

Notes from Local Interest Group 25th January 2018

Present: Maureen Lloyd (ML), Avryl Lloyd, Wendy & Dainis Ozols, Sylvia Illingsworth, Iris Lloyd, Margaret & John Price, Jenny Francis, Jenny Weatherburn, John & Evelyn Bally, Chris & Jeremy Rose, Richard Thomas, Barbara Lloyd.

Apologies: Roy Lloyd, Peter and Pauline Spode

ML welcomed everyone and said that the subject of the session would be **Who was Pain?**

ML said that Pain had given his name to the castle and the village, so surely he must have been an important person. But, who was he and where did he come from?

ML began by showing us a number of maps of Britain and Wales to set the scene. The first map showed the main peoples who lived in Britain before the Romans. Wales was then home to at least five native tribes, including the Deceangli in the NE, the Ordovices in the NW, the Demetae in the SW, the Silures in the SE and the Cornovii in the central borderlands. At this time, Cymry covered a large part of what is now Great Britain. After the Romans left, in 410 AD, what is now Radnorshire was known as Rhwng Gwy a Hafren - the land between the Wye and the Severn. (Radnorshire did not come into being until 1542.) In the 8th century, Offa's Dyke was built separating Wales from England, with a ditch on the Welsh side and the bank on the English side. It was 177 miles long and up to 20m wide and 2.4m high. Offa was the Anglo Saxon King of Mercia from 757 to 796. By the 9th century, most of Wales was united under Rhodri the Great, King of Gwynedd. He was born in 820 AD and he inherited Gwynedd in 844 and died in 873. We next looked at a map from the 10th century which showed Rhwng Gwy a Hafren once more; this area is sometimes included in Powys and sometimes not on maps dating from this and earlier periods.

ML then showed us a map of the Cantrefs and Commotes of Rhwng Gwy a Hafren, on which is marked an area called Elfael, which more or less corresponds to present day south Radnorshire. Within this area were five divisions: Radnor/Llythyfnwg; Uwch Mynydd (above the hill); Aberedw; Is Mynydd (below the hill); and, Boughrood and Trewern. The King of Rhwng Gwy a Hafren was Elystan Glodrydd, also called Æthelstan the Famous or Renowned. Elystan, about whom very little is known and who died in 1010, founded the fifth royal tribe of Wales and he and his descendants ruled Rhwng Gwy a Hafren.

In 1066, Britain was conquered by William of Normandy, William I of England (also known as William the Conqueror). He reigned from 1066 to 1087 and when he died his eldest son, Robert Curthose, became Duke of Normandy. His third and favourite son, William Rufus, became King of England (William II). Before William I died, he had distributed lands in England to Ralph Tosny (in recognition of the part he had played in the Norman Conquest of 1066), as well as to his brother Robert Tosny and their brother-in-law William FitzOsbern. The latter later became earl of Hereford. The Tosnys also had land in Normandy, together with three castles at Tosny, Conches and Nogent le Roi. Ralph Tosny was made Lord of Clifford Castle in 1075 in return for his loyalty to the King and the part he had played in the Battle of Hastings.

In 1093, Elfael was taken by the Normans. The Marcher Lords of Herefordshire attacked the middle of Wales after the defeat and death of Rhys ap Tewdwr of Deheubarth at the Battle of Brecon in April of that year. During this advance into Wales, Ralph Tosny extended his lands around Clifford by

invading Elfael. It seems that he (with help from the Baskervilles) advanced up the Wye valley towards Glasbury and then went northwards to Aberedw, (it seems likely that they built the first Aberedw Castle) and then inland to Colwyn, where he built a castle, Glan Edw, in Elfael Uwch Mynydd. (Colwyn Castle is near Hundred House and is one of the earliest castles in this area. It did not last for long and was later rebuilt on a different site in 1144.

Ralph went back to France as war had returned to the country in 1097 and 1098. When he died in 1102, his son, also called Ralph, inherited and he was a supporter of Henry I. Henry I had inherited the English throne from his brother, William II, who died in 1100. Ralph Tosny (the younger) witnessed charters for the King at Romsey in 1110 and Rouen in 1119 and 1120. One of his companions at Rouen in June 1119 was Pain FitzJohn. Ralph Tosny died in 1126. On his death, his son Roger inherited his estates and later he married one of Henry I's granddaughters. However, when Stephen became King in 1135, Roger rebelled and was imprisoned in Normandy. He was later released, in 1137, and was eventually reconciled with his King. Roger died in 1157.

Pain FitzJohn was one of Henry I's most trusted nobles. Pain was born c. 1086, and was the son of John FitzRichard, a tenant-in-chief who is mentioned in the Domesday Book. He was not of high birth, rather he was a self-made man. He and his brother, Eustace, frequently attended the royal court. Pain FitzJohn of Weobley and Ludlow became the most powerful lord in Shropshire and Herefordshire and was sheriff of both counties. As a royal justice, he heard legal cases for the King throughout much of western England. He was married to Sybil Talbot, who was part of the de Lacy family. Walter de Lacy had come to England with William the Conqueror and had been given lands in Herefordshire and Shropshire by the King. His son, Roger, was involved in the rebellions against William II in 1088 and, in 1095, he was implicated in a conspiracy against the King and was banished. His lands were confiscated and passed to Pain through his wife.

At some time, Pain acquired Elfael from the Tosny family (they were preoccupied with their lands in Normandy and there is no record of Tosny rule in Elfael after the death of Ralph in 1126). From 1126, it appears that Pain was involved in "ruling" Elfael and it is probable that some time during the late 1120s Painscastle was built by him. Being "south of the hill" it may have been to compliment Colwyn Castle which had been built to the "north of the hill". It was probably a wooden castle.

Apart from Eustace, Pain had other siblings: William probably later held Harptree in Somerset; Alice who became Abbess of Barking Abbey; and, Agnes who was the wife of Roger de Valognes.

When Henry I died, he named his daughter, Matilda, as his successor; she was his only surviving legitimate child. However, it was her cousin, Stephen, who succeeded to the throne (his Mother was a daughter of William I). Pain was one of Stephen's early supporters during the period of civil war which followed Henry's death and during which the succession was decided. He was certainly at Stephen's first court in December 1135. In fact, Stephen arranged the marriage of Pain's elder daughter, Cecily, to Miles of Gloucester's son, Roger (later 2nd Earl of Hereford and Lord of Brecon).

Pain FitzJohn died on 10th July, 1137, in an ambush whilst he was pursuing some of Stephen's Welsh vassals near Carmarthen, in Deheubarth. He was struck through the head by a javelin. He was buried at Gloucester Abbey (now the cathedral). After his death, it seems likely that Painscastle was retaken by the Welsh.

Apart from Painscastle, it seems that Pain also gave his name to a town in Gloucestershire – Painswick. He had holdings in the county – the old de Lacy estate – but he did not found the town and so it is a mystery as to why it took his name.

At a later date, the castle's name was changed to Maud's Castle, and then, some time later, back to Painscastle. We will be looking at the later history in a future meeting.

ML said that Paul Remfry is writing a series of books about this period of history. The second book includes a description of the Battle of Painscastle and this is well worth reading. Another useful publication is a book called "Castles of Radnorshire".

We all thanked ML for her hard work in researching the story of Pain and for putting together such an interesting and illuminating presentation.

ML told us that the next few meetings are as follows:

February 22nd – The History of Aviation in Radnorshire by Philip Jones from the Radnorshire Museum in Llandrindod.

March 29th – The de Winton Family by Ken Jones.

April 26th – Hergest Camp, Kington by Mari Fforde.

The meeting ended with refreshments, kindly made as usual by Avryl Lloyd.