Carmarthenshire & Beyond: Studies in History and Archaeology in Memory of Terry James

Edited by
HEATHER JAMES & PATRICIA MOORE

with the assistance of the David Rees bequest for the preparation of maps and plans

CARMARTHENSHERE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
2009
Cover illustration
Watercolour of Carmarthen Quay, 1899, by Benjamin Archibald Lewis.
(Collection: Carmarthenshire County Museum. Copyright: the artist's estate).

Back cover
Air photograph of Pen-y-Gaer hillfort, Llanybydder, by Terry James.
Toponymy and Land-use in the Uplands of the Doethi Valley (Cardiganshire)

Iwan Wmffre

This short piece attempts to evaluate the particulars of the traditional agricultural economy of the central Welsh uplands, illustrated by the case of the Doethi valley in Cardiganshire. Use is made of Early Modern documentation relating to the area as well as to oral information collected from the last mountain shepherds.

BACKGROUND

The mountainous spine of central Wales constitutes the widest expanse of open moorland in Britain south of Scotland and is situated on the borders of the counties of Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Breconshire, Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire. Upon being taken to see what had been described to him as ‘mountains’ in the 1960s, a visiting Italian geographer exclaimed ‘Tundra!’ – which anecdote is a salutary reminder that not all mountains conform to the schoolbook categories of towering pyramidal peaks. Trees hardly grow above the 300m contour and the coincidence of both these characteristics constitutes a rough-and-ready guide to the traditional Welsh binary distinction between mynydd (mountain) and llawer gwlad (literally ‘floor of the country’, that is to say, lowland).

Pumlumon, its highest point at 752m, dominates the northern part of this area, but thence southwards the topography takes the appearance of a dissected plateau whose rounded summits lie at between 400–600m. The only exception is Drygarn-fawr in Breconshire which reaches 645m. North of Drygarn-fawr, the plateau is dissected by waters running into the Elan river whereas the derived name of the area Elenydd. West of Drygarn-fawr, the plateau is dissected by waters running into the Tywi river and this is where the Doethi river is situated.

Contrary to the mountains of northern Wales and even to the Brecon Beacons to the south, these central Welsh uplands are characterised by a succession of rounded hills rather than by a profusion of pointed peaks. It is this fact which seems to lie behind the earliest known name of these uplands Cymyndwyl ‘round mountain’ (only attested as an earlier alias of Iforestregob ‘the bishop’s forest’ near Ystradffyn and in a thirteenth-century reference to the mountains near Garn-gron, Blaen Caron). The later traditional name of these mountains – Y Mynydd-mawr ‘the great mountain’ – was applied partly due to the extensiveness of the upland and partly to distinguish it from the much smaller Mynydd-bach west of it in Cardiganshire. Colloquially, however, the commonest appellation was simply Y Mynydd and its inhabitants were distinguished as Pobl y Mynydd ‘the inhabitants of the mountain’.

The mountain was a vast open stretch of land dominated by moorland grasses on slopes and wetland vegetation on flats and bottoms. Rocky outcrops show themselves in a few areas most especially on steep valley sides. The widespread planting of dense uniform conifer forests (W. coed gleision ‘evergreen trees’) since the 1930s has radically changed the appearance of the land which has a less uniform look than it hitherto possessed.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHANGE

In the Doethi watershed, above its junction with the Pysgortwr, over a period running from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, there seems to have been some twenty-eight inhabited houses. By 1841 there were only some sixteen inhabited houses attested with a standing population of sixty-two. The number of inhabited houses declined to five by 1901 with a corre-
The decline continued throughout the twentieth century and the last inhabited house, Tyncornel, was abandoned in the 1950s. W. J. Lewis, in his otherwise exemplary Cardiganshire Historical Atlas, perpetrated a grave error in describing the houses of the Doetheic and neighbouring valleys as *tai-unos* ‘one-night (squatter) houses’, typical of the upland fringes of Cardiganshire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many, if not most, of the Doetheic houses were long-standing independent agricultural holdings probably mediaeval in origin. The earliest attestations are Cnwcgwyn 1599, Nantgwyddly 1631, Brobwall, Maesbewws, Tyncornel 1653, Doethiu-fach, Nantwiwan 1660, Dinas 1679, Gurnos 1684 (it should be borne in mind that deeds did not exist in Cardiganshire prior to 1536).

The language of the inhabitants throughout this period was exclusively Welsh. Of the 1901 total of twenty-five, fourteen were Welsh monoglots (Maesbewws, Tyncornel, Coli in the upper part of the valley), whilst eleven also had English as well as Welsh (Blaendothi, Troedhrhwymer), with one of the enumerated persons in Troedhrwymer being a relation usually resident in Cheltenham. The area was not well served by any ecclesiastical institution. The chapel or oratory that gave its name to Maesbewws was traditionally held to have fallen in ruin around 1716 and having been dedicated to the ancient Welsh saint Celynnin. Whatever credence can be given to these traditions, it is clear that *betws* is a mediaeval term for chapel. In 1821 a non-conformist (Methodist Calvinistic) chapel was erected in the adjoining Camddwr valley and named Soar-y-mynydd. This also acted as the local school until 1947 when the school was discontinued. The circulating schools of Griffith Jones had been active in the Doetheic valley in the late eighteenth century and, despite the reputed primitive lifestyle of *Pobl y Mynydd*, there is no doubt that they were in regular contact with their fellow Welsh of the lowlands, not least the seasonal wool-pickers and shearmen and the drovers who guided their flocks eastwards from Llanddewi Brefi to the present-day Llanwrtyd Wells (then named Pont Rhyd-y-fere).

**PLACE-_NAMES**

I did not come across many members of the original families of the Doetheic valley, but my enquiries with the shepherds of Llethyr, Nantllwyd (of the adjoining Pysgotwr and Camddwr valleys) and of Troedhrhwymer supplied me with a respectable collection of names which demonstrated that a great many names were never collected by the Ordnance Survey (OS) mapmakers at the end of the last century. This can be illustrated clearly taking as example the mountainland between the Doetheic and Pysgotwr rivers which belonged to Troedhrhwymer and the annexed holding of Cnwcbeithinog. Maps give us thirteen names (five from pre-OS maps and eight from OS maps), but an interview with Jim Lewis of Troedhrhwymer in the 1990s harvested at least twenty-seven further names. These were Bryndyfran, Carreg Bwchgywnt, Carreg Lletyregob, Cnepyngors, Cneyn Tirida, Craig-yr-oleibfa, Craig Troedhrhwymer, Esgairbedd, Esgairborfa, Esgair Ffloguellau, Esgair Garregwen, Esgair Rhihillog, Gribinlwyd, Lletiroed, Llynillwyn, Pwll-y-faelfaith, Pylaunam, Talencnwc, Hendre-boeth (r), Penrhwymer (r), Dyfran (hn), Ffostegan (hn), Nantgelynwen (hn), Nant Hendre-boeth (hn), Nantmawd (hn), Pantclunmynydd, Pomprenwish. The last two were not included in PNCards 2004 because of some uncertainties which I had hoped to clear with Jim Lewis in a subsequent interview, but he died not long afterwards and consequently I was unable to verify anything more. The location of *Pantclunmynydd* at SN 763516 was clear enough, but at the time I was somewhat suspicious concerning its pronunciation (*moenr* rather than *mwyynr*), a suspicion to which I now attach less importance. I was unable to give exact grid co-ordinates for the location of *Pomprenwish* from the map, in grid SN 7649, but its position could be easily enough ascertained from an actual inspection of the area as Jim had said it lay directly below Talencnwc and referred to a single stone which bridged Nantecnwc. There were some other names *Castell and Pant-y-gower* somewhere in SN 7649, but I am unable to give any more precise location. Figure 1 contrasts the density of place-names of this area from the maps and those from the oral tradition.

Investigations with my informant established that *Cefn Cnwcbeithinog* was an umbrella term for a stretch of upland which covered and included at least three distinct ridges. Investigations also established that the place-name *Cors Pwllic* had been completely misplaced on OS maps, some 2km from its traditional location. It is evident that the surveying carried out by the OS in the 1880s and 1890s for the 6-inch maps was constrained by factors of time and resources and thus did not always assemble a representative sample of the most important place-names, let alone the majority of names that were then in use. The physical survey could be
carried out consistently, whereas the collection of local names depended upon the availability of local informants and there must have been many cases where the shepherds most suited to give toponymic information were at the time of the survey otherwise occupied in driving, selling livestock or helping neighbours in another location. One of the clearest illustrations of the failure of the OS survey in the uplands north of the Doethie valley is the example of Esgairwen, the crowning height of the extensive civil-parish of Caron Uwch-Clawdd at 548m, which was never named on OS maps even though it was still mentioned, albeit no location given, in the 1990s in the local newspaper, the Cambrian News, at a period when the status of commonland was being redefined.

The superficially ‘featureless’ traditional landscape of these uplands (before afforestation) was in fact well known to the men who lived there and who looked after livestock and who had names for each hill, stream and feature of the landscape. These names were developed orally before maps of these districts were ever made and functioned as markers to convey geographical location over a wide expanse of land (to reach a sick or lost creature or person for example). Erwyd Howells’ relates an amusing illustration given him at the mountain farm Cefnbrwyn (Llangurig, Montgomeryshire) that if one of the members of the family were to leave their cap on their mountain they could direct any other member to the place and retrieve it simply with reference to the place-names on the open upland. Named places also defined boundaries on the open uplands.

Welsh upland place-names are not so different from those of the lowlands except that they were used to name otherwise unbounded pieces of land. This fact seems to make for a greater awareness of, and interest in, place-names among shepherds than among farmers in the enclosed lowlands and indeed sometimes (credible) reasons were given by upland informants for the names. The impressive repertory of place-names however among male inhabitants of the uplands should not be exaggerated relative to the lowlands. It was not that uncommon among the lowland farmers and farm-workers I interviewed to know not only the names of all the fields on the farm they were attached to, but also those of the neighbouring farms where they had worked co-operatively, which also adds up to a considerable sum of toponymic knowledge.

UPLAND LAND-HOLDING
The Welsh uplands were exploited by the inhabitants and did not constitute wasteland in the strict sense of the term and even though the land was divided into
exclusive holdings, the legal landholding status of much of the uplands was different from that of the lowlands. Until 1888 most of the Doethi’e valley in the parish and lordship of Llanddewi Brefi had commonland status, excepting those patches of enclosed land surrounding dwellings which were held as freehold and which were like unto island oases surrounded by rough mountain pasture. The Llanddewi Brefi parliamentary enclosure act of 1888 apportioned this common mountain pasture as freehold to particular dwellings and so ended the separate legal status of the upland as commonland, which now became unenclosed freehold (only in some areas of upland, usually nearer the lowland boundary to the west was wire fencing erected to replace formerly open boundaries). However, the paradoxical fact is that the upland commonland was already divided between various dwellings prior to 1888 and so was not ‘common’ in the generally understood sense of the word. Prior to 1888, most dwellings were surrounded by a small area of enclosed freehold lands (some of which was cultivated) and abutted to an adjoining sheepwalk which was deemed commonland though in practice it belonged just as much to the dwelling as did the freehold lands. The enclosed freehold land and the appertaining sheepwalks of the Doethi’e valley in the mid nineteenth century are shown on Figure 2 (based mainly on the tithe map and the later enclosure maps).

The legal definition of what constitutes commonland is discussed at length by Gadsden. There is an obvious discrepancy between the ‘classic’ kind of commonland that prevailed over the lowlands of southern England, which were large stretches of cultivated openfields held in common by a ‘manorially’ organised village, and the predominant type of commonland in Wales, the uncultivated expanses of rough upland pasture. Villages – on the scale found throughout the English lowlands – were relatively rare in Wales and confined mainly to the anglicised lowland fringes of the country. Nevertheless, even within Welsh Wales a useful distinction can be drawn between lowland commonland and the upland commonland. The examples of lowland commonland in Cardiganshire tend to be the result of the subdivision of a larger mediæval unit of landholding, whereby a piece of uncultivated rough ground, usually at one extremity of its bounds, continued to be deemed common for the purposes of thatch, turf and pasture to those farming units which had subdivided from the parent unit. Various termed cyfr, iox-cyel, cyffredin, cumins, comins in Welsh, these types of commonland are technically termed ‘appurtenant common’ as it is a right confined to a restricted number of landholding units in a lordship as opposed to an ‘appendant common’ whose rights are open to every

Fig. 2: Doethi’e valley sheepwalks and ancient enclosures in the nineteenth century.

Fig. 2 (based mainly on the tithe map and the later enclosure maps).
landholding unit in a particular lordship. On the other hand, the upland commonland in Cardiganshire, being the uncultivated ‘wasteland’ of a lordship rather than being the result of the subdivision of mediaeval farming units, can be usefully termed ‘seignorial common’. But, as we saw in the case of the Doethie valley, in the nineteenth century the upland commonland was not shared between every landholding unit in the lordship of Llanddewi Breifi (appendant), or shared between a restricted number of landholding units (appurtenant), but was separately and exclusively divided between a restricted number of landholding units exactly as if they were exclusive freeholds. The commonland status of the sheepwalks of the Doethie valley was probably due both to a historical memory of seigniorial rights and to the continuing rights of the lord of Llanddewi Breifi (the Bishop of Saint Davids) to mineral and hunting rights and the appendent rights of turbaries, thatch and wool-picking enjoyed by the inhabitants of the lordship.

THE IDIOSYNCRACY OF FFORESTREGOB’S STATUS

The lands of Cwneithinog (later Troeddhriwymwymer) and Henfaes (later Troeddhriwruddwen) were two of the four constituent parts of the mediaeval Fforestregob ‘the bishop’s hunting-reserve’ and up to the nineteenth century were lands still directly held by the bishop, as opposed to the other mountain landholders who were tenants of the bishop’s lordship. Like other mountain farms, these four holdings comprised only a small area of ancient enclosed land, most of their area was open upland. However, when enclosure was considered in the late nineteenth century, in contrast to the rest of the Llanddewi Breifi mountain, the open upland attached to the farms in Fforestregob were also accounted to constitute freehold land as much as the enclosed land. It is likely that since the Bishop was both freeholder and lord of the land, the common rights to the upland appendant to his freeholds were usually extinguished according to English legal practice. Nevertheless, this had all the appearance of a legal sleight of hand allowing the bishop to avoid payment to secure his part of the mountain commonland which was being enclosed (in contrast to the payments asked of all other owners of sheepwalk rights). Documents preserved in the Cymerau MSS in the National Library of Wales reveal the discontent at this perceived injustice:

The [Ecclesiastical] Commissioners refuse to allow their sheepwalks to be dealt with under the inclosure of Llanddewi Breifi mountain in a similar way to the sheepwalks of the other owners. (1882 Cymerau MS 177)

... the lands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners on Llanddewi Breifi mountain and the 2000 acres which they added to the 2000 acres originally owned by them which they were allowed to retain under the enclosure Act while other owners of sheepwalks had to disgorge. (1882 Cymerau MS 174)

When the enclosure of Llanddewi Breifi mountain was first mooted at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the status of the Fforestregob was clearly problematical as can be seen from the following extract from an article of 1810 penned by ‘An independent freeholder’ in the Cambrian newspaper:

Question, whether the sheepwalks are to be considered as private property or as waste and common lands, and particularly as to the sheepwalks surrounding Foelallt, and about that part of the lordship called the forest. (Cambrian 10/02/1810)

Since the owners of sheepwalk rights already enjoyed exclusive use of their sheepwalks for grazing – their main economic purpose – the Llanddewi Breifi Enclosure Act of 1888 can be seen more as a money-raising scheme that profited the bishop at the expense of these owners, rather than as an emancipatory act that rid the land of an oppressive seignorial monopoly. To emphasise the argument that the enclosure was in fact needless from the point of view of the exploitation of the land, one need only look at the even more extensive neighbouring uplands of Caron parish which, though never enclosed by parliamentary act, today enjoy a practically identical mode of land-use with the enclosed uplands of Llanddewi Breifi.

THE ORIGIN OF THE DIVISION OF THE OPEN UPLANDS

It seems clear that in pre-Conquest Wales most of the mountain wastes were in the jurisdiction of the comtoes or administrative divisions of the Welsh kingdoms and that the wastes (diffath in mediaeval Welsh, a substantivised adjective meaning ‘desolate’ derived from Latin defectus) belonged to the Welsh rulers. The southern recensions of the Welsh laws (Llyfr Blegywyr) talk of diffeth Brenhin ‘the king’s waste’ as well as pointing unequivocally to his right to decide the use of that land through his officers: Maer a chyghefalu bieu kadw diffeth brenhin. ‘It is the steward and seneschal who administer the king’s waste.’ Charters dating from
Fig. 3: Part of Cwchethinog (later Troedrhiwcymer) one of the four constituent parts of Fforestrogob, a medieval hunting estate of the bishops of St Davids. Air photograph, Jan. 1999, viewed from the north-west, by Terry James, who noted that it was abandoned as a habitation by 1851, replaced by Troedrhiwcymer in the valley to the south. A sheepfold was built over the site of the farmstead, but there are still well-preserved infield and outfield banks, and a palimpsest of cultivation ridges and lazy beds of unknown date. The steep-sided Doethie valley is at the top left; its tributary Nant y Cnch is on the top right.

Fig. 4: The same area viewed from the north-east; air photograph, Jan. 1999, by Terry James. The former farmstead and sheep fold are here viewed from the north-east, showing traces of cultivation of unknown date, undetectable on the ground.
the thirteenth century demonstrate that pre-Conquest Welsh rulers were able to bestow the mountain wastes of whole commotes to Cistercian monasteries such as Ystradflur and Ystradmarchell. The 1202 charter of Rhys Ieuanc ab Gruffudd ab Rhys to Ystradflur is particularly clear:

\[\text{... omnum pasturam de Cantrefmaur et de Cantrefbichan et de quattuor contrades de Kardegan et nominam de Penwedic co molo et eisem terminis quos carta Mailgonis diffinit data prefatis monachis de pastura Pennwedic...} \]
\[\text{... all the pasture of Cantre-mawr and Cantre-bychan and the four cantrefs of Ceredigion, especially that of Penweddig, the mill there and its boundaries which} \]
\[\text{the charter of Maedgwn [Fychan] gave the aforesaid monks because of the pasture of Penweddig’ (1336 Calendar Charter Rolls: 383–84)}\]

That such upland wastes were considered the prerogative of a ruler (especially by the rulers themselves), did not rule out these same wastes also being considered the assets of the community of the commote as is suggested by the name *Mynydd-y-wlad* ‘the country’s mountain’, the local designation of the *Ffrest-fawr* uplands of western Breconshire. A strained polarisation between the rights of the community of the commote on the one hand, and that of the native rulers on the other, need not be implied in these different emphases. If the mountain wastes belonged to the commote, there still remained the practical need for an accepted order for its exploitation, and the native rulers were in the likeliest position to regulate this exploitation, if only as arbitrators.

It seems that both the pre-Conquest Welsh rulers and their successors, the post-Conquest lords, were in a position of being able to dispose of the uplands as seemed fit to them. But whether there was an annual or a rather more permanent allocation of grazing rights to various livestock masters and whether the upland was subdivided in a permanent way is difficult to ascertain as we are simply not well enough informed by the dearth of relevant documentation.

A few things nevertheless seem clear in relation to land-use in the uplands in places like the Doethey valley in late mediaeval times. There seems no doubt that the principal economic activity was cattle grazing and indeed the *Black Book of Saint David’s* reckoned the stock-carrying capacity of Ffrestrogob in 1326 as 240 cows.” That there was no mention of sheep in mediaeval times does not preclude their existence on these mountains at the time, but it does indicate that sheep were not then viewed as the main economic ‘cash-crop’ that they later became. And whilst there is no doubt that there were periods of economic dominance of either cattle or sheep on the Welsh mountains, the economic dominance of one creature does not necessarily preclude the existence of the other, though their overall numbers would indubitably be affected.\[15\]

The more abundant documentation for North Wales in late mediaeval times gives us a number of attestations of the Latin term *vaccaria* ‘cattle-breeding station’ or rather ‘cattle ranch’ and there is a record of Dafydd ab Llywelyn, Prince of Gwynedd, bestowing the *vaccaria* of Cwmhesgen near Ganllwyd (Merionethshire) to the monastery of Ystradmarchell (1322 Calendar of Charter Rolls: 440). The importance of this particular reference is that it shows that a much more extensive stretch of open upland could be subdivided into a network of cattle ranches, a pattern which Winchester has found obtained throughout the uplands of northern England, especially the central Pennines, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.\[16\] The Welsh equivalent of Latin *vaccaria* may have been *bюch*, a collective form of *bюch* ‘cow’, originally meaning ‘herd’, a term commonly found in the upland toponymy of central and northern Wales, though intriguingly not in southern Wales or the mountains of central Cardiganshire. There is an almost total lack of documentation concerning the Llanddewi Brefi mountain in mediaeval times so that we cannot even begin to guess as to the extent of any ‘cattle ranch’ in the Doethey valley. We might interpret Ffrestrogob as having constituted one particular cattle ranch, though this is a possibility rather than an established fact. The place-name *Tromda-gwyliton* ‘the ridge of the wild cattle’ for a particularly remote stretch of upland by Drygarn-fawr in Breconshire implies that *da* ‘cattle, livestock’ were most usually looked after by herdsmen.\[17\]

It is known however that cattle are more likely to wander than sheep, a fact which implies that any mediaeval cattle ranch would have been more extensive than the later sheepwalks of the Modern era. The relatively recent sheep-orientated economy of the Welsh uplands is misleading at worst and mostly irrelevant in providing a picture of a mediaeval upland land-use and upland settlement predicated upon the grazing of cattle. As well as deserving a sustained study in itself that has yet to be done, there is no space here to elaborate on features of the cattle-herding economy. I would just like
to say in passing that it seems likely that the pattern of wholesale transhumance of herders and flocks with the seasonal occupation of shielings (W. lluest, hafod) was more a feature of the cattle-herding economy than that of the later sheep-grazing economy, in the care of full-time shepherds who lived in the mountains the year round. The forage requirement of a cow is roughly equivalent to that of six sheep though this traditional equivalence ratio can vary according to many factors, such as the physiology of the local cattle and sheep, the grazing characteristics of any particular area as well as the pattern of livestock production.

The place-name Llethrhafoedlydd 'slope of the summer-dwellings' in the remotest part of the headwaters of the Doethie, about two kilometres from the nearest nineteenth-century inhabitation, might imply the existence in the plural of these seasonal constructions in late mediaeval times (since it can be easily demonstrated that the term hafod had been replaced by lluest by at least the sixteenth century). In the nineteenth century there only existed a ruin, Magwyr Llethrhafoedlydd. However, it is quite feasible that hafodydd here means 'summer grazing lands'. The original meaning of hafod was indeed 'summer-dwelling' but it evolved to encompass the meaning of 'summer grazing land' which necessitated the coining of new terms to define anew the actual summer construction, namely hafoty in northern Wales and lluest in central and southern Wales. The term lluest is particularly enlightening as its basic meaning was 'camp' and often associated in mediaeval literature with accounts of armies on the move. Both the origin of the word and the examples of the collocation lle lluest 'place of encampment' in northern Cardiganshire in the sixteenth and the seventeenth century clearly illustrate the impermanence of such summer dwellings both as regards construction and seasonality. Once again I repeat the particular association of such impermanent summer dwellings with a cattle-herding economy. The term lluest has remained part of the living language in northern Cardiganshire, but as the phenomenon it was based upon has evolved, so has its meaning, so that nowadays it means no more than a 'mountain farm', one inhabited all the year round.21

THE LATER DIVISION OF UPLANDS INTO SHEEPWALKS

Cattle seem to have been the predominant economic livestock kept on the mid-Wales mountains until the eighteenth century, during which century they were replaced by sheep as the principal economic livestock of the uplands. Indeed the English term sheepwalk in itself holds a clue to the origins of the later subdivisions of the uplands found in the mountains of Cardiganshire, an origin that can have no connection with the cattle-herding economy of mediaeval times.

I deliberately emphasised sheepwalk as an English term as the Welsh equivalent libert has a wholly different origin. Without any particular reference to sheep, the term libert is derived from E. liberty, which is more familiar in English as the term for a feudal franchise, or area exempt from a certain jurisdiction, a meaning also known in Welsh. I can only speculate that the evolution of the term to refer to sheepwalks was the result of the subtraction of a stretch of upland commonland or waste from the jurisdictional prerogatives of the lord concerning the grazing of livestock. The earliest attestation of the term in this sense is known to be precisely from the Doethie valley in the early part of the eighteenth century under its English form 'liberty of common'.22 Lewis Morris in 1747 wrote of particular districts or liberties next adjoyning to the freeholds or cottages and 'liberty of grazing belonging to one of the cottages'.23 The range of use of the term libert stretches from the central Cardiganshire mountains to the mountains of central and north-eastern Wales.

The earliest attestation I found for the term sheepwalk in Cardiganshire was sheep walk in the Ystwyth valley in 1760.24 A few years later in 1773 Thomas described the Pumlumon area as 'a country of sheepwalks'.25

Whilst we must generalise, it is well to remember that developments could take a different turn in other areas. The preponderant development in the Cardiganshire uplands was the division of the upland wastes into separate sheepwalks dependent upon a farm. A contrary case was the upland wastes of the lordship of Ysbtyr-Ystradmeurig, locally known as Comins Sbyty ('the commons of Ysbtyr-Ystwyth'), which had a communal shepherd paid for by each of the farmers who sent sheep. Though one might conclude from this that the common was undivided for purposes of ownership, it was made clear to me upon further enquiry that each farm in the parish had its particular sheepwalk or libert on the mountain (Iori Davies, Ysbtyr-Ystwyth, pers. comm.). We shall see below that the term sheepwalk has both agronomic and tenurial connotations, which leads to ambiguity as to what precisely is the legal standing of
sheepwalks in the Ysbyty-Ystrwyth context (for example, did they denote a customary right only or were they wholly alienable as were sheepwalks in most other lordships?). Nevertheless, it is clear that the arrangements for Ysbyty-Ystrwyth mountain constitute a more communal exploitation of the commonland and may well preserve an older system, though this cannot be demonstrated (we may suspect the functional influence of the size and shape of the mountainland concerned, a somewhat smaller and definitely elongated strip of commonland compared to the broad expanses characteristic of the mountain commonland of other lordships).

LEGAL STATUS OF SHEEPWALKS OR LIBERTS

Even if the original subdivision of the commonland uplands into a network of sheepwalks or liberts on seignorial commonland or wastes had initially occurred by concession, as Gadsden remarks:

It is hardly surprising with the passage of time that flock owners often came to look upon the sheepwalk as part of their land in severalty and, if the owner of the waste was an absentee from the area, there was little to counteract this impression. Doubts over ownership seem to have been more prevalent in Wales than elsewhere, probably because some parts of Wales suffered absentee landowners for prolonged periods.\(^{26}\)

In 1747 Lewis Morris noted concerning the lordship of Perfedd in northern Cardiganshire (and it is worth remembering that he was employed in enforcing crown rights in this crown lordship):

There hath been time out of mind, a division of the common into particular districts or liberties next adjoining to the freeholds or cottages which all the shepherds thro' boldness or ignorance claim as their own right, and sometimes chase other people's cattle away.\(^{27}\)

In Llandewi Brefi too, those freeholders who maintained a right to do as they pleased with their libert were quoted as saying `Why the word libert in Latin means free,' to which the Bishop's representatives retorted why should libert be applied to sheepwalks `as distinguished from the freeholds.'\(^{28}\)

Despite the misgivings of lords it is apparent that a libert could be sold (or at least alienated) as can be illustrated in the case of the libert of Llethrllloyd in the lordship of Pennardd or Caron, which though still retaining commonland status to this day has been attached to different local farms. In 1839, in the tithe map, it was noted as a sheepwalk to Trecefnail, but was sold in the 1860s–1870s by the farrier who lived at Blaencroes-fechan to Tŷ-mawr and Allddu (Llano) am darned ogor `for a little fodder', and in turn Tŷ-mawr sold it in the last few years (Sam Jones, Glanrafon-isa, Blaencaran, pers. comm.). Another example was given in 1880 by the defendant of Nantmeirch mountain farm near Ponterwyd in northern Cardiganshire: `. . . sheep walks have often been sold and alienated together with the adjoining farm and separately'.\(^{29}\) A further indication that sheepwalks were treated as freehold are the land prices quoted by George Nicholson in 1813 for Cardiganshire which varied from £3 per acre in Aberystwyth to 15–25 shillings per acre in the hinterland, to 6–9 pennies an acre for sheepwalks.\(^{30}\) This shows that sheepwalks had a recognised worth and suggests that they could be sold as easily as freehold land.

Gadsden informs us that the right of common in gross (i.e. to freely alienate a sheepwalk on its own) is evidenced in northern parts of England and he quotes a legal opinion of 1864:

There are also lands which in ordinary parlance are called common, although the right of pasture over them is in an individual. Such are the small plots of pasture often in the middle of a waste, called sheeheaves, the soil of which may or may not be in the lord, but the pasture is certainly private property, and is leased and sold as such.\(^{31}\)

He further argues that the right of common in gross, in origin a grant to a person and his heirs, was only perceived by legal opinion as being freely alienable following a case in 1840.\(^{32}\)

I would like to elaborate on a distinction that may be important when using the term sheepwalk. From its component etymological parts one would be predisposed to understand the term sheepwalk as an agronomic area of land or a pastoral unit wherein sheep remain put without straying far. This is likely to have been the origin of the term, but in its tenurial usage it often meant a `holding' of commonland which might in some cases correspond to an `agronic sheepwalk' but often tended to be much larger and contain any number of `agronic sheepwalks'. This is where Welsh terminology can be judged to be more precise since the term libert unambiguously referred to the `tenurial sheepwalk'. A common alternative for libert was the term mynydd followed by the farm name to which the land
was appended. The earliest unambiguous attestation I have found for mynydd in this sense is Mynydd Abergwngi, collected by Edward Lhuys in 1700.35 The mountain lands of Abergwngi at the headwaters of the Elan valley, part of the mountain waste of the crown lordship of Myfynnydd, was a vast expanse which can never have approximated a single ‘agronomic sheepwalk’.

The north Cardiganshire shepherd and oral historian Erwyd Howells gives repeated instances of mountain farms’ upland in the Pumlumon area which in the twentieth century were divided into lots (sg. lot) for separate flocks, with mention of ranges of 5–19 subdivisions. In the case of Blaenmerin (Devils Bridge) in 1909 the lots were topographical names – namely Bancmawr, Y Groes, Ffrwd, Bistell, Banc-isa – whereas in other cases some of the lots had proprietary designations such as Clap Defaid John Hugh, Pant Defaid Lisa, with reference to owners who repeatedly summered their sheep.36

The Welsh term for an ‘agronomic sheepwalk’ was arhosfa (pl. arofydd), composed of aros ‘staying’ + -m’af ‘place’. This term is found all over southern Wales, from Pembroke to Glamorganshire under the reduced forms rhosfa, rhysfa and even (b)osfa, (b)ysfa. This has led to it being misunderstood as a compound of rho ‘moor’ by the Welsh dictionaries.37 The complementary distribution ranges of libert and arhosfa (not found in Cardiganshire outside the Tywi waters) is of note, though the mention of ‘a libert in Nantmwawr [Caeo, Carmarthenshire], and a rhosfa to keep the cattle’ when discussing the status of sheepwalks on Llanddewi Brefi mountain implies that the two terms were known and probably still distinct.38 In the same court case a defendant translated arhosfa as ‘abiding place’ in the phrase ‘two banks for an abiding place for sheep and cattle that graze there’ (the two banks, or hills, being Lan-fauw and Brynafaedan on Llanddewi Brefi mountain). The term for an ‘agronomic sheepwalk’ in Merionethshire was cymfyn. It will be noted that the two words for ‘agronomic sheepwalk’ are native Welsh whereas the word for ‘tenurial sheepwalk’ was a loan from English feudal terminology. In northern England and Scotland the technical term which answers to an ‘agronomic sheepwalk’ is heaf (pl. heaves) or heft and the verbal derivative of the latter has given the name to the practice of hefting (i.e. settling) sheep on a particular piece of open land.39 Hefting was known as cyngefio in Merionethshire and ryfio (arofio) on the Epynt mountain of Breconshire where it could be extended to people settling down in a new place Siwd ych c’hin ryfio, which is rather better Welsh than the usual setio lawr (pers. comm.). In the 1930s there were three brothers who employed full-time to heft wethers brought to the mart in Brecon onto the Brecon Beacons, using a rota system between them to complete a task that took anything between two and three weeks working day and night (Gwyn Jones, Tregaron after Glyn Davies, Cwmduwlas, Llanddewi Brefi, pers. comm.).38

CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE FORMATION OF SHEEPWALKS

Economic considerations dictated that even if many inhabitants throughout a lordship initially had a right to keep livestock on the extensive mountain wastes, it would quickly transpire that in most cases it would prove more economical for those who, living far from the uplands, should come to an arrangement with the mountain dwellers for the latter to guard their animals. Payment for guarding the livestock soon became construed as payment for keeping their animals on a particular stretch of mountain by the shepherd. There are some examples of sheepwalks divided between all the principal farms of a lordship or parish, for example Cellan, south of Llanddewi Brefi, but the preponderant pattern in Cardiganshire by the nineteenth century was that sheepwalks were attached to adjoining farms. In the lordship of Pennardd we have perhaps a fossilisation of an earlier arrangement for the concentration of small agronomic sheepwalks in Blaencaron associated with farms in the townships of Trecefai and Llanio, which stand in contrast to other larger tenurial sheepwalks of farms adjacent to the mountain.

That sheepwalks or liberts were not particularly stable before they were mapped on estate plans from the late eighteenth century onwards and especially in the comprehensive great tithe map surveys of the 1830s–1840s can be illustrated by two rather unique documents dating from the first half of the eighteenth century. Written on the reverse of seventeenth-century deeds, they name and describe the circuit boundary of two liberts, those of Nantgwyddyl and Brobwll in the Doethie valley. Besides revealing the toponymical richness of the upland, the boundaries of Nantgwyddyl and Brobwll sheepwalks in the early eighteenth century are shown to be significantly different from the boundaries given at the time of the tithe map surveys around 1840 (continual underlining indicates names whose location is unidentified, broken underlining indicates names whose location is tentative, no underlining indicates names given in my PNCards 2004).
Nantgwyddyl (c.1700–50 – Neuadd-fawr MS 475, NLW).

The coomon belonging to Nant y Gwyddil as follows:
South by East side oddi-rhwnr y dday gae y flaen [ben y Crippelle, ag oddiyno (added)] nant y Caw, ag oddi-yno y flaen Flöes y glocch, ag oddi yno y gorse mynach, oddi yno y fryn y garreg Lwyd, oddiyno y fhos y Cwyon, oddyyno y pen rhiw r Clochdy, oddyno dros wastad bryn mawr y flaen Nant Ivan Owen. Ag y flaen y draw-y-floes, ag y droed rhiw nywdog, ag y hant y brychwyn, ag y ben rhiw y gwyddil, y flaen y floes laes a Chłn [added]wich y Gwyddil hyd y rhyd ddwy ar lan Dathie.

The boundary continues north of Doethie-fechan:
Ar ochor arall ir aeron hyd pant yr hên du or ffordd fawr hyd yr aeron. Ag o Lydiad y Garreg y fyny y ochor y deisigbwylla ag oddiyno y y ra'hir fraen. Ag y lawr ty a chywer Tûn yn y Cornell.

Brobwll and Tyncornel (c.1700–50 – Neuadd-fawr MS 459, NLW).

The Liberty of Common formerly enjoyed by e occupiers of Browbwll & Tir Jenkin Tho alias Tûn-y-Cornell lands.

Westward Oddwrth yr aeron Doethie gyda Nant y Gwynyn y-ben-y-Cerrig, ag y Essex Wyn, a chyda Nant y Llyn hyd llyn Verwvyn. Eastward Ag yn oel y Essex Cerrig hyd floes y Garreg, ag y ddothie Vach y-wared hyd y Nant sydd gyda chae tir Doethie Vach, Ond is-law Doethie Vach y lawr, y Ben y Goyalle, ag y wared y ben y-edys-gosylla, ag oddi-yno y Lydiad y Garreg ag y ddothie.

MS 475 repeats the bounds given in MS 459 with the only significant difference that it is only described as 'Browbwll Comon'.

Despite the difficulty in identifying all the landmarks, the significance of these two documents, among others, is that they provide absolute proof that the libert boundaries of these farms in the mid-nineteenth century were radically different from those of their early eighteenth-century counterparts. As well as its own nineteenth-century sheepwalk, Nantgwyddyl seems to include part of Brymabor sheepwalk (Corismynach), and Cobi sheepwalk. As well as its nineteenth-century sheepwalk, Brobwll seems to include part of Blaendolthi and Penlan Doethiu sheepwalks, and the presumed earlier sheepwalk of Doethiu-fach, annexed by 1840 to Maesglas in the Camddwr valley. It is not clear if Tyncornel sheepwalk goes with Nantgwyddyl or with Brobwll or with either (despite its association with Brobwll in MS 459).

The correlation of the pre-1750 and the 1840 sheepwalk boundaries seems too complicated to explain in the absence of any other information. However, what does seem clear is that libert boundaries were liable to be changed drastically, and we should perhaps not wonder at this as the land was generally neither mapped nor mentioned in deeds (technically not being freehold). Our only hope of information before detailed maps were composed are disputes concerning boundaries. In fact in most cases even such disputes were for the most part never written down to be preserved for the historian's gaze, even if disputes that reached the courts were sometimes reported in nineteenth century newspapers. The commonland status of the uplands, or rather the local law and customs specific to each lordship, tended to shield them from the workings of common law and their actual distance from the centres of often considerably weakened seignorial authorities in the lowlands and allowed a lawless mentality to flourish. Within the living tradition there are anecdotal accounts of shepherds who were fierce and who threatened their meeker neighbours. The absence of authority or interest in law enforcement in what were marginal and unpopulated lands was a recipe for such lawless threatening behaviour, especially when economic motives could come into play. If, on the one hand, we can imagine of the existence of a 'wild-west' mentality, I do not think that we can conclude that all the inhabitants of the Cardiganshire mountains of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were lawless, I would hazard a guess that many were honest and neighbourly. Nevertheless, the situation did nothing to discourage a rather rougher society than we have been led to believe by the profusion of Victorian and post-Victorian accounts and parish histories of Wales coloured by Nonconformist pieties and most especially by the understandable natural prudence of local people not to offend neighbours publicly, however justified the reason.

It has been shown that the sheepwalks or liberts attached to the farms of the Doethieu valley and elsewhere in the Cardiganshire uplands usually contained more than a single heaf (or 'agronic sheepwalk'). The libert therefore tended to cater for more sheep than were needed for the subsistence of one family and so the practice arose of having lowland sheep let on tack and settled on their particular heaf or arhosfa. We must understand that by the nineteenth century the tacking of lowland sheep and livestock on the mountain 'com-
monland" during the summer months was not a right that the lowlanders had as ‘commoners’ of the lordship (in those cases where their farms were indeed within the same lordship) but a commercial agreement between them and the holder of the liber. This settling of other people’s sheep and other livestock became the economic mainstay of the Cardiganshire mountain farms.

In theory the livestock placed upon the seigniorial wastes were supposed to come from within the lordship; any “foreign” animal was liable to a fine. It is eloquent testimony to the power of commercialism over feudal ‘niceties’ that by the eighteenth century profits from sheep grazing made seigniorial fines little more than an inconvenience to the sheep entrepreneurs. Cledwyn Fychan notes that as early as 1707 Celli-gogau sheepwalk (Perfedd lordship) was stocked by a certain Gruffudd Huw Crowder of Arwystli lordship in Montgomeryshire, and that it is a measure of the size of his business that he was fined £33-6-8 during the decade 1712-21. Concerning the same lordship in the 1750s, Lewis Morris noted that: ‘every man may keep as many sheep as he is able to get and pay a shepherd for the keeping. So that there are some in these parts that have many thousands, even to fifteen or twenty thousand sheep which is more than Job had.’ According to Walter Davies the celebrated William Williams (†1773) of Pantsiry (a mountain farm whose liber extended into the headwaters of the Doethie), was nicknamed the ‘Job of the West’ as he had owned 20,000 sheep, 500 wild horses, and a ‘vast number’ of wild cattle. To have so many sheep at one time meant of necessity that many if not most of his flocks were set on tack on sheepwalks belonging to others, but his economic clout was so great that in many ways he could proceed with impunity as is suggested by the following anecdote concerning him related by Walter Davies:

He monopolized the whole range of hills for his numerous flocks; his shepherds kept them during the summer on the summits of the mountains, even in Brecknockshire: . . . He was so purse-proud, that in answer to a landlord, who threatened him with an action for certain damages done to his farm, he is said to have replied: ‘You may begin as soon as you please; I will maintain a seven year law-suit with only the breechings of my sheep’s wool’.

In the early nineteenth century a certain Ifan Jones, of Nantgraig in a valley adjacent to the Doethie valley was said to have owned 500 sheep, to which he added a further 600 sheep when he later acquired Nantwichan in the Doethie valley. Since both places were owned by different landowners in 1840, according to the tithe maps, it is likely that he was only able to have owned so much livestock by renting rather than owning all of the land that was needed. At a later date, the successful sheep grazer Captain Bennett Evans (1887–1972) of Capel Dewi, on the strength of the land that he had rented and had bought to expand his flock in Llangurig parish, came to be nicknamed Syr Watkin Bach ‘Little Sir Watkin’ with reference to the greatest Welsh landlord of his day, Sir Watkin Williams Wynn who owned most of the land in the parish. These cases are enough to demonstrate that from the eighteenth century onwards it was possible to be economically dominant in the sheep-grazing economy through shrewd rental agreements as much as through owning land. However, since commercial transactions have not been as carefully preserved as deeds to land we are left largely in the dark as concerns the economic details of how land-use actually operated during the nineteenth century.

As we have seen, all aspects of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sheep-grazing economy are far from being understood, but what is clear is that it does not seem to correlate much to the cattle-grazing economy that had preceded it in mediaeval times and which had been so different in so many ways. I would like to present one final illustration of the changes. By the late nineteenth century the practice of tillage on mountain farms had come to be neglected by the overweening dominance of sheep ‘monoculture’, for which phenomena the owner of Nantmeirch mountain farm in north Cardiganshire stated that the farm owners often found that the ancient enclosure

will not pay the cost of tillage [so that] ordinary practice [is] . . . to allow it to remain entirely neglected and waste. The land so neglected assumes after some years nearly the same appearance as that of the adjoining sheep walk but with this difference that the herbage on such land is slightly greener and of finer quality than that on the adjoining sheep walk. (1880 Att. Gen. vs. Bonsall: 4).

This abandonment of tillage occurred in degrees and varied from area to area, indeed probably even from farm to farm, but there was some growing of barley in the Doethie valley even after the 1914–18 war (Gwyn Jones after Glyn Davies, Cwmduwlas pers. comm.). Much more could have been said about the practices of transhumance, droving, ponies, geese, mountain hay and the mountain boundary, but I hope that the subjects I have covered here have opened the way for others to study these questions further.

281
NOTES

1. It will be seen that the river is spelt Doeith in this article with the diaeresis that Welsh orthographical practices demand to aid pronunciation as a trisyllable and not a disyllable. The etymology of the name is uncertain, especially as to the vocalism of the first unstressed syllable pronounced (it is locally pronounced Doebi or Dyebi and even sometimes Thie). I am of the opinion that the form of the name suggests a collective plural in -au to a river-name which was originally something like Doebi (there are after all two branches Doebi-fawr and Doebi-fach). It is otherwise difficult to see what else the final -e represents in Doebi, but as this is not a securely established fact I have preferred the form Doebi, though the spelling Doebi will make an appearance in place-names containing the river-name so that the reader can refer all the easier to the forms in my 2004 The Place-names of Cardiganshire (Oxford: Archetypepress), vols. 1–3.

2. In descending order going down the valley the pre-1841 inhabitants are: Magwy Llethrhafoddyl, Lleyst Esgirlceryn, Ffald-y-cremyn, Nantgwyddyn, Nant-y-cawl, Cribyn Hengwrt, Ffoel-fratth, Lleyst-fach, Lleyst-fawr, Hendreboeth, Ty-coch, Penrhwcymwr.

3. Neither Penlan nor Brobwll are mentioned in the census, seemingly overlooked.

4. The houses were abandoned in this order: Brobwll, Cwnechteinog, Cwncwychwyn, 1840s (13 houses in 1861); Nantbenglog 1860s (12 houses in 1871), Cwnechglas, Garnos, Penlan Doethiau, Tir-bach 1870s (8 houses in 1881); Doethiau-fach 1880s (7 houses in 1891); Dinas, Nantriaw 1890s (5 houses in 1901).

5. Maesbws was abandoned in 1819.


8. The local Llanwenog historian David Rees Davies (Cledlyn), born in 1875, remembered being employed as a lad by the OS when surveying the Teifi valley. See D. R. Davies, Chwedla ac Odla (Aberystwyth: Cymdeithas Llyfrau Ceredigion, 1963).


10. However, it was noted that part of Llandewi Breifi was wire-fenced about 1870 (1915 Cymru: 48.206).


12. The distinction is discussed in Thomas Edward Scurton, 1887, Common Fields or the History and Policy of the Laws relating to Commons and Enclosures in England (Kitchener: Batoche, 2003 edn), pp. 44–55, who, from the evidence, concludes that the distinction between ‘appurtenant’ and ‘appendant’ was not made prior to the late fifteenth century and not established in common law even then.

13. The term ‘lordship’ and its adjective ‘seigniorial’ are more pertinent to Welsh conditions than the usual ‘manor’ and ‘manorial’ pertinent to most of England. Compared to a lordship, a manor’s judicial powers were reduced both by being subject to a larger lordship or of a county and by being smaller. The Welsh term for lordship was arglwyddiaeth whereas the sporadic translation of ‘manor’ as masnor – a wholly unrelated term – was basically a homonymous calque whose establishment in Welsh with that meaning is suspect.

14. That such legal distinctions could be poorly understood can be seen from a memorandum that Lord Lisburne of Trawsgoed sent to a London lawyer in 1797, with details concerning the upland commonland of the Crown lordship of Creuddyn, in which he stated that particular tenements claim certain distinct parcels as appendant or appurtenant thereto (Crosswood I MS 1174, my emphasis).

15. The reference to Foelallt or Fachallt mansion skirting the western boundaries of the mountain commonland in the same context as Frestogreason no doubt refers to its (? lapsed) status as a deer-park or hunting reserve that existed in its environs, a status recalled by the name Caefin for the land immediately east of the mansion.

16. Documents relating to the controversy which surrounded the enclosure of Llandewi Breifi mountain are found in Ceredigion Archives (1864 onwards, ref. GB 0212 T/TR, ENC/1) as well as in various collections in the National Library of Wales, namely: Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England/Saint Davids (ECE/SD) MSS, NLW: (letters by encroachers 1874–75) MSS 51,188, 51,278, 51,310–12, 51,362; (sporting rights late nineteenth century) 51,697; (Frestogreason 1890) 71,029. Lucas MSS, NLW: (enclosure and boundaries 1856–57) MS 2,999; (maps of mountain 1882–1903) MSS 2,613,710. Haverfordwest Williams and Williams (Hav.WW) MSS, NLW: (legal opinion concerning enclosure 1864–76) MSS 24,081–83, 24,102. This list is just for the purposes of guidance for researchers and has no pretensions of forming an exhaustive list.


18. There was an increase in sheep as a ‘cash-crop’ in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Wales spurred on by Cistercian monasteries and their trading networks. The question of the preponderance of sheep against cattle is one that deserves a sustained study, see R. E. Hughes et al. ‘A review of the density and ratio of sheep and cattle in medieval Gwynedd with particular reference to the uplands’, Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society, Vol. 7, 1976, pp. 373-83.

Toponymy and Land-use in the Uplands of the Doethie Valley (Cardiganshire)

Richest Historical Record (Amesbury: Society for Landscape Studies, 2000), pp. 76-78.

20. Due to the modern prevalence of sheep on Welsh mountains the Welsh word *bugail* is nowadays translated exclusively as 'shepherd', though etymologically it translates as 'cow-herder'. Until the nineteenth century lowland Wales was not as extensively divided into fields as it is today and late into that century adolescent lads in lowland parts of Cardiganshire were still employed to look after straying cows, their occupation being termed precisely *bugail*.

21. As with much else in this article, I have deliberately kept referencing to a minimum as the details relating to place-name elements will be elaborated in my forthcoming *Welsh Place-name Elements*.

22. NLW, Neuadd-fawr MS 459 c.1700-50.


24. NLW Coleman MS 147.

25. T. Pennant, *Tour in Wales*, 1773 (Caernarfon, Humphreys, 1883), 3.185.

26. Gadsden, op. cit., n. 11, p. 94.

27. Morris, op. cit., n. 23, p. 16.


32. Gadsden, op. cit., n. 11, p. 71. In Cardiganshire the arguments for and against the freehold status of sheepwalks in the late nineteenth century were discussed at length in Eccl. Comm. vs. Griffiths (1875) (op. cit.) and Att. Gen. vs. Bonsall (1880) (op. cit.).


34. Howells, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 7, 15, 84, 116.


38. E. Howells (2005, op. cit., n. 9) also gives interesting details on settling cattle and sheep.

39. An account of an argument concerning boundaries between Llethr and Blaendoethlau in c.1835 was preserved much later, perhaps based on notes written at the time (>1928 Welsh Folk Museum MS 1793/67).

40. The late Lewis Jones of Cefnresgap, Tregaron, regaled us with stories of robberies and rustling and even murder on the mountain, especially concerning drovers, and wrapping up his account with a conclusion that still reverberates in my mind: *Does neb yr gwybod beth ddigwyddodd ar y mynydd?* Nobody knows what happened on the mountain! But to give one documented example, William Roberts (1842-1936) of Blaenglasfawr, later Nantnodd, of whom it was said that: 'There was more that a hint of violence in William Roberts' nature. He was once fined £5 for threatening to kill his neighbour at Tywi Fechan; there are still those living who can point out the desolate spot where he had dug a grave in readiness ...' (Ruth Bidgood, *Parishes of the Buzzard* (Port Talbot: Alun, 2001), pp. 251-52). E. Howells (2005, op. cit., 57, 208) mentions the regular general exchanges of blows with sticks at the mountain fair of Pfair-rhos and the fact that quarrels over boundaries and other routine matters often led to threats and sometimes fights. If he is generally positive about traditional mountain society as he knew it we are fairly reasonable in positing a more peaceful atmosphere from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. There is no reason to think that deaths were commoner in these mountains than elsewhere, and even if anti-social individuals recur in every generation, this is unlikely to reflect the behaviour of the majority of the peaceful inhabitants. What I am at pains to emphasise is that these mountains of mid-Wales prior to the nineteenth century were particularly remote from the land-owning authorities of the time and thus constituted an environment which endorsed anti-social behaviour and taking the law into one's own hands.

41. In Edeirion (Merionethshire) such tack sheep were termed *defaud roi* (literally, 'turned [out] sheep') (Bulletin Board Celtic Studies, Vol. 1, 1923, p. 292).

42. There must have been an invisible boundary between considering such charges as a fine or simply as a payment. Animals from outside the lordship, pasturing on Llondwe Brefi wastes during the summer, were in the early nineteenth century charged 5s. for a head of cattle, 1s. for a sheep and 4d. for a goose (clearly based on the grazing needs of each animal) (A. Eirug Davies, *Enclosures in Cardiganshire, 1750-1850*, Ceredigion, Vol. 8, 1976, p. 102).


46. This appears to be the Evan Jones of Nantygraig who is noted in the parish registers as living in Nantygraig in the late 1780s. His gravestone dated 1833 is at Soar-y-mynnydd (Emyr Lake, Llandeilo Brefi, pers. comm.), >1919 Welsh Folk Museum MS 1793/803.

47. Howells, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 103-104.