

**THE DIARY OF WALTER POWELL
OF LLANTILIO CROSSENNY IN
THE COUNTY OF MONMOUTH,
GENTLEMAN, 1603-1654**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649323203

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1603-1654 by Walter Powell

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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WALTER POWELL

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The Diary
of
WALTER POWELL
of
Llantilio Crossenny
in the County of Monmouth, Gentleman.
1603 — 1654.

Transcribed, and Notes added by
JOSEPH ALFRED BRADNEY, F.S.A.

From the original MSS. in the possession of
SIR HENRY MATHER JACKSON, Bart.,
to which is added a Pedigree and Portrait of the Diarist.

1907:
BRISTOL: JOHN WRIGHT & CO.

INTRODUCTION.

WALTER POWELL, the author of this diary, was the son of Thomas Powell of Penrhos. His family claimed, as do many Welsh families, to be of Norman origin, descending in the paternal line from Sir Walter de Bredwarden, who was seated at Bredwarden in Herefordshire soon after the Conquest. Settling at Crickhowel the family became Welsh, and after a succession of *ap*'s Thomas Powell, or Thomas ap Howel David Rawling, is found resident in the parish of Penrhos in the sixteenth century. Here his son Walter Powell, author of the Diary, was born on the 25th of March, 1581.

The diary commences with extracts from the parish register book of Tregaer, long since lost, relating to the family of his first wife Margaret, daughter of William ap John Evans of Llwyn-y-gaer and Cefn-garw, both ancient seats in that parish.

On his marriage in 1604, when only 22 years of age, he settled in a house of his own in the parish of Llanarth—which place this was there is nothing to show, but it may have been Cefn-coch, a farm belonging to the Powells for many years afterwards. In 1611 he moved from Llanarth and came to live at the vicarage at Llantilio. His reason for so doing may have been that his uncle Hugh Powell was vicar. In January 161½ he took *the new house* at Llantilio, which stood on the site of the present mansion of Llantilio Court, having had a grant, dated 13 May, 1611, of the farm from William Sterrell. By indentures dated 12 May, 1619, he had a

further lease from Sterrell of the premises, and also of another message wherein Thomas ap Howel David dwelt, and also of Lantrothy in the parish of Penrhos, for 21 years at the rent of £25.

How William Sterrell came to own land here is not clear, but it was probably granted him, in return for services, by Edward, Earl of Worcester, whose secretary he was. He is an interesting personage, concerned as he was in the plots and counterplots of the latter years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Of scholarly education and culture, he was a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and was employed by the Earl of Worcester and the Government to spy on the Catholics who, from 1590 to 1596, were plotting against the Queen. Among the State Papers Domestic are letters and papers concerning him which show that he was at last suspected by his employers of duplicity.

The last note of rent paid by Walter Powell to Sterrell is in May, 1643, and in 1645 he removed to Penrhos, where he continued till his death. There is nothing to show where in Penrhos he lived, but it is probable it was the Grange. By this time, 1645, he must have purchased the estate at Llantilio from Sterrell, as in 1649 he demised (*i.e.* let) *the great house at Llantilio* to John Webb.

Besides being deputy-steward and receiver of rents to the Earl of Worcester, to whom and whose family he often refers, he seems to have managed several smaller estates, notes occurring of the various manor courts he attended. As a local man of business he made and proved his neighbours' wills. He also had a lease of the mill at Llantilio from Lord Worcester, his accounts for which are still extant, extending over the whole period of his 21 years' lease, and all in the same handwriting as that of the Diary.

It might be wished that he had said more about the Civil Wars, and, in particular, the siege of Raglan. On the 25th of May, 1646, a few days before the siege began, he was committed to prison in Raglan Castle for an offence he does not name.

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The siege began on the 3rd of June, and on the 8th of June, on account of his age, he was allowed by Lord Worcester to depart, the besiegers also permitting him to go home. The following letter is a copy in his own hand of one addressed to the commander of the besieging army, Colonel Thomas Morgan of Llangattock Lingoed, to whom he must have been well known :—

Indeited for the Com'ander in chief.

Sr.

It has pleased my lord in regard of my age & infirmities of body to give me (that now am a prison'r) leaue vpon my par'll to goe home to my wief & children to my house in Penros, and therefor I humbly desire you that you will be pleased to graunt me a passe to goe freely throughe yo'r armye w'thout lett or molestac'on, and I shall remayne

Yr humble servant

6 Junij 1646

W. P.

This is endorsed :—

A coppie of my request for a passe from the castle of Raglan as a prison'r & to goe throughe the guardes of the leaguer.

During his absence his house in Penrhos had been plundered by the Parliamentary forces. Safe at home again he settled down to business as though no disturbances were taking place in the kingdom, his diary containing the usual notes as to lending money, collecting rents, and attending sessions. The only difference was that he had to pay rent for his estate to one William Loup, the receiver for sequestered estates. Having had in 1643 a quarrel with Owen Rogers, the vicar, over the church key, he from this date attends Llanarth church, noting the dates on which he received the sacrament.

It is worthy of note that his daughter Anne, who was born at the vicarage 23 May, 1611, married her husband John Watkins 11 June, 1621, she being therefore only slightly over 10 years of age. Her husband was baptized 2 June, 1609, so that he was but a trifle over 12 years old, *both younge* as the Diarist observes. In 1627 he put John Watkins to school at Monmouth to learn to write, and in 1630 John Watkins ran away from the Diarist's house.

Of the sons of Walter Powell only two left children. The descendants of Thomas have disappeared, but are probably to be found among those of the name in the humbler walks of life in Abergavenny. Matthew, the youngest son, who had under his father's will the small estate at Llantilio, continued the representation of the family there. His grandson Matthew Powell was sheriff in 1724, whose half-sister and heir married John Lewis, esq., of Llwyn-floortun in Carmarthen-shire. Around this lady is woven a story of romance or of tragedy, according to the views of the reader of a certain scandalous book. This work, which went through at least three editions, is entitled

THE TRUE
ANTI-PAMELA :

OR

MEMOIRS

OF

Mr. James Parry,

Late ORGANIST of *Ross* in *Herefordshire*.

In which are inserted

His AMOURS with the Celebrated
Miss P— of Monmouthshire.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

In TWO PARTS Compleat.

PART I. MEMOIRS of his LIFE and AMOURS.

PART II. Genuine LETTERS of *Love* and *Gallantry*.

LONDON

Printed for the AUTHOR, and sold by the
Booksellers in Town and Country, 1741.

After many love scenes with Parry, whose acquaintance with the lady commenced by his teaching her to play on the spinnet, she became tired of him, which so annoyed him that, being refused admittance to the house at Llantilio, he got drunk at

the Hostry inn,¹ and was arrested for riotous behaviour. The result was a series of Actions at Law, in which Mr. John Lewis of Llwyn-fortun, who was a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, was counsel for Miss Powell. Parry in revenge published the book, and John Lewis married the heiress. Of this marriage there were two children, Mr. Richard Lewis, whose name is remembered as having for very many years maintained a pack of hounds, the origin of the present Monmouthshire Hounds, and Eliza Maria, who married William Morgan, esq., of the Argoed in Penallt, the representative of one branch of the family of Tredegar. Mr. Richard Lewis died in 1836, leaving only a daughter, Mrs. Taddy; and the estate went to Colonel Henry Morgan-Clifford, the grandson of the above William Morgan. Both Mrs. Lewis and Colonel Clifford increased the estate by many purchases of farms and land, and the latter sold it in the year 1874 to Sir William Jackson, baronet.

The present possessor of the estate, and of the Diary with a large number of papers connected with the Powell family, is Sir Henry Mather Jackson, 3rd baronet.

Walter Powell's will is dated 29 Dec., 1655, proved 11 Oct., 1656 (PCC Berkeley, 349), the following being an abstract:—

Whereas by deed dated 28 May 1635 since revoked to bar entail of my lands in Llanarth, and to settle such lands in Llanarth, Llanvapley and Penrose, I have levied a fine in the Common Pleas unto Walter Morgan and James Williams gent'n in trust of and in certain lands by the names of two messuages, two barns, one bakehouse, and cottages, two gardens, 100 acres of land, 20 acres of meadow, 30 acres of pasture, 10 acres of wood to the use of my last will——by deed dated the 20th inst December between me and Phillip Cecil and Sheldon Powell, gent'n, Sibyl my wife, my sons Walter Powell and Matthew Powell, such lands I leave to Philip and Sheldon in trust, parcel of lands in Penrose called Gworlod

¹ The present Hostry inn stands on a different site from the one named here. The original Hostry stood at the corner of the present pleasure grounds of Llantilio Court, facing the steps leading into the churchyard.

y bryn purchased of Richard Hughes, and lands in Llanvapley purchased of Charles Hughes and Hugh William James and Mary his wife called Hames,¹ also lands in Llantilio Crossenny and Llanvapley called Glan Trothy, upon the death of the said Mary, one moiety for the use of my wife Sibyl, and after her to my sons Walter and Matthew, the other moiety to my said sons Walter and Matthew—to my dau Anne £3 per annum—my brother William Powell, clk., deceased—my cousin Walter Morgan—lands called Ton-llwyd² parcel of an ancient tenement in Llantilio Crossenny—my son Richard—land called Trefol'd³ to my dau Katherine—to my dau Mary a cottage and garden called the Pant—lands in Skenfrith where John Powell and Margaret his wife dwelleth, their children—lands in Llanvapley to my son Charles Powell—whereas I hold two leases from Walter Morgan and William Morgan of Llantilio Pertholey, the same to my son Thomas Powell—lands in Tregare to my dau Anne—lands in Grosmont by grant from Turberville Morgan, Edward Morgan, and George Morgan, these to my nephew Sheldon Powell—whereas two parcels of land in Llanelen are conveyed to me and Prudence my dau, such to remain with Prudence bringing £3 per annum—my grand children, children of John Williams and Blanche my dau—my sons Walter and Matthew ex'ors—my friends Phillip Cecil, Sheldon Powell, and Thomas Powell of Poolhall overseers.

Witnesses :—

SHELDON POWELL
 PHILLIP CECIL
 HUGH POWELL
 DAVID JAMES
 WM PRICE

¹ Ham, or Hom, or Holm, is a favourite name for a meadow.

² Ton-llwyd (*the grey sward*), now only a cottage, is situated on the bank of the Trothy half a mile eastward from the church.

³ Tre'r-fyiliaid (*the home of the fools*), the site is unknown (*vide* footnote p. 18).