ap Owen and his wife Jane. Catherine claimed that Jane, on 21st August 10 Charles I at Beriowe spoke to and of Catherine these scandalous Welsh words

"Ffwrdd witch, witch wyti/ac tydi a witchest fy mywch i /."

(Away wytch, thou art a wytch/ and thou didst bewytched my cowe /.)

At the 1636 sessions when Morris Pryce and his wife Catherine, again brought Evan David ap Owen and Jane, his wife to court, but this time with a specified damages claim of 100 pounds. Catherine stated that Jane, on 21 August 10 Charles I, this time at Allt Ucha, had spoken these scandalous Welsh words to her

"Witch wyti ac myfi ath briffia di yn witch, ac tydi a witchest fy mywch i."

(Thou art a wytch and I will prove thee to be a wytch, and thou didst bewitch my cowe.)

The outcome of both cases is unknown.

Another case which dealt with an individual named Pryce came to court in 1648. The case concerned Anne Pryce, a spinster, who brought a case against Thomas Webley and his wife Elenor (sic) for 100 pounds. Anne stated that on 10th July 24 Charles I at "The Welshe Towne" (Welshpool) Elenor spoke to and of Anne these scandalous Welsh words

"Wytch wyti, ac tydi a elli fy wytcho fi fal i wytchest di er aill."

(Thow art a witch, and thou mayest bewitch me as thou hadst bewitched others.)

The outcome of this case is unknown.

At the March spring sessions for Montgomery in 1651, William Powell and his wife Elizabeth brought a case against David Jones for 100 pounds. In a conversation at Newtowne with William Powell, David Jones was alleged to have spoken these scandalous Welsh words concerning William Powell's wife Elizabeth.

"Hen wich yw dy wraig di, hi a wichiodd i mi worth igen pynt o dda y blanedd." (Thy wife is an oud/wich/witch, shee did bewitch me twenty pounds of goods this last yeare.)

The outcome is unknown.

Jane Meredith, a spinster, brought a case for an unspecified amount against Joan Miris, a widow, at the spring sessions in 17th March 1650/5. Jane stated that on 28th April 1650 at Welshpool, Joan spoke to and of her using these scandalous Welsh words

"Allan a thi am ty i witch, di a withiest dy ew(ythr) oi haner i wared, mi a wel(aist) dy yn dwad mewn trwy dwll y klo dair gwaith me bedair."

(Out of my house witch, thou didst bewitch thy uncle from ye mydle downward; I saw thee coming through a hole in ye lock three or four times).

The deposition was torn and the outcome is unknown.

In 1662 at the sessions held on 6 October 14 Charles II, David Wynne and his wife Katherine brought a case against Edward Longland and his wife Mary for an unspecified amount. They claimed that on the 6th September 14 Charles II, at Welshpool, "in a certain discourse had with Jane and Humphrey Prichard of Welshpool," the following scandalous Welsh words were spoken

"Witch yh hi ag hi a witchwdd fywch Ester Tilley."

(Shee is a witch and she hath bewitched Ester Tilley's cowe.)

The outcome is unknown.

**North Wales Circuit  
Anglesey**

At the sessions held for Anglesey at Beaumaris on 16 August 1652, Maud verch Hugh ap Hugh, a widow, brought a case for 100 pounds against Richard Prees of Penmyndd, a yeoman. Through her attorney William Thomas, Maud lodged a declaration.

*Declaration: And whereupon the said Maud hath been from the tyme of her nativity hitherto a woman of good name, fame and credit and from then free and untouched with ye crime of witchcraft, sorcery, or any other hateful or hurtfull offence so has hitherto been reputed so among her neighbours, yett the said Richard imagining, and intending not only to injure and oppress the said Maud unjustly to oppress... her good name and reputation aforesaid among her neighbours and others to hurt and scandalize, but also to bring her the said Maud in danger of losse of her life and estate on the..... day of....at Bewmares in the county aforesaid, the said Richard being in company with one John Morgan, on espying the said Maud passing by also pointing at her, these false, malicious and defaming words in... hearing of the said John Morgan and of diverse others understanding the Welsh tongue did speak*

*"Dymma r witch a witchiodd fyngwas theg am lloie i er ys dwy fflynedd yn myned heibio." ( Here is ye witch that bewitched my cowes and calves these two yeares passing by)*

...

*of speaking and publishing of which false and scandalous words the said Maud is not only hurt and wounded in her good name, fame,... and honesty, but also her neighbours and others by that means haddd altogether withdrawn themselves from her company and with her as they were wont have desisted any way to. informitt (?), or hadd any commers /rummours(?). whereupon thou saith that she is a mouse(?), and hath dam adged to the value of forty pounds, and whereupon bringeth /humbleth (?) her Life / Pride(?)*

*And the aforesaid Richard by Ellis Mowwib(?) his Attorney cometh (?) the defendant which found and wrong.....*

*And sayeth that he is not guilty of the*

*Speaking, offering and publishing of the scandalous and false words aforesaid in the declaration above specified, in manner and form..... the said Maud doth above complaynd against him, and of this now putting himself upon the country And the said Maud likewise.*

Maud entered a plea of 'Not Guilty' but issue was taken. The outcome is unknown.

This witchcraft as words case was the only one in which the plaintiff used the words "*Maud in danger of losse of her life and estate...*". Not only was it the only case which mentioned that Maud feared for her life, it was the only slander case for Anglesey until the 1718 case (cited below), a reality which tended towards the suspicion that Maud verch Hugh ap Hugh was probably one of the women who was executed for witchcraft practices in Anglesey.

At the 1718 sessions held at Beaumaris on 3 October 5 George I, Alexander Williams and his wife Ann brought a case for 200 pounds against William Roberts of Llanddaisaint, a weaver (textor). Ann declared that William had spoken to and about her at Erianell, saying these scandalous Welsh words:

"Witch a lladrones." (Witch and thief.)

*Imparlances* to 29 July 5 George I (1719) A plea of not guilty was entered but issue was taken. *Venire facias* and the verdict was given for the plaintiff with damages assessed at 4s and costs at 1d with 7 pounds and 6d increment by the court.

William Jones and Jane, his wife brought a case for 20 pounds against Hugh Griffith at



the spring sessions at Beaumaris. Jane declared that on 1st May 4 George II at Llanddaniell, Hugh had used these scandalous Welsh words when he had both spoken to and about Jane

"Witch, my ach profa chwy yn witch, a lladrones hefyd."

(Witch, I will prove thee a witch and also a thiefe.)

The outcome is unknown.

### **Caernarvon**

In 1754, at the sessions held at Carnarvon(sic) on 5 September 28 George II, William Hughes of Carnarvon, tailor, and his wife Catherine brought a case against William Lloyd, gentleman and his wife Alice. More detail concerning the actual slander and the event was attached to this court record.

(Prohibition)

*Suggestion: William and Catherine Hughes informed the court, praying a writ of prohibition, that the Welsh words following are words of heat and passion only, and not so grievous as to be prosecuted in any court Christian; nevertheless Catherine has been cited to appear in the Spiritual Court of Bangor to answer a certain libel for defaming Alice in the twelve months preceding the commencement of the cause by saying;*

*Yr ydiw chwi wedi meddwi."*

*in English "You are Drunk."*

*And also for calling Alice "a witch."*

*Libel: copy filed*

The case may be one of the few Welsh cases where a person lodged a counterclaim. However, the defamers were lodging a writ of prohibition, not the defamed, perhaps to stop Alice and William Lloyd claiming damages for libel, although it does seem odd that the claim was not being heard before the Spiritual Court of Bangor as the suggestion states that Catherine was already cited to appear at this court.

### **Merioneth**

None

### **Carmarthen Circuit**

#### **Carmarthen**

None

### **Cardigan**

None

### **Pembroke**

David ap Rees ap Owen and his wife Maud brought a case for 100 pounds against Rees Lewis and his wife Elizabeth at the 1623 sessions held at Haverfordwest on 31 March 21 James I in 1623. In the declaration, the time, place or person(s) to whom Rees and Elizabeth Lewis were talking were left blank in the record but the words spoken concerning Maud were these scandalous Welsh words

"Hen witch y diw r hen wraig o Ben y Gegin ny ddaith benach witch oy gwlad hi eirioed, ag mi a bryfa ythi hi witchsio Owen Johnes o Trecowne."

(The woman of Pen y Gegin is an old witch, never come out of her country a verer(?) \*chiefer\* witch, and I will prove that she bewitched Owen Johnes of Trecowne.)

The outcome is unknown.

Margaret Collyns, a widow, brought a case of 100 pounds against David Mabb at the Haverfordwest sessions in 1634. Margaret declared that on 12th June 1634 at Rosem(ar)kett, David Mabb spoke these scandalous English words

"Thou art an ould witch and I will p(ro)ve thee to be a whitch (sic)."

The members of the Collvns family appeared to have some difficulties with members of the Mabb family as, at the same sessions on 14th September 10 Charles I, Margaret also lodged a case for 100 pounds against John Mabb, as she declared that John Mabb had used these English words at Rosem(ar)kett  
 "Thou art an ould witch and I will p(ro)ve thee to be a witch."

The outcome of both cases was unknown but the next case (Deposition 114) concerned a James Collvns who brought a case against David Mabb for 100 pounds. It seems that David Mabb had called James Collvns a thief because James had, according to David Mabb, both stolen and shorn David Mabb's sheep. This charge was also spoken aloud at Rosem(ar)kett but on 20th July 1634. The relationship between Margaret and James Collvns was not known although they could well have been mother and son since Margaret was declared a widow in her original deposition or they could have been brother and sister. Whatever the relationship, David and John Mabb certainly seemed to have borne Margaret and James Collvns some ill will which may have prompted Margarets' original slander claim. James Collvns then lodged his case as a slander case, the onus does not appear to be on James to prove or disprove he was a thief, he sought to clear his name of slander.

Rice Mortymer and Margaret his wife, brought a damages case of 200 pounds against William Garnons and Margaret, his wife at the autumn sessions in 1638. Margaret Mortymer declared that on 20th September 14 Charles I at Kylgeran, Margaret Garnons had spoken these scandalous Welsh words  
 "Witch yt tu ag my fu a bryfia (du) di yn witch, a llandrones fy awr i wyt tu.  
 (Thou art a witch and I will p(ro)ve thee to be a witch, and thou didst steale my gold.)  
 The outcome is unknown.

At the spring sessions of 13 Charles II, Morris James of Haverfordwest, a gentleman and his wife Mary brought a case for 200 pounds damages against Peter Davies of Haverfordwest and his wife Mary in 1661. In a Declaration drawn up by Mr. Fuxley, Mary James declared that both Peter and Mary Davies had publicly stated that Mary James was  
 "Witch, whore, stockster, and that thou ( meaning the plts. wife ) has bewitched my child and my drinke, and my childe is yet sicke and thou didst doe it."  
 A note attached to this case indicated that Peter and Mary Davies were in debt to the James' for 3 pounds 3s as the James' had lent the Davies' 20s on 10th November, 20s more on 12th December, 20s more on 4th February and 3s more on 12th March. The outcome is unknown.

At the 1783 sessions held at Haverfordwest on 30 August 23 George III, Dinah Reed, a spinster brought James Chubb of Narberth parish, who was an officer of excise, to court. No damages claim was made and information was presented in a declaration:

*Declaration: The def. on 1 August 1783 at Narberth spoke to and of the plt. these scandalous words:*

*"I have lost twenty guineas and you are the person that took and had them. I am certain that you had my money for the conjuror told me so."*

In all, there were five statements regarding the words. James Chubb was found "Not Guilty" but issue was taken.

A quarter sessions witchcraft as words case record appeared in the records for Pembroke. Walter Lloyd and his wife, both of Newport parish, were bound over to appear at quarter sessions on a charge of alleged slander, that is calling Elizabeth, the wife of George M.....

"a witch and a common whore."

*To the High and Petty Constables of ( torn manuscript)  
 Komos/Tomos (?) ye to Every and Either off them*

----- yt Hath Lately been made this day beffore me by  
 John Habour (?) and David Jones /Jamesof the said parish of Powys --- that ---  
 Lloyd and Mary his wife of the said parish (?) have --- ---, --- and  
 wrongfully(?) had ---- -- Elizabeth the wife of George M ( torn manuscript)  
 as a Common Whore and yt she the said lady laid with -- -- -----  
 -- which ye said Joel (?) H/Flanier further deposeth yt ye said --- Lloyd  
 that (?) ye said Elizabeth is a witsch and a common whore and yt had  
 had her an hundred times; -- and -- in (?) his Majesties Name(?)  
 to command you, that you, --, the ?ight having  
 to make forsooth (?) for (?) yt to any -----  
 yt Mary his wife yt to call(/) them to come shortly before me (?) and  
 find sufficient --- for their formal(?) appearance yt the first day  
 of Next General Sessions of the--- to be held (?) for the said County  
 (torn) in the meantime to be of good Behaviour ---- not  
 (manuscript torn and folded ) my --- Day of August (?)  
 The outcome was unknown.

### **Ecclesiastical Courts**

Records for the ecclesiastical courts in early modern Wales can be located through the NLW Schedule of the Church in Wales Records, Vol. I - Vol. VII.

### **Peculiar of Hawarden Consistory Court**

Sometime between 1666-1685, Catherine Weigh complained in the Peculiar of Hawarden Consistory Court that Anne Millington had called her "An old hairy witch and said that she should not bewitch her the said Anne Millington." Catherine also stated that Anne had accused her of being William Fox's whore, also saying that she was "An old recottinge queane" and that her husband was "a false theefe."

The outcome was the payment of a fine, the exact nature of which was unclear as the writing is almost illegible.

### **Bangor**

The ecclesiastical court records for Bangor exist from 1742 - 1792 and did not yield any witchcraft as words cases.

### **Llandaff**

The ecclesiastical court records for Llandaff exist from 1707/10-1792.

The first case for defamation in the ecclesiastical courts occurred in the Llandaff courts when, in 1712, Jane, the wife of William Miles brought a libel case against Mary Miles who was a spinster. Both women were from Bonvilstone and the defendant stated that in April - December 1712 at Bonvilstone, Mary Miles had defamed the plaintiff by speaking these Welsh words "Yr whore, y buttain (2). Y witch y sy wedi witcho i gwr na na fe ond y wel hi yn dda." (The whore, the harlott (2). Ye witch that has bewitchd her husband yt hee'l doe nothing but what she pleases or approves of ).

The outcome is unknown.

The following three witchcraft as words cases all came before the Llandaff Consistory Court in 1722.

In 1722-1724, Quenlian/Gwenllian, the wife of Mathew Howell of Llangonydd brought a case against Jennet Rees, the wife of John Lewis of Bettus., all from the parish of Llandaff.

Libel (271) Gwenllian stated that Jennet had defamed her in May-June last at Langonydd by speaking these Welsh words "Y witch. Y slutt. "

(You witch or sorceress, you slutt or dirty whore).

Several depositions from witnesses were attached to the case:

Depositions ( 271a ): 30 November 1722

Anne Evan of Langonwydd, a spinster aged 30, was at a market in June at Bridgend (a market town five miles from Lanonwydd ) and heard Jennet call Gwenllian "a witch and a slutt". Gwenllian is of good name.

Mark (of Anne Evan)

Upon Interrogatories:

She does not remember any provocation by words or blows given by the plaintiff to the defendant, nor does she remember their discourse at the time of their quarrel. She stood very near the parties when they quarrelled and her fellow witness, El.Wm. (Elizabeth William), stood so near them that she could well hear what was said for they spoke very loudly.

Mark (of Anne Evan)

Elizabeth William of the parish of Bettus, also a spinster aged 34, was at Bridgend market a week or fortnight before last mid summer and heard Jennet call Wenllian (sic) "a witch and a slutt."

Mark (of Elizabeth William)

Upon interrogatories:

She remembers that some words arose between the parties about the value of the wool which they both had to sell in the market (sic) and Gwen called Jennet in Welsh "y tullin" [ owl: modern spelling is "tylluan"] but she knows of no other provocation given to the defendant. She also had wool to sell and sat between the parties when they quarrelled. Her fellow witness stood at her back and might well have heard what was spoken.

Mark (of Elizabeth William)

Personal Answer (271b): 1723 The palintiff's proctor, Jenkin William believes that the defendant ought to be punished in this court for calling her a witch. He believes that the word 'slutt' is synonymous with "dirty whore" and may also be ecclesiastically (sic) punished, especially when spoken of a "civil and modest" woman such as the plaintiff.  
(Signature)

In 1722, Catherine, the wife of William Nicholls of Peterston super Ely, a gentleman, brought a case against Mary, the wife of Evan Rees alias Morgan of the same.

Libel (279): The defendant stated that in April-September 1722 at Peterston super Ely, she had been defamed by Mary who spoke these Welsh words.

"Y slutt, y sluttfront, y witch goch, y witch bengoch, yr buttain bengoch."

(The vel thou slutt, the nasty slutt, the vel thou witch, the vel thou red witch, thou red-headed witch, the vel thou red headed whore, the vel thou redheaded harlott.)"

The outcome is unknown.

Wenllian, the wife of Robert Vaughan of Magor in Monmouthshire, brought a case against Sarah, the wife of John Williams who resided in the same place.

Libel (286): In October-January last at Magor, the defendant was defamed by Sarah when she spoke these words

"Thou art a witch or sorceress and hast bewitched severall p/er/sons.

Thou art a com/m/on whore and strumpett."

The outcome is unknown.

### **St. Davids**

The ecclesiastical court records for St. Davids are from 1674-1838 but did not yield any witchcraft as words cases.

### **Archdeaconry of Brecon**

The ecclesiastical court records for the Archdeaconry of Brecon are from 1662-1702 but

327.

did not yield any witchcraft as words cases.

**Court of Arches (appeals)**

Court of Arches (appeals) extant records were from 1670-1798 and are held in Lambeth Palace Library but did not yield and witchcraft as words cases

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## Appendix II Witchcraft as *Malefice* Cases

### Witchcraft as *Malefice* Cases : Primary Source Transcriptions

#### Witchcraft as *Malefice* cases before the Courts of Great Sessions

##### Brecon Circuit

Brecon	None
Glamorgan	1668 Rachel Flemynge/Fleming for witchcraft practices, dismissed 1678 Rachel Flemynge/Fleming for witchcraft practices, sentenced to death but died on the day of her execution. No extant records for the Glamorgan Courts of Great Sessions prior to 1690 exist.

Radnor                      None

##### Chester Circuit

Denbigh                    1594 Gwen verch Ellis for witchcraft practices  
1672-73 Elizabeth Parry, quarter sessions for witchcraft practices

Flint                        1655-56 Dorothy Griffith for witchcraft practices  
1657 Anne Ellis for witchcraft practices

Montgomery              None

##### North Wales Circuit

Anglesey                  1652 Maud verch Hugh ap Hugh, fate unknown but this slander case may have become a witchcraft practices case.  
1655 Margaret verch Richard for witchcraft practices. **Executed.**

Gaernarvon                1621/22 Ritherch ap Jevan and Lowri verch Jevan committed to gaol on a charge of witchcraft.

Merioneth                 None. No extant Courts of Great Sessions or quarter sessions.

##### Carmarthen Circuit

Carmarthen                1654 Joan Roger and David John for bewitchment  
1656 Gwenllian David/Lys Hier and Margaret David/Maggie Hier for witchcraft practices

Cardigan                  1693 C/Katherine Rees for witchcraft practices

Pembroke 1607 Katherine Lewis/Bowen for witchcraft practices  
1693/4 Olly Powell for witchcraft practices

Haverfordwest County and Borough  
1655 Golly Lullock for witchcraft practices

**Brecon Circuit : no cases in the records of Great Sessions.**

**Brecon : none.**

**Radnor : none.**

**Glamorgan: none.**

**Chester Circuit**

**Denbigh**

**Gwen verch Ellis: NLW, Great Sessions 4/9/4/10-15NLW Denbigh Gaol Files (1594) Great Sessions for Denbigh 36 Elizabeth.**

(This case mentions Flint but these are filed in the Great Sessions records for Denbigh).

10

The examination of Gwen verch Ellis the supposed wife of John ap Morris of Bothe in Loft in the County of Denbigh touching with witchcraft, charming, sorcerie and soothsaying supposed to be practiced and used by her taken before the Rverend Father in God William Bishop of St. Asaph at within the county of Flint the 12th day Anno XXVI Elizabeth

Being examined where she was born, bred, brought up and by whom, who were her parents of her and how she getteth her living, saith that she was borne within the parish of Lland (?) rioke in the countie of Denbigh, and was sent unto her uncle Harrie ap Roger to Yale(?) being then about five or six yeares old and continued at Yale aforesaid about 15 years and then was married to Lewis ap David ap Gwyn with whom she lived two years until he died. And afterwards Gwen married one Lewis ap David ap Griffith and with him dwelt about 27 years And after his death she married the aforesaid John Morris about two years at midsummer next. Further she saith that she getteth her living by spinning

and making of linen cloth to be sold and also by making plasters and salves for hearts that are diseased -- making of any for the same. Yet they of their voluntary wills do sometimes give her wool, corn, cheese or butter for her pains and that it is her chiefest maintenance. Being further examined whether she herself or any other have practiced or used witchcraft sorcerie, charming or soothsaying thereby to help or hurt man or beast sayeth that about the space of these ten years no last past, she hath used to charm and thereby hath helpen some diseased children and also beasts as well as by the same charming as also by salves, drinke and plasters. And being further demanded what words she used in the said charms saith that she useth these words following in Welsh

(Fifteen lines of Welsh follow)

With many other words and sentences. Being examined of whom she learned these words for charming saith that she learned the same of her sister Elizabeth verch Ellis what is died these 15 years last past." Further she saith tht divers have come unto her for help as well as for men women and children as also for sick beasts and that she hath helpen. And also she saith that divers that have come to her did believe that she help them, and so she believed likewise. Being examined further that the last that she had helped by charming was a  
11  
man child to one -- of the parish of Llanweddin (?) whose name she knoweth not which was done about Whitsuntide last past."

Being further examined -- that she -- by -- of Jane Conway, widow, late wife to Hugh Holland of the -- in -- two gospels of St. John the Evangelist about two years no last past. And saith that she doth now remember did deliver one of the said gospel to one Margaret verch Morris and that the said gospels were written (she believed) by Mrs Jane Conway her son.



Being further examined whether she did bring -- or convey into Mr. Mostyn's parlour at- or was consenting, assenting, so privy to the bringing or conveying of any written paper containing (as if it seemed) witchcraft which was found in the said parlour and written to be read backwards, saith the she was not party to any such written but heard that there was such written paper there found. And that divers did -- her to get herself out of the way. And that Mr. Mosty would punish her for the same. Being demanded who they were, saith that one Margaret Lewis of -- widow, Ellen verch -- wife of David ap Rees ap Maddock did persuade her to go out of the way. Further she saith that she was once all night about two years now last past at Me. Mostyn's house at the Marle, he being then from home..

(Some additional papers are attached which do not seem to correlate with the preceding testimony but which are lodged with Gwen verch Ellis' testimony. It is Gwen verch Ellis "speaking", these are numbered 11. These could possibly be the English translation of the Welsh which concludes the testimony on the page numbered 12, see below).

... sent this money to Mr Kyffyn and that the horse which carried them was hurt. And she did ask this examinante whether she knew what was the cause that the horse was hurt, and the examinant said that she could not.

Further this examinant -- saith that the said Jane Conway alias Holland did tell this examinant that the said Mr Thomas Mostyn was a sickly man and did ask her this examinante how long he should live, and this examinant did answer her that she could not tell.  
(end of 11).

12

The examination of Gwen verch Ellis the supposed witch taken at Flint the 10th day of July 1594 before us the Justices of the Peace whose names are subscribed, by the appointment of the Justice of Assize for the county of Flint.

Being examined what speeches she this examinant used since her commitment to the gaol of Flint concerning Jane Conway alias Holland widow confesseth that she saisd that -- the aforesaid Jabe did know that she this examinant was in any scarcity or poverty she this examinant was -- that the said Jane Conway alias Holland wouldest her want nothing. -- saith further that this last week (the day certain she this examinant knoweth not there came into the gaol where this examinant was, two women strangers unto this examinant (as this examinant saith) -- one of them asked this examinant whether she was the woman that was committed who confesseth that she was the same. Whereunto the said woman replied that she saw the foresaid Jane Conway alias Holland at Hollywell who was angry with her for that she feared she had offered more of her than the truth. And further this examinant doth affirm and in every point acknowledge her former examinations taken before the Lord Bishop of St Asaph too be true. And also saith that she saw the like -- that were found in the parlout of Mr Mostyn'e house at -- in Mrs Jane Conway's prayer book where the said Jane Conway dwelleth. Being further examined how often she was with the aforesaid Jane Conway at her house or elsewhere and what talk she had with the said Jane Conway about Mr Mostyn. Saith that at Christmas(?) last was twelvemonth this examinant was at the said Mrs Conway her house in the Marle, and that then the said Mrs Conway did tell the examinant that some variance was between Mr Mostyn and his son-in-law and that my lady (?) had some -- between them both. And did ask this examinant whether she knew whether the said Mr Mostyn had money or goods and this examinant said that she knew not. Being further examined what pictures are in her house. Saith that there is one picture of Christ rising from the dead of brass and tin and a bell without a clapper. And being demanded where she had them. Saith that her sister had gave the same to her whom died about 16 years now last past. And being demanded whether she did use the same image and bell in performing her charms saith she doth not.

Being further examined saith the the foresaid Jane Conway alias Holland did ask the examinant what gold or money the said Mr Mostyn had and that he had sent ...

(The rest of this transcript is in Welsh)

13

Examination of witnesses sworn -- --

witchcraft, sorcery and charming supposed to be committed and done by Gwen verch Ellis taken the 30th day of August ... 1594 before William Wynn and John Lloyd esquires two of the Justices of the Peace of the County of Denbigh, by virtue of a special commission to them and these directed by the right worshipful Sir Richard Shuttleworth, Knight, Henry Townsend -- her majesties Justices of Assize of the said county of Denbigh. At -- in the county aforesaid.

William ap Griffith/Gruffyd ap William of Denbigh, bayliff -- -- of 30 years or thereabouts sworn and -- saith and deposeth that he hearing by common report in the county that the aforesaid Gwen verch Ellis did use soothsaying and charming and finding that diverse did -- unto her for that purpose sent word unto her the he with some company with him would shortly come and drink in her house and that if she had skill in soothsaying she would know what time he would come thither without any further warning.

Whereupon the deponent intending to make trial of the said Gwen for sorcery together with one Robert Evans, Owen ap Robert ap William Lloyd ap -- ap -- and one Hugh ap William ap Miller(?) being a young man did -- a -- -- about the latter and at Christmas last past went to the house of the said Gwen situate within the aforesaid parish of --, and there and then xcalled for drink for their company, but the said Gwen refuseth to give them any drink saying that she had -----  
-- -- this deponent with the rest of his company earnestly inteated her for some drink which she -- refuseth, settingher back upon the door of her chamber where the drink was

Thereupon Robert Evans one of the company did with his left arm thrust her before the door, then she the said Gwen said that she would revenge upon them any injury they should offer, and thereupon commanded her maid to fetch them drink, which the maid did accordingly and when that drink was done she the said Gwen herself fetched drink in a great goblet containing about two quartz and brought the same and layed upon the table this deponent and the rest of the company espied a great fly stirring to life in the cup and upon the top of the drink which being -- this deponent and the rest

of his company -- -- said this, meaning the fly id  
the said Gwen's devil by which she worketh mischief,  
and so this deponent and some of his company did put their  
hands into the said cup seeking to take the said goblet and  
poured the drink upon the floor, and the said Gwen saith that  
she would be revenged (?) with some of them. Also this deponent  
saith that henor any of his company afterwards could  
see the said fly even upon the ground nor in the cup. And  
further this deponent saith that when -- suffer the forsaid  
Robert Evans had his left arm broken without any  
-- violence or any other cause -- -- -- but that he  
verily thinketh by the means of the said supposed witch  
who affirmed to -- that she was the only cause of breaking  
of the said Robert Evans, his arme, for the performance  
of her revenge which she had promised. Also this  
deponent saith that within a month or six weeks after, this  
deponents wife was taken of her child. She did long  
languish and as yet is not perfectly recovered. Further  
this deponent saith that upon a certain day a little before  
night this deponent came to his house where he found the  
forsaid Gwen standing by the cradle wherein his child was, at  
which sight he was greatly discontented and amazed  
and so this deponent was taken -- while the said Gwen  
went forth of the house. Thereupon this deponent went  
to his wife lying in bed and did ask her why that witch  
was in his house , who -- that it was told to her that  
the said Gwen could help her and that therefore she was  
sent for unto her, and this deponents wife said further  
that the said Gwen had been with her and said that ib case  
she this deponents wife would believe the said Gwen she  
would help and rid her of her pain, and therefore  
desired this deponent tp let her the said Gwen alone.  
Lastly this deponent saith that it is commonly  
deposed in the county where the said Gwen travelleth  
that she hath used and practiced soothsaying, charming  
and thereby hath done harm to men, women and  
beasts, and for such -- she is and hath been  
-- known and taken.

John Lloyd ap -- ap Miller of -- in the county of  
Denbigh -- of 36 years or thereabouts sworne  
and examined saith that he who -- with  
William ap Griffith/Gruffyd ap William and Robert Evans in the

latter end of Christmas last past at the house of Gwen verch Ellis drinking and at that time he said Gwen brought them great goblet full of drink upon the top wherof there was a great fly of the bigness of the bumble bee great and ugly to behold which when this deponent saw said this is your devil meaning the said Gwen and this deponent and the rest of that company sought to take the said fly but could not and then did pour down the drink upon the floor and yet could neither see the said fly in the cup nor upon the ground, and further this deponent saith and deposeth touching the being in the house of the said Gwen and seeking drink of her and her supposed -- -- this deponent and the rest of the company in every point and article as the former deponent William Ap Griffith ap William hath said and deposeth which saying and depositions -- -. Also this deponent saith that the said Gwen did use and practice soothsaying and charming and -- it is supposed -- some goods and some charms and further he deposeth not.

Margaret verch Morris of -- in the county of Denbigh of -- of -- 20 years or thereabouts likewise sworn and examined saith

That she knoweth the said Gwen verch Ellis for these three years last past and that in the latter -- of Easter holidays last past the forsaid Gwen being a near neighbour of this deponent came to this deponents mothers house at -- and there among other speeches uttered to this deponent said that her -- -- -- touching the injury that was done her and that she hadd caused Robert Evans his arm to be broken, and had likewise caused the wife of

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William ap Griffith/Gruffyd ap William to be taken up for -- and said further to this deponent then lying sick that if she this deponent would believe her then the said Gwen she would help her and recover her of her sickness and this deponent -- that she would -- -- would consider her -- if she would do her some good. Then the said Gwen called for salt and caused this deponent to put it in about -- -- -- -- -- the next morning the said Gwen came to this deponent being sick in bed and took the said salt from this deponent and went home -- the next night and the next morning

came again to this deponent and bought the said salt and delivered it to this deponent wishing her to take some of that holly creature(?) meaning the said salt and to put some of it into the first meat that this deponent did first take in the morning and willed her to use it for three mornings together saying it would do her good and that it would defend her this deponent from all infirmities by the space of a year and a day and this deponent did as the said Gwen did tell her but was rather the worse and had greater pain than before. Also this deponent saith that -- -- to her the said Gwen for help both for men and beast and for knowledge and things that were lost but whether she did harm or good this deponent knoweth not. Also this deponent saith that it is commonly reported and know that the said Gwen did use and practice soothsaying and charming and so -- -- is reputed and taken among her neighbours.

Ellen verch Richard of -- in the county of Denbigh -- -- of 40 years or thereabouts likewise sworn and examined saith that about six years ago last past on Lewis ap David ap Gwyn (being then husband unto the forsaid Gwen verch Ellis, did serve in a -- of this deponents husband as -- where the said Gwen and her husband then dwelleth and about the same time one Lewis ap John this deponents son fell out with the said Gwen and did strike her. Also this deponent saith that shortly after the falling out between Lewis ap John her son a, and the said Gwen verch Ellis the said Lewis this deponents son fell to be frantic and beside himself whereupon afterwards he was -- troubled within four days next before his death during which time it was told this deponent by divers her neighbours that the forsaid Gwen verch Ellis was the cause of the said Lewis ap John's his frantic and disquietness and that the said Gwen said if she liked help him. Thereupon this deponent being so desirous to have help for her son went unto the house of the said Gwen. At -- -- and did call her out of the house who came and brought this deponent some part of the whay and finding that the deponent was pensive and -- sorrowful did tell this deponent that for all her suit and troubles she should -- her mothers lands this deponent

answered that she neither cared for lands nor any thing else so much as for the disquiet and sickness, wherewith the said son was then troubled and so -- her to help him -- by any means she could saying that she -- would like her forgiveness and her amends so the injury that her said son had done unto her, and the said Gwen said it was done unto her, and the said Gwen said it was too late and if she had come sooner in time she could and would have helpen him saying further that this deponents said son should live untill a certain day within a month or two there next following as this deponent now remembereth and this deponent saith and certainly remembereth that her said son departed this life the very day that the said Gwen had appointed and told this deponent. Further this deponent saith that long before the death of her said son Lyckie the wife of William ap Griffith ap Hugh told this deponent that the forsaid Gwen verch Ellis had caused this deponents said son to become mad in revenge of the injury that he had done to her, and that she could, if she liked -- him again and thereupon this deponent went, as before she hath deposed, unto the said Gwen for helpe unto her son. And this deponent further saith that as it was told her and reported by divers the said Gwen was the cause of her said son's sickness and death. Further she cannot deposeseth.

Lykie verch John wife to William ap Griffith ap Hugh in the county of Denbigh -- 70 years or thereabouts likewise sworn and examined saith that about three years now last past the aforessaid Gwen verch Ellis came to the deponents house and told her amongst other things that Ellen verch Richard, the former deponent, would make amends to her the said Gwen for the wrong that her son Lewis ap John had done to her, she the said Gwen would help the said Lewis and rid him of his sickness, thereupon this deponent either went herself or sent unto the said Ellen verch Richard for help unto her said son being demented whether the said Gwen verch Ellis ( at such time as she was at this deponents house and said that she would help the said Lewis ap John) did then confess that she had been the cause of the forsaid Lewis ap John his sickness and disquietness saith that she doth not now

perfectly remember whether the said Gwen said so then or at any other time or not and otherwise than before she hath deposed she cannot.

John ap Hugh ap William ap Miller (?) of Llansanfrond (?) in the county of Denbigh labourer of -- 22 years of age or thereabouts sworn and examined saith that upon Sunday next after Christmas Day last past somewhat before daylight this deponent then being the household -- of one Roger ap - ap - of Llansanfrond(?) aforesaid did at the command of his said master go to the house of the said Gwen verch Ellis to fetch her to help one Hugh ap Roger being

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then sore troubled with the -- -- and the said Gwen at the request of this deponent rose out of her bed made herself ready and came by as -- of one Hugh ap John ap Rees by which -- the said Gwen verch Ellis said that she and her husband did sometimes dwell there and that one Lewis ap John the son of John ap Rees had then abused her and stricken her and that therefore she prayed unto her god that the said Lewis might be brought before himself and that the same her request was granted and that she had effected her purpose therein with her said saying this deponent did imply unto the forsaid Hugh ap John ap Rhys, brother to the said Lewis ap John.

Griffith ap Hugh of Bettis(?) in the county of Denbigh -- -- of 32 years or thereabouts, sworn and examined saith that in -- last year past was two years, this deponents mother being widow lost an axe and thereupon they went to the said Gwen verch Ellis to know tidings of that axe which was lost, a hoop of rye was promised her if axe she could see where the axe was which she undertook to do, and said the axe was in -- and search being made for this was not found there but in the upper end of Llan (?) therefore the said Gwen was not paid for her hoop of rye wherewith she was discontented as this deponent hath said. Further this deponent saith that about Ascension Day last past the forsaid Gwen verch Ellis came to David ap Hugh this deponents brother being then sickly at which time she the said Gwen



did as this deponent asked and charmed the said David with salt and gave him to drink after which time the said David became very sick and upon Ascension even died. before which time, -- 3 days before the death of the said David this deponent came to the said David his brother and asked him whether the drink which the said Gwen had given him had done him any injury or not, who assured that it did not but said and constantly affirmed unto this deponent that the charming or sorcery which she the said Gwen had done unto him with the salt did him great harm and had been the cause of his death, as he thought in his conscience. And further this deponent saith that the forsaid Gwen verch Ellis is generally reported taken and known amongst her neighbours to have used and practiced charming and sorcery.

John Lloyd ap John ap Griffith -- of Bettnis in the county of Denbigh, gent of -- 46 years or thereabouts being sworn and examined saith that upon -- day in the -- week last past for the county of Denbigh, he this deponent met there with one Hugh Holland of Conway and with him did question about certain writings which was found at Mr. Mostyn's house at the Marle containing as it was thought words of witchery. And this deponent asked him whether the same was his hand writing or whether he had written the same writing which was found in the purse of Gwen verch Ellis at the time of her examination taken before the Lord Bishop of St. Asaphs', who answered this deponent and utterly denied that he had written the said writing which was found in Mr. Mostyn's parlour at the Marle. Nevertheless he confesseth that he had written St John's Gospel out of an old book and either delivered the same to his mother Jane Holland or letter the same in the said old book in his mothers house. Also this deponent saith that he was in company with the constable searching Gwen's hooose where was found a crucifix and a bell without a clapper, and saith likewise that the said Gwen is called a soothsayer and that divers did resort unto her from sundry places.

**of Sarah Poole.<sup>1</sup>**

3

To the Right Worshipfull his Majesties Justices  
of the Peace for the County of Denbigh  
Right Worshipfull

This may certifie you that your Humble petitioner Sarah Poole as shw was going to the Mill about the latter end of November last past was suddenly set upon by Richard Robets the husband of Katherin Gill who threatened to kill her, and his wife the Wednesday following told me that he did repent that he had not soundly paid my Bones(?); And of the cause and orration you shall be fully certified by the witness of Thomas Parker and Martha Parker. And your humble petitioner is bound over to the Sessions, which was only for striking to save life of her Child, against Four persons; namely Robert Road and Jane Road his wife and Elizabeth Parry (alias) Gill, and Katherine Gill. And the said Elizabeth Parry about 12 years ago came to Scold about Some triviall orration and I desired her to refrain for awakening the Chils(sic), and shee answered the Devill Bless him and thee also: whereupon the Child dyed before nine oclock the same night and I myself fell sick and so continued three yeares after, and the same thing will be witnessed by Lowry Joseph and Dorothy Owens. Likewise the said Elizabeth Parry as she was going by the milking place of Edward ap Evan, of Wrexham Vaughan there was a Woman Milking and Shee said the Devil Bless the work, whereupon the Cow fell down upon her and like to have smothered her, the same things will be justified by Phillip Fouler and his wife, Orsilla Fouler. And the Said Elizabeth Parry not long ago came to my house and Scandalized me with most filthy and uncivil Language and likewise kneeled down upon both Knees and Cursed me, whereupon I fell sudonly (sic) sick and so continued Seven days.

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<sup>1</sup> The petition was amongst the papers of the Clerk of the Peace, Thomas Pritchard of Halton and Chirk Castle and the petition was submitted at the Hilary Quarter Sessions held for Denbighshire in 1671. Sarah Poole came from Wrexham Vechan, a township of the old parish of Wrexham which exists now in name only. Sarah Poole had assaulted several of her neighbours and had been bound over to keep the peace. Her petition was her response to the parish constable keeping a constant watch on her and she asked that this be stopped because her actions had only been reactions to a woman named Elizabeth Parry, whom Sarah claimed, had provoked her. She cites Elizabeth Parry, a practitioner of the black arts with an ability to call up the Devil. These cases were apparently common in the quarter sessions courts but it was not common to cite the black arts and the Devil in such cases. See D. Leslie Davies, "The Black Arts in Wrexham ." *Transactions of the Denbighshire Historical Society*, 19, 1970, p. 230-232.

**Flint**<sup>2</sup>

**Dorothy Griffith: NLW, Great Sessions 4/985/2/18-19 Great Sessions for Flint (1655-56) at Flint on the 7th April 1655-56.**

**Anne Ellis: Wales 4/985/5 Great Sessions for Flint ( 1657) Sessions for Flint at Flint 28 September 1657.**

**Montgomery: No cases in the records of Great Sessions.**

**North Wales Circuit****Anglesey**

**Margaret verch Richard : NLW,Great Sessions 16/7**

Anglesey The Gaol Delivery of the County aforesaid made at Bewmares in the said County before Edward Bulstode Esq. Justice of the great Sessions of the said County, Justice of his highness the Lord protector to Deliver the gaole of the said County Prisoners remaying in the same, and also Justice to keepe the peace in the said County, and assigned to heare and determyne diverse felonyes, trespasses and other Misdemeanours done in the said County, on Monday the twentieth day of August in the yeare of our Lord one thousand six hundred fifty and five.

Anglesey Bee it remembered that at this Sessions the jury found to inquire for his highness the lord protector for the body of the said, County, upon their oath do present that Margaret verth<sup>3</sup> Richard late of Bewmares<sup>4</sup> in the County aforesaid widow, having not the fear of Almighty god before her eyes, but renouncing the almighty god and his power, and being led and seduced by the divell, and wickedly consulting with evil and wicked spiritts, employing them to work her own wicked evils and purposes for the effecting of her own malice and revenges

<sup>2</sup> Witchcraft studies for Flintshire were undertaken and published by J. Gwynn Williams in two papers published in the *Journal of the Flintshire Historical Society*, Part I in Vol. 26, p. 16-33 and Part II in Vol. 27, p. 5-37, both in the volume for 1975-76.

<sup>3</sup> The spelling in the transcript is "verth" but the Welsh word it represents is "verch" meaning "the daughter of".

<sup>4</sup> The spelling of Beaumaris in the transcript varies and the text has been transcribed accordingly, keeping the variations.

and to do hurt to her neighbours by payning, wasting , consuming destroying and killing them in their bodys or ??? through the last days of October in the year of our lord one thousand six hundred fifty and four, at Bowmaris aforesaid in the County aforesaid and certain detest able, wicked and devilish arts called Witchcraft and Sorcerie, wickedly devilishly and feloniously, in, uppon, and against one Gwen the wife of Owen Meredith of Bewmauros aforesaid gardner of her malice forethought did use, practice and expertise. By reason of which said detestable, wicked and devilish Arts, the said Gwen from the said last day of October in the yeare aforesaid unittl the last day of December in the yeare aforesaid at Bowmauros aforesaid in the County aforesaid, was most dangerously and mortally sick, and did languish and uppon the said last day of December in the year aforesaid by reason of the practicing and expertising (?) of the said wicked, detestable and devilish Artes aforesaid, the said Gwen at Bowmauros aforesaid in the County aforesaid Dyed. And so the Jurors aforesaid uppon their oath aforesaid do present that the said Margaret verth Richard the said Gwen the said last day of December in the yeare aforesaid in manner and form aforesaid willfully wickedly and feloniously of her malice fourthought did slay and kill contrary to the public peace and contrary to the forms of the Statute in that case made and provided. And Now here at this Sessions came the said Margaret verth Richard, being brought here to the B ?????????? under the Custody of William Bold esq (?) Sheriffe of the said County, and being presently asked how shee would therin bee tryed, did say that shee was not theroff guilty at all. And therof did put herself for good and evil uppon the Country (?). Therefore such a Jury bee made therin and the Jury being called came, who being chosen ????? sworne to say the truth of the promisses (?), do say uppon their oath that the said Margaret verth Richard is guilty of the Witchcraft and Sorcery aforesaid above laid to her charge in manner and found, by the Indictment aforesaid is above against her supposed: and that shee had noo goods, or cattle, land or rents. Whereuppon it was asked unto her, if she had or know any thing to say for herself, Wherefore the Court here ought not to proceed to judgement and execution against her uppon the prisoner who said nothing further but what shee formerly has sayd Therefore it was considered that Shee the said Margaret verth Richard should bee hanged untill dead.

**Caernarvon**

**Ritherch ap Jevan and Lowri verch Jevan : Calendar of the Wynn Papers NLW  
9058E No 1009**

The NLW entry in the Calendar of the Wynn Papers reads:

"Griffith Hughes, by reason of a sickness in his house these 18 years, has apprehended two of Bodvil's tenants, Ritherch ap Jevan and Lowri verch Jevan, and committed them to a gaol on a charge of witchcraft."

1621

Sir John Bodvil to Sir John Wynn about some persons taken up and Comitted on suspicion of Witchcraft.

Sir

(Six lines pertaining to Sir John's daughter who was married to Sir John Bodvil)

-- by the means of Griffith Hughes -- under  
 taken of Bodvil Prisoners -- guilty supposed -- --  
 by time xviii yeares which -- -- Jevan --  
 and -- Bodvil to tenants after -- --  
 Witchcraffe against Ritherch ap Jevan and Lowri  
 verch Jevan one -- brought an -- -- by which  
 belong to -- -- and type after my tenant --  
 -- -- -- and known by their misfortunes to be  
 both -- people and of good reputation but --  
 did beare the malase, --- -- my warrants --  
 never besought to ye -- -- -- and --  
 they -- -- forwarded and committed to the  
 gaole after to remain without bail or mainprize(?)  
 (Letter then continues with family news).

**Merioneth: none.**

### **Carmarthen Circuit**

#### **Carmarthen**

Joan Roger and her son David John: **NLW, Great Sessions 4/718/2 Great Sessions for Carmarthen ( 1654).**<sup>5</sup>

At the sessions held for 14 August 1654, an indictment was lodged against Joan Roger who was a widow of Pembry and against her son, a husbandman of Pembry, David John. The indictment stated that on 6 February 1653 these two individuals had bewitched John Thomas who had languished until 18 February 1654. The depositions of August 1654 said that John Thomas was returning from visiting friends at night in the company of Joan Roger and her son David John. John Thomas said he "*saw some black things*" and, afterwards "*grew unruly*" whilst in bed in the house of Joan Roger. What John Thomas actually saw was not disclosed and nor was the person who lodged

<sup>5</sup> This case is outlined in Cecil L'Estrange Ewen *Witchcraft and Demonianism*, Heath Grnaton, London, 1933, Appendix E, p. 423.

the indictment but he had languished for a year after his bewitchment although the indictment was not lodged until the August sessions at Carmarthen. The indictment claimed that Joan Roger and David John, had bewitched John Thomas and this was not common: it is one of the few cases where a woman and a man were accused of bewitching another person. The indictment was endorsed and stated to be a true bill but the outcome was unknown, the records detailing the fate of the two individuals were not located.

**Gwenllian David alias Lys Hier and Margaret David alias Maggie Hier: NLW, Great Sessions 4/719/2/48,49,50,51,52,53,54,55 Great Sessions for Carmarthen (1656).**

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County Carmarthen the 16th day of June 1656

Examinations then taken at Pen-- before John Powell Esq.

one of the justices of the peace of the said county on his highness behalf against Gwenllian David alias Lys Hier and Margaret David alias Maggie Hier both of the parish of Llangadocke in the aforesaid county for and touching suspicion of witchcraft and inchantment etc.

Moore Pritchard of the aforesaid parish and county being sworn and examined on his corporal oath deposeth and sayeth that the aforesaid Gwenllian and Margaret are persons of an evill and badd fame and report in the country and are granted as this deponent hathe heard to be witches and to use the art of witchcraft etc and further deposeth not

the same day

Catherine the wife of Moore Pritchard, being sworn and examined on her corporal oath deposeth and sayeth that she had heard the said Margaret and Gwenllian calling one another witch many times and further deposeth not

the same day

Anne Morgan of the parish of Llangadocke aforesaid spinster being sworn and examined on her coproral oath deposeth and sayeth that about 15 years ago the said Margaret David alias Maggie Hier came to the deponents house and desired the loan of some of her pearlace which this deponent refused and denied for a long time, till at last the said Margaret begging and desiring so earnest the deponent gave the loan of 4 yards of diaper lace out of her coffer, promising restitution the next day unto the said deponent so the said Margaret went forth out of the deponents house and

went a little way off and returned in again and told her she had forgotten one thing and then did put the pearlace to this deponents breast and rubbed her breast therewith and then parted from her and was not gone half a mile from the house but the deponent was taken with great pain in her right thigh and increased by degrees on all her body within few days after and so continued for the space of half a year until such time as the said Margaret came with the pearlace home to the deponent all plaited and full of small holes like parchment where -- are wrought upon, and laid it to the deponents breast and rubbed itas aforesaid and immediately at the same instant the deponent recovered and the pain left her but her skin seemed to be all over red spots (like flea-bites?) and further deposeth not.

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Rees Bowen of the aforesaid parish being sworn and examined on his corporal oath sayeth and deposeth that about fifteen years ago being in his bed on a Tuesday night was suddenly taken with a most horrible pain in his left leg below his knee about the place where he did use to tie his garter, and so continued till the next morning, and near noon the next day having some occasion to go to Llangadocke tow, he endeavoured to go thither though in some pain, and in his return from there passing through Penybont near Llangadocke, Margaret David alias Hier met this examinant, and told him that he went very well, and that if he pleased she would bear him company in his way homewards, so she went a long with him for the space of half a mile, and then parted from him but she was not gone forty yards from him till he was taken with a kind of forgetfulness of himself, and in a strange manner, not knowing at the instant where he stood yet in less than half a quarter of an hour, he recovered himself and went his way homewards, having taken up his burden which was fallen off his back when he fell as if a ----- been in a ----- and when he came home he went to his bed and kept his bed very close for five or six weeks in a very Sadd condition, his left leg, by reason of the great and intorferable pain therof, being shrunk and bearing backward and very black near his garter, as that many of his friends were of the opinion that it would be very necessary to have his leg cut off and cauterized, others would

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have the aforesaid Margaret to be sent for, which some of them doubted, she had bewitched him; at last he yielded to their advice, and sent for the said Margaret which came being sent for, when she entered into the chamber where this examinante lay very weak in his bed, she desired to see his leg, which he could not sway(?) unto her nor move any part thereof, then she took up the bed clothes and looked upon his leg, and told him that he had been bewitched, then took his leg between her two hands and laid it on a cushion and rubbed some prayer or charm over it and rubbing of it with her hand the pain began to assuage (?) and from that time forward he recovered his health better and better one hour succeeding the other so that in three days space he could go about the house in and out and further deposeth not.

the same day

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Gwenllian Rees of the parish of Llangadocke being sworn and examined upon her corporal oath sayeth that about 7 or 8 years ago she came to the house of Magaret alias Hier, and so were in conference together the said Margaret desired a lock of the deponents hari which she refused to give then so desired a piece of her pearlace which she also refused sa at last desired a piece of Money of her and promised that she should be the better for it if she gave the deponent replied her and said that she had no money. Then the said Margaret told her that she had near or abouts three shillings about her and the deponent then had 3s 4d about her then, at length desired the deponent to come to the inner part of the house, and took a little image out of a coffer or the bed straw and showed it to the deponent which seemed to her to be a piece of wood or ivory full of small holes and the deponent desired to see her hand but the said Margaret denied to give it and said that she would go with it to John White--- either a Tuesday or Thursday following and further this examinant deposeth not.

the same day

David Thomas Jenkin of the parish of Llangadocke being



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sworn and examined on his corporal oath deposeth and sayeth that about 14 years ago Margaret David alias Hier borrowed a pair of gloves of the deponent and kept them about half a year which said deponent in the interim that she had the gloves could not eschew or avoid her company until such time as she restored the gloves back again and ever since the deponent could not abide the sight of her and further deposeth not.

51

Gwenllian Owen the wife of Lewis Walter of Llangadocke being sworn and examined on her corporal oath deposeth and sayeth that about 15 years ago or past the deponents husband had a few sheep and some of them died of a distemper and that Margaret David alias Hier, came by chance by their house, and told the deponent that if she would reward her for her pains, that she would cure the sheep, and preserve them from danger, but that she must have water and earth out of Jerusalem, before she could cure them, she parted from the deponent, and came to her again within 2 days and after, with the water out of the well of Jerusalem mixed with earth of the same as she made the deponent believe With a bone of four or five inches with a fork upon one end thereof, which the said Margaret put into the water, and then cast a little of the water upon each of the sheep using some charm therewith, at which time the examinant asked the said Margaret what good or virtue was there in that forked bone the said Margaret answered her that she would not take the best gelding in Sir Parry Jones stable for the said bone, this examinant further sayeth that about a fortnight after the said Margaret David came by her house and had some conference with her amongst other things asked this Deponent what ailed her that her face was black and blue she made answer that her husband in some measure had abused her, then the said Margaret gave an oath that if this examinant would give her either a bandstring or a point from her husband's codpiece she would make him that he should never do so again with her, then this examine asked the said Margaret what she would do with him, she replied and said that she would make an end of him, to which words this examinante replied no.,thou shalt have none from me for my husband is the father of 6 children and I pray God to keep him in health, and

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further this examinant sayeth that within a few days after the said Margaret came to her house and gave the examinante a handful of Linseed and wished her to throw it on a cross was near thereunto, but this examinante wished to put it on the crossway but laid it in a little heap

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near the crossway; and the next day the said Margaret came to the examinante and asked her where she had laid the Linseed, then this examinante came along with her and showed her the place where she had laid the Linseed at which time the said Margaret chided her because she had misplaced it, so the examinante trodd near the Linseed, oh pain(?) the said Margaret thou hast spoiled thy self. Whereupon a great pain took her at the very instant in her toe and foot and continued in great pain and torment, for a long time and diverse times to this day is troubled with pain, then this examinante told the said Margaret god bless me from thee I feel thy ways are not right, I will have nothing more to do with thee, the said Margaret answered and said why dost thou bless thy self from me.

53

Margaret Roger the wife of Thomas John of the parish of Llangadocke being sworn and examined sayeth upon her corporal oath that there was a kind of butter or sybstance pitched upon the door post of the house of Thomas John her husband, at which time there was a poor woman begging at the door that first viewed it and told the examinante that it was witches butter whereupon the examinante went to her neighbours and acquainted them with it and asked their advice for it, so that David John Rhudderch being one of the neighbourhood took a knife and laid it on the fire till it was near (or red) hott, and stuck it through the said substance into the door post and left it there for a fortnights time and in the interim that the knife remained in the door post Gwenllian David alias Lys Hier lay sick and cried to take the knife out of her back and the deponent thought of the knife that was thrust into the door post, and took it out, but it was no sooner taken out but immediately the said Gwenllian began to recover and further this examinant deposeth not.

the same day

Thomas John of Llangadocke being sworn and examined on his corporal oath deposeth and sayeth that he was in place when the aforesaid David John Rhudderch stuck the knife through the substance into the door post and that he thrust it in further, and within a few days after the deponent went to thresh into one end of the house where the said Gwenllian David lay sick and heard her groaning and crying for to take the knife from her back and the deponent wished his wife to take out the knife from the door post which she did and immediately thereupon the said Gwenllian began to recover and further this examinant sayeth not.

the same day

Margaret Walter of the parish of Llangadocke widow being sworn and examined on her corporal oath deposeth and sayeth that she was in the house of the said Thomas John when the knife was stuck into the post door through the substance or the thing called witches butter, and that she made David to heat the knife, but within a few days after she went to the house where Gwenllian lay sick, and heard her crying  
Oh draw the knife out of my back and heart and it was reported that when the knife was taken out of the door post the pain left the said Gwenllian and further this examinant deposeth not.

the same day

Margaret Pritchard the wife of Rees John Parry of the aforesaid parish being sworn and examined depose and sayeth on her corporal oath that about May last was two years she was at the market at Llangadocke where she met Gwenllian David alias Hier with a green chees under her arm which said deponent -- and bought the cheese of the said Gwenllian for 3d and carried it home and cut it but when she tasted it, she could not eat it by reason that it was very unsavoury, so brought it home and restored it back to Gwenllian asking her why did she make such cheese without salt she replied unto the deponent and said that it was made after night which said Gwenllian

had neither kind sheepe nor any kind of cattell and further this examinant deposeth not.

the same day

David John of the parish of Llangadocke being sworn and examined on his corporal oath sayeth that about 7 or 8 yeares ago he fell out with David Lewis the son of Gwenllian David alias Hier; then the said Gwenllian threatened to be quit or even with the deponent, but the next morning there was a cow of the deponent sick, and went upon her back about the house and through the partitions in the house, said Margaret David came to the deponents house upon a sudden, when said cow was sick and demanded a little salt and said that she would make her well but it was denied her yet notwithstanding the cow to the admiration of all them that were present recovered, and further this examinant deposeth not.

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the same day

Gwenllian Walter the wife of John Rees Bevan of the parish of Llangadocke being sworn and examined on her corporal oath deposeth and sayeth that Gwenllian David alias Hier came to the deponents house and enquired for her husband she answered and said that he has gone abroad, then the said Gwenllian told her these words, I know I must fall out with him at last the deponent asked her what was the cause of it then the said Gwenllian answered and said because she had no corn of him since last harvest and presently returned out of doors as if she had been angry, but the deponents husband fell sick immediately complaining of great aches in his bones, and stiches all over his body and joints and as continued for 6 weeks or more and further this examinant deposeth not.

the same day

Gwenllian Bowen the wife of Morgan Rees of the parish of Llangadocke being sworn and examined on her corporal oath deposeth and sayeth that Gwenllian David alias Hier did use to come to the deponents house most commonly when she would be brewing and that the said Gwenllian David never came to the deponents house but that the deponent was in

loss either for her work or her Ale out of her barrel or other vessels. and knew not which way she had lost it but suspected that it was done by witchcraft of the said Gwenllian David because of the bad fame and report that was spoken of her in the County and further this examinant deposeth not.

Two several bills of Indictment were preferred against Gwenllian David alias Lys Hier. One of the bills was for the bewitchment of John Rees Bevan and the second was for the bewitchment of David John Rudderch's cow. The bill was declared *ignoramus* by the Grand Jury and, although the bills were declared untrue by both accusing parties and their thirteen witnesses, the jury verdict was upheld and Gwenllian was allowed to go free. Similarly, Margaret David was indicted, acquitted and discharged of bewitching John Rees Bevan and Jane Lewis, the wife of David John Rudderch even though the bills were declared true, endorsed and supported by fourteen witnesses.

### Cardigan

#### **K(C)atherine Rees: NLW, Great Sesslons 4/886/15<sup>6</sup>**

Cardigan Examination taken before me David Lloyd esq. one of their Majesties Justices of

the peace for the said County of Cardigan against Katherine Rees of the parish of Nancwnlle in the said Countt, the Nineteenth day of June in the fifth yeare of the reign of our Sovereigns Lord and Lady William and Mary. By the grace of god of England etc King and Queen and defenders of the faithetc. Anno domin 1693 Erasmus Thomas of the parish of Trevylan in the said County Labourer or being then sworne and examined saith that about five or six years past in the month of September or October he was coming home at dusk of the night from the house of one Thomas Griffith William a neighbour with whome he had been working that day, met inhis way hard by a place called --- Three women, And the said examinant to the best of his knowledge deposeth and sayeth that the said Catherine

Rees was one of them, and that they struggled with him all the night, carrying him from place to place till day breaking, next morning by which time he was sensible that he very

well knew the place where he was then, being hard by a neighbours house near a Quarter

of a mile distant from the place the said three women first met him. And calling to the dog of the house which did --- to follow him, they upon that parted with him he not knowing how or where they went. And the said examinant further sayeth that he did Require --

-- from the said Catherine Rees. And at other times when they should happen to fall out both , he gave her the terms of Witch She being not at all Concerned at

<sup>6</sup> Throughout the testimonies her name was spelt with a "C" although the initial examination statement referred to her as Katherine.

him for Calling of her by that name nor any manner of Contradiction given unto him for the Same at any time. And the said examinant further Sayeth that the neighbours there about give a very bad report of her Complayning that when ever any of them happened to fall out with her, they always observed that some mischance or crosses should befall them. And further Deposeth not.

John Jenkins of the parishe of Nacwnlle of the said County being Sworne and examined Sayeth that about four yeares past one David Thomas of the parish of Ystrad in the said County -- now deceased, fell out then with the said Catherine Rees And

he the said examinant being then present sided with the said Catherine upon which Account the said David Thomas abused him with ill Language, for which the said examinant

threatened to Sue him. And after they came home being near neighbours, the said Catherine

told the examinant that he should not Sue him for he should see that Shee would be Quitts

with him very Speedily some other way. And immediately after the said David Thomas fell Sick. And he Continued for a Long time. And the said examinant further Sayeth that at some other time, going An errand in his neighbourhood And passing by her house Threw his great Coate in there. And in his Return home about An hour after, being in the Dusk of night, Called at her doore which was then Shutt.

for to have his Coate none would Answer him he at that thinking to open the doore found there was some resistance within but then with much adoo forced the doore open, to

where he only found the said Catherine And an Aunt of hers which is since deceased And after he had threatened them for not opening the doore to have his Coate They not Replying him with any Answer he went away. And in his way home not far Distant from the house of the said Catherine but upon playne ground fell downe up on his side and knowing how a paine then took him in his thigh which Continued him Lame for a Long time after. And also the said examinant Sayeth that there is An ill fame to her in the neighbourhood to the same effect as the former examinant deposeth.

Richard Lloyd of the parishe of Nancwnlle in the said County, groom being sworne and examined Sayeth that on a Sudden a daughter of his fell sick about Christmas Last was three years and at the same time was deformed as having her lipp near the ear of the one side and the eye of the same side nearer the eye brow than it ought. The said deponent went to see one Richard Bloom of Carmarthen, who he was Infomed to be a man of Judgement in Such particulars to Seeke help for his daughter, who gave him ointment to Anoint her And at Another time after gave her drink by which Shee was in some measure better though that side which was deformed Continued -- -- that Shee was not able to turne in bed without hekp until about May following. The said deponent

at Another time meeting with the said Richard Bloom who told the said deponent that a woman of his neighbourhood being of Short Stature , which --- throw dice upon a Booke, pretending to be a fortune teller, And one that had a pyde eye, had occasioned that sickness and deformity to the said deponents' daughter And Charged the said deponent that when ever he met her to call her by the name of Witch not regarding the place to be ever so publick. And the said Richard Bloome engaged before witnesses to -- has --- the said deponent from Any damage that he might Incurr thereby and further deposeth not.

Sarah the wife of the above named Richard Lloyd being after Swome and examined Sayeth that about Christmas last was three years she sent her daughter to a neighbours house upon some business. And immediately after Her Returne the said deponent Sayeth that her Daughter Complained that her Lipp and eye was both out of order as the said Richard Lloyd aforesaid deposeth And likelwise Complained that She Lost the use of one of her feet And by next morning Shee Complained that her righte arm and all that Side over were useless unto her. And the said deponent further Sayeth that her Daughter found that Side was useless unto her that from that time when Shee fell sick which was about Christmas Last was three years untill May following she was not able to turn in bed without assistance And the deponent further Sayeth that upon an Information of an ill Report given to the said Catherine of being a witch, asked her daughter whether she had seen her that day Shee fell Sick or nooe And her daughter --- that she had seen her. And the deponent Sayeth that upon a Late Quarrel which happened between her and the said Catherine, she did very much suspect her to doo her daughter mischief, being a woman of ill fame as aforesaid and further deposeth not.

Examination against Catherine the wife of John Hugh for Witchcraft.

### **Pembroke**

**Katherine Lewis: NLW, Great Sessions 33/6/5-6**

Examination taken at the town of Tenby in the county of Pembroke  
the 25th day of July -- --

eighth year of the reign of James,

examination before John Rogers and Howell Lowell

Richard Browning of Gumfreston in the county of Pembroke,  
yeoman, sworn and examined on the Holy Evangelist deposeth and  
saith that the day before St Peter's last, being the 27th  
day of June, this examinant being at his own house in Gumfreston  
Katherine Lewis, the wife of Thomas Bowen, native(?) of Tenby

labourer, and sometime of Gumfreston parish, came to this examinants house and asked for his wife, and this examinant telling her that she was within the house the said Katherine went in unto her and shortly after returned forth again having -- with her some milk and flour which this examinants wife had given her, and immediately after that the said Katherine was gone.

There was two sows of this Examinant within the curtilage that were heavy with pigs which ran about the said curtilage<sup>7</sup> fallowing \* their pigs in a most strange fashion, which this examinant perceiving caused some of his people to drive them into the barn, and the pigs that were fallen they took up and put in a --- and brought them likewise into the barn where the said sows continued running about farrowing their pigs, and ever since the swine have languished and are now so weak that they are not like to live, albiet they have been carefully kept and looked unto. And to this day they could not givr sustenance to their pigs. By reason whereof most of them died and the rest were nourished by another sow of this examinants, which since did cast her pigs also.

And this examinant, his wife and others that have seen them being persuaded that the said -- sows were bewitched, did support that the sows hurt by the said Katherine Lewis in regard when she dwelt in Gunfreston parish she was suspected to be one that could do hurt that way, and as this examinant believeth she standeth at this time indicted in the Great Sessions of the County of Pembroke for witchcraft or some such like matter.

Whereupon this examinant having sent 2 or 3 times for the said Katherine to come to see the said sows and pigs, at the length she came (as this Examinant --) to this examinants house in the company of her husband who brought with him a staff with a pick in it. (doubting as it seemeth) she should have had some hurt offered unto her. And at her coming farther she fell a railing and cursing and so departed. And further sayeth not.

Katherine Lewis, the wife of Thomas Bowen of Tenby, labourer examined upon what occasion she went to the house of Richard Browning on the day before St Peters eve last saith she was

<sup>7</sup> Curtilage was the term for land enclosed by the same fence which enclosed the house.



not there at all upon that day but saith she – St Johns eve last she havinh called at Christopher Millard's house in Gumfreston came to Richard Brownings house where she had some milk and flour given her by his wife, And about a fortnight sithence that she came hither again in company with John Adam Fisher's wife where they both had bread and chees given then by the said Brownings wife at which time they had some speech together concerning a child that the said Richard Browning had by one Dobbins daughter and sithence that upon the report of one – Young that the said Brownings wife enquired for this examinant, she this examinant and her husband having with him a pick ) they went to the said Brownings house to know what the matter was. Whereupon the said Brownings wife said that on St Johns eve her sows did cast pigs and that she suspected this examinant had done some hurt unto her and wished her to help her sows again or else she would be sorry for it. Whereupon this Examinant knowing herself to be clear from doing any hurt or harme --- or having any knowledge of witchcraft , she was moved to say that she desired her and as many as did think she was such a woman, and thereupon this examinant and her husband returned home again in respect the day was spent. And further saith that at her being at Brownings house on St Johns eve she doth not remember that she did see any sows or pigs or any other cattle about the house that time.

Examination touching the cause aforesaid taken at Tenby before the said JOhn Rogers, mayor the 16th day of September. Elizabeth Browning, wife of Richard Browning sworn and examined upon the Holy Evangelist deposeth and saith that the day before St Peters eve last past the said Katherine Lewis came into her husbands house and finding this examinant there and having a pot with her, seemed to take something of this examinant, whereupon this Examinant did fetch her a dish full of milk thinking to put the same in her pot, but in regard the said pot was near full this Examinant would put but part of the said milk therein, whereupon she told the said Katherin Lewis that her pot was full enough and asked her what she would have. Whereupon she desired some flour which this Examinant did give her because she feared that the said Katherine would do her some hurt if she should deny her for that she was a woman suspected of witchcraft. And immediately after the said Katherine departed, and before she

was gone a -- -- from the house it happened that two sows which were heavy with pigs did in most strange fashion ran about fallowing<sup>8</sup> of their pigs and so continued after they were driven into the barn and shortly after one of the said sows fell blind and so died and the other sow responded but all her pigs died. And this examinant and her husband suspecting that the said sows were bewitched did send for the said Katherine Lewis who after sundry messengers came unto her and this Examinant telling her how she suspected that she had done hurt to her sows wished her to do them good again, the said Katherine fell upon her knees cursing and railing and said with great oaths she had but a life to lose and if she were not a witch herself she would cause them that should do it. And thereupon this Examinant saying she would have some of her blood, the husband of the said Katherine having in his hands a hay pick saying these words 'If thou take her blood I will have thine for it for I thought of such a matter before I came hither.' And further -- -- -- not given there -- and that the said Katherine did hurt her sows.

Maude Adam, servant to Richard Browning aged 21 years or thereabouts, likewise sworn and examined deposeth and saith that she did see her dame, Richard Brownings wife upon the day before St Peters eve gave some flour to the said Katherine Lewis that presently after the said Katherine was gone from the house there was two sows of her masters that ran about the house falling their pigs in a strange fashion. Whereupon this Examinant and her dame took up five or six of the pigs and carried them unto the barn where the said sows in like manner fell the rest of their pigs. And afterwards continued so weak that most of the pigs died and one of the sows languished and died also. And this Examinant master and dame suspecting that they were bewitched by the said Katherine did send for her by 2 or 3 messengers and at the last she came and being charged with the bewitching of them she fell down on her knees and wished she might never enjoy any thing if she did any hurt unto them and further saith not.

#### **Haverfordwest County and Borough**

**Golly Lullock: Wales 4/ 789/4 Great Sessions for Pembroke (1655) Great**

<sup>8</sup> Fallowing, she means "farrowing" or giving birth.

**Sessions held for Pembroke at Haverfordwest 20 August.<sup>9</sup>**

Golly Lullock was indicted for witchcraft practices on the 20th August in 1655 at Haverfordwest when Henry Arrundell and Robert Williams brought an indictment against her. The indictment was supported by six witnesses and stated that Golly Lullock of Haverfordwest, on the 13 August 1655 and at Haverfordwest, had bewitched one sow worth 6 shillings and one black coloured nag worth 6 pounds which were the goods and chattels of Henry Arrundell. Golly Lullock was also accused of bewitching four pigs worth 5 shillings each which were the goods and chattels of Robert Williams. Robert Williams' pigs died on 18 August at Haverfordwest but the survival or otherwise of Henry Arrundells' animals was not mentioned.

The indictment was unsuccessful as Golly Lullock was found "Not guilty" even though the endorsed bill was stated to be true and six witnesses had supported the testimony of Harry Arrundell and that of Roger Williams. "Golla (sic) Lullock was committed by the Mayor until she entered into a recognizance with sufficient sureties for her personal appearance at the next sessions of the peace of the said town."

**Olly Powell: Bodleian Library MS: Ashmole1815 f.r-v. Letter written in February 1693/4 by John Edwards, then a justice of the peace for Pembroke to Alexander Forde, his Archdeacon then at Jesus College. The letter details the case of Olly Powell. If extant court records concerning the case of Olly Powell exist, these should be located in the NLW, Great Sessions for Pembroke 1693/4 Sessions held in April 1693 (NLW, Great Sessions 4/800/1); OR August 1693 (NLW, Great Sessions 4/800/2); OR August 1694 (NLW, Great Sessions 4/800/3); OR September 1694 (NLW, Great Sessions 4/800/4).**

The information about her trial was contained in a letter dated February 1693/4 so the actual trial date could have occurred in 1692 or 1693 or 1694. The outcome of the trial is known as Olly Powell survived her accusations. The witness statements against Olly Powell were detailed, Edwards elaborates on some but declared that there were fourteen witnesses against her.

1693/4

... the woman as witch's name is Olly Powell arraigned by Henry Phillips who proved that she coming to Jeffrassen cole workes where he was at work asked(?) for a kilkerkine of cole desiring a stone of cole over measure he replied "poore wrech thou or thy horse are not able to carrey more unless thou wilt run on all four and help him, she muttering went away and, within an hour after, Philips (sic)

was taken all over his body with stiches, and so continued for 5 or 6 days, every day worse in all which time he could neither sleep nor rest up nor downe This Philips is of a

<sup>9</sup> This case is outlined in Cecil L'Estrange *Witchcraft and Demonianism*, op. cit. p. 423.

very good reputation and relations who often come to see him and all that came judged

him to be bewitched which is his own conscience he from the first did believe. By the 5th or 6th day he

was brought as weak that he was not able to go and feeling death he rode with his Brother

-in-law to this Olly and found her reapeing with Captain Davies reapers, where, with much muttering

and relucttancy she was perswaded to say God bless him, which no sooner had she said but Phillips was perfectly whole and walked to -- -- what happened but he

-- -- he was hardly at home, he remained in great torment as ever he was

caused him and his brother i-in-law to go to her asking her why she tormented him

she sayeth he might thanks himselfe for devulgeing his curere and again

after much aversion and muttering She said God bless him and he was immediately well as ever

he was but when he came home he found one of his children in the like condition

as he had been in which made him and his brother in law go again to her and requesting why she

so continually plagued him and desiring her to say God bless his childe, she answering

it was his own fault then instead of blessing his childe cursed him, on which Philips said

he would have some of her blood, and after long struggling and much fairer words she putt forth

her hand and bid him to do his worst, he should have no blood of hers, he took a naile out of his pocket and thrust it thrice in the same orifice through the flesh which is between

the thumb and forefinger and,with much squessing forced an inconsiderable drop

out which she perseaving said, get thee gone before thou wilt be at home thy

childe will be well which accordingly happened. An other witness said that as she sat by

the door looking on her -- ducks -- is come only home (?) -- -- pools walking

Olly past by and asked whose ducks they were and the woman replied -- hers

Olly said ye will have little good of them and Olly had not gone much about 100 yards off but

7 (or some) of the ducks came out of the water and would not stand but turned on their back and so died.

(The document is difficult to read at the base of Page 1 but the gist of the information follows)

Another witness was building a new furze rick and Olly saw it when she was passing by. She said " ha yonder is a furs reek where never was one before but before tomorrow twill be upside down " and so it transpired.

Another witness stated " that one night after she had bolted her door ... and her husband her children and herself had gone to bed that Olly came to her bed wakened her.... and demanded salt and bread. A long struggle ensued in which Olly grabbed the woman so hard and squeezed her in the small of her back that she thought she would lose her breath. Another witness told

--- --- -- that as he was sowing of  
oates Olly passed by and asked for some oates, he replying that he had none -- nay  
she sayeth

ye have not -- -- in the ditch as ye will give me but time which she went away muttering  
-- -- he should resulting in a few weeks time after he lost sixteen of his cattle which  
died

strangely and all saw it judged --- Another woman -- that as she satt by her  
husband's corpse before he was interred, Olly came through all the company to her  
openly if she had given her a quarter of the goose which she had killed last Christmas  
tide her

husband should have been living and working with his fellow labourers, this man stood  
in such dread of Olly that when his fellow workmen at Jeffreson say there comes Olly  
he would fall

atrembling all over. Another --  
told that he had bought a cow on a day in the month of  
July .....

He was sure that Olly had cursed the cow

He said that the cow refused to eat even when it had been offered water and fresh  
pasture and

all surrounds it seemed flies began to gather around the cow on the next day and, by  
the thrid day, maggots

were around her nostrils, ears, eyes and udder and at last all flies covered the animal  
The owner took the cow to a "high way which Olly much frequented " and, when she  
came " muttering and cursing being her custom to bless his cow and she came to the  
cow she said ha ye might always give some salt and bread to all such suspected  
(being her words I say) people as I am and all ye have will be her wish , but now is  
late for the cow will be dead by this time tomorrow which ... (accordingly?) came to  
pass.

John Edwards states at the end of his letter that he has recounted the cases "to the best  
of my remembrance they with such strong supperstition but which I have heard said  
and they sworn for myself examined, her tricks before tryal are nothing to what she  
have since done, by reports..." John Edwards has then crossed out eight lines so  
heavily that these cannot be transcribed.

Olly Powell:<sup>10</sup> The letter in which the information about her trial was contained was dated  
February 1693/4 so the actual trial date could have occurred in 1692 or 1693 or 1694.  
The outcome of the trial was known as Olly Powell survived her accusations. John

<sup>10</sup> Bodleian Library MS: Ashmole1815 f.r-v. Letter written in February 1693/4 by John Edwards,  
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August 1694( NLW, Great Sessions 4/800/3); OR September 1694 (NLW, Great Sessions 4/800/4).

360.

Edwards states in his letter that he has recounted the cases "*to the best of my remembrance they with such strong supperstition but which I have heard said and they sworn for myself examined, her tricks before tryal are nothing to what she have since done, by reports...*" <sup>11</sup> John Edwards has then crossed out eight lines so heavily that these cannot be transcribed. The witness statements against Oly Powell were detailed, Edwards elaborates on some but declared that there were fourteen witnesses against her.

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<sup>11</sup> Letter of John Edwards, p.2 (the pages are unnumbered).

**Appendix III****Charm Papers**

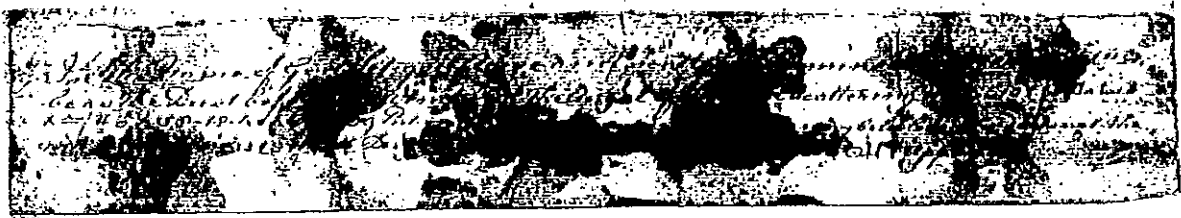
Charm papers are held in the collections of the National Library of Wales and the Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagan's near Cardiff and these were donated by family members who had kept them over generations as the charms were usually passed down through families and remained undestroyed because, as long as the family bloodline was true, the charm continued to protect all those who were direct descendants of the original purchaser. It was believed that the charms should not and could not be destroyed as intentional destruction may have harmed those the charm was intended to protect. The efficacy of the charm remained for as long as the paper on which the charm was written remained intact.

In the Trovarth and Coed Coch Deeds there is an almost illegible charm for the protection of all the oxen, beasts and cows of David ap Rees ap Jankyn. The charm was to be placed over the door of the cattle shelter as the paper was endorsed with directive words "Supra ostium." The charm begins with the words "In nomine Dei + patris+ et filii + et spiritus sancti" and contains many references to the Trinity in various languages: Messias, Sotho, unigenitus, primogenitus, and salvator. The charm was from the late fifteenth century and was located amongst all the deeds and papers relating to Trovarth and Coed Coch and was handed down to the family from the fifteenth century. Jankyn is now Jenkin or Jenkins.

Two charm papers were found amongst the papers of Mrs. Mary Jones of Rhosgall and the details were provided by the Rev. T.D. James, the Rector of Llanerfyl. He states "In one of her private drawers we found a small round bottle, about the length and thickness of my finger. It was corked and sealed. We saw that it contained two rolls of paper. We tried to get them out, but they were fitted so tightly that we had to break the bottle." The charms were specifically for William Jones, Mary's husband, of Rhosgall who had died in 1890 aged 71. The second charm was made for William's father, Edward Jones, who had lived and died at Dolgead in the parish of Llanfair. Edward Jones' charm was written in English and concerns the protection of "my horses cows calves pigs sheeps and every living creature that I possess from the power of all evil men women spinsters or wizards or hardness of heart and this I will trust thou will do by the same power as thou didst cause the blind to see the lame to walk and they that were possessed with unclean spirits to be in their own minds." William's charm is written in Latin and seeks to "defend me William Jones from present past and future ills, both external and internal." The charm papers for the Jones family concerned two generations. If William Jones died in 1890 at about 71 years of age, that indicates that he was born circa 1819 which places his father Edward Jones and the charm paper created for him in the late 1700s.

Other charm papers have been found at Ty Gwyn, Fron-isaf, Chirk, (undated) and another at Nantyr, Glyn Ceiriog which is thought to have been written in the early

nineteenth century. The formula used in all the charms was generally the same: a mixture of biblical verses, some base Latin and other languages and various hieroglyphics. These are not easy to transcribe and it is not clear that they were meant to make sense to the layman. Transcribing most of the charm paper examples cited is difficult, mostly because they are multilingual and an amalgamation of seemingly unconnected words and concepts. As the purchasers were often illiterate, the meaning was not important; actual possession was the important aspect for the peace of mind and security of protection that the purchaser required.



*Charm for Ty Gwyn, Fron-isaf, Chirk.*

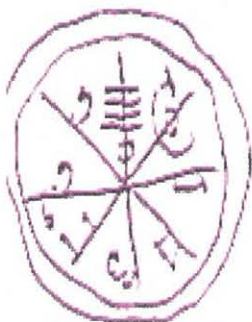
In the Name of God I begod Anse and scatter These mine Enemies let Them  
 Be as the Dust before the Wind and the Angel of the Lord scattering Them 10/2 Dal 11  
 MS/408 150-18-4 Sub 75. 39 Put on the whole armour of god that we may be able to stand against the  
 wiles of the Devil 118 118 1/2 Beignraie Illun yued Shiraent Iny raled 044 Appogayson

*Transcription of the Ty Gwyn, Fron-isaf, Chirk charm.*

A much longer charm paper was donated to the Museum of Welsh Life in 1991 by relatives of a lady who died in 1989 in her 102nd year. The lady was the widow of John David Griffiths and he was the gentleman who had purchased the charm paper for the protection of his farm *Cefnerglodd* at Tallesin in Cardiganshire. John David Griffiths and his wife took the lease of the farm in 1915 and were able to purchase the farm in 1920 although the actual date when the charm was both written and purchased is not known.

*Charm for Cefnerglodd, Tallesin, Cardiganshire.*





Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a form of shorthand or a specific dialect. It appears to be a title or a short passage related to the diagram.

A vertical column of handwritten text on the right side of the page, possibly a list or a set of instructions.

Main body of handwritten text in a cursive script, arranged in several lines. The text is dense and appears to be a detailed explanation or a set of instructions related to the diagram.

The charm was thought to have been written by one of the Llangurig-Ponterwyd wise men or *dyn hysbys* as a member of the family remembered that John David Griffiths had mentioned a Davies the Conjuror of Y Fagwyr Fawr. Research carried out by members of the Museum indicated that the charm was the work of a well known conjuror in the district, Edward Davies of Y Fagwyr Fawr in Ponterwyd. The charm has been transcribed and reads:

*In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost amen xxx and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ his redeemer and saviour the..... true John David Griffiths and his wife, Mrs. Griffiths, Cefnerglodd, to relieve his cows, calves, milk and butter cattle of all ages, mares, suckers and horses of all ages, yews, lambes, sheep of all ages, piges, fowls and everything that is under his possession and his person from all witchcraft and all evil diseases amen xxx Gaspar..... thus(?) Melchior Balthazar, Auranus (2 Maccabees, iv, 40?) nectria(?) ..... salvitur(?).....Christ.....caduca (?) amen xxx medicato(?) univers.....anno meoram..... .... Sar ah adversus(?)..... ..... amen xxx..... .. virb-um bonum..... cuncta.... ..... domino..... .. Omina .... .. linga malignua... .. Lord Jesus Christ .....salvatur... ..... the possessions of John David Griffiths and his wife and to relieve his cows, calves, milk and butter catell of all ages, yews, lambes, sheep of all ages, piges, fowls and everything that is under his possession from all witchcraft and all evil men or women or spirits or wizards or words of mouth amen xxx and thus I will join to them the Lord Jesus Christ thy redeemer and saviour from witchcraft amen xxx and this I trust in Jesus Christ my redeemer and saviour he will relieve /help me (heiroglyphics) John David Griffiths and his wife to reside at Cefnerglodd farm and to relieve his cows, calves, milk butter cattle of all ages mares suckers horses of all ages yews lambes sheep of all ages piges fowls and everything that is under his possession on this farm from all witchcraft by the same power as he did cause the blind to see the lame to walk and the dum to talk and that thou sendest with unclean spirits as whilt Jehovah amen xxx the witch confused them about but the Lord will destroy them all pater pater pater master master did crie ? Maria creed lord of all man x au x adanaxv tinamainmaTon amen xxx and in the name of the holy trinity and of humble heart it pre serve all above named from all evil diseases Whatsoever amen x*

Charm papers were an extremely important aspect of the communal antidote to



*[Handwritten text in English and Latin, including a list of names and a circular diagram with a cross and numbers.]*

The name of the first part of the day of the week is Christ. The name  
 of the second part of the day is the Holy Spirit. The name of the third part  
 of the day is the Virgin Mary. The name of the fourth part of the day is  
 the Holy Child. The name of the fifth part of the day is the Holy  
 Ghost. The name of the sixth part of the day is the Holy Church. The name  
 of the seventh part of the day is the Holy Communion. The name of the  
 eighth part of the day is the Holy Sacrament. The name of the ninth part  
 of the day is the Holy Eucharist. The name of the tenth part of the day is  
 the Holy Mass. The name of the eleventh part of the day is the Holy  
 Sacrifice. The name of the twelfth part of the day is the Holy Offering.  
 The name of the thirteenth part of the day is the Holy Feast. The name  
 of the fourteenth part of the day is the Holy Festival. The name of the  
 fifteenth part of the day is the Holy Solemnity. The name of the sixteenth  
 part of the day is the Holy Season. The name of the seventeenth part of  
 the day is the Holy Time. The name of the eighteenth part of the day is  
 the Holy Hour. The name of the nineteenth part of the day is the Holy  
 Minute. The name of the twentieth part of the day is the Holy Second.  
 The name of the twenty-first part of the day is the Holy Third. The name  
 of the twenty-second part of the day is the Holy Fourth. The name of the  
 twenty-third part of the day is the Holy Fifth. The name of the twenty-  
 fourth part of the day is the Holy Sixth. The name of the twenty-fifth  
 part of the day is the Holy Seventh. The name of the twenty-sixth part  
 of the day is the Holy Eighth. The name of the twenty-seventh part of  
 the day is the Holy Ninth. The name of the twenty-eighth part of the day  
 is the Holy Tenth. The name of the twenty-ninth part of the day is the  
 Holy Eleventh. The name of the thirtieth part of the day is the Holy  
 Twelfth.

A circular diagram with a cross inside, containing numbers 1 through 12.

NLW MS 11229B NO. 1 and 2

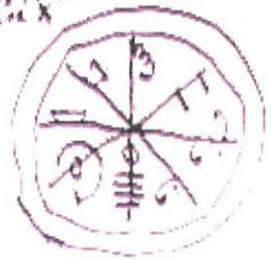
Charm papers came from all areas of Wales and the existence of a charm paper for Radnor was noted by Maxwell Fraser in 1952. "There is an actual charm, dating from 1700, hanging in Cascomb (Casgob) Church, Radnorshire, which is a typical incantation and invocation, jumbled together to form an acrostic on the word Abracadabra." Gregory notes further information about the charm, locating it on the north wall of the nave. The parchment was dug up in the churchyard and was thought to have been created to drive out the evil spirits from which Elizabeth Lloyd, a parishoner, was suffering. A mixture of Christianity and paganism, the parchment was written in English and dog Latin with Bible quotes and some phrases lifted directly from the writings of Dr. John Dee whose family home at Nant-y-groes was less than two miles from Casgob. As recently as 1987, a charm paper in a bottle was located in Wales. A charm, written on a piece of paper and placed in a nineteenth century glass bottle, was found inside a wall which some men were demolishing on the outskirts of Welshpool.

Locating where all the charms originated can be difficult and the two following charms are

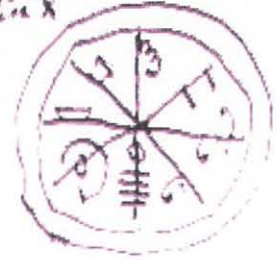
thought to be from Montgomeryshire.

*[Faint, mostly illegible handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]*

\* 4 D \* 4 R \* 4 R  
 + P \* 4 + D \* 4 D \* 4 R \* 4 R  
 Long Lat Lat Lat



*[Faint, mostly illegible handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. Some words like "Llandiloes" and "Montgomeryshire" are partially visible.]*



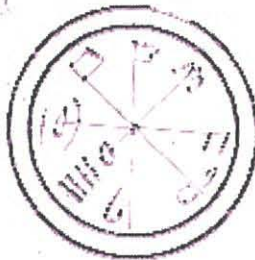
NLW 11229B No.4

Both the charms pictured above were for the protection of the purchaser against witchcraft and it is thought that the charm papers were originally from the Llandiloes area of Montgomeryshire.

Considerably more detail accompanied the charm papers pictured below which were created specifically for the protection of Thomas and Margaret Richards although it is not known where Thomas and Margaret Richards lived or where the items and the property they wished to protect was located.

*[Faint, mostly illegible handwritten text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]*

*[Handwritten notes and symbols, including a large 'X' and various numbers and letters.]*



NLW MS 9140

NLW MS 9140A





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