

DISCOVERY OF DOCUMENTS EXTANT ON ELIZABETH PORTREY OF YNYS CEDWYN HALL

Elizabeth Portrey of Ynys Cedwyn Hall was my great great great great great grandmother in the Royal Celtic line and is well known in memory and reportage. Recently I discovered the first contemporary documents extant that prove her existence, and which establishes the fact that the Morgan Awbrey Family are descended from the Princes and Cambrian Normans. The documents are as follows.

- 1) File 4/380/6 Document 32 of the National Library of Wales Crime and Punishment collection, dated 9th April 1753. Elizabeth Portrey, spinster, of Ystrad Gynlais, is described as a prosecutor in an action against Mary Beynon of Ystrad Gynlais, for theft of wearing apparel belonging to Gwenllian John, also of Ystrad Gynlais. This is accompanied by a confession (C), deposition (D) and recognisance (R), and the NLW has promised to look in to these documents for my cousin Stuart Davies of the Morgan Awbrey Family.
- 2) Document 34 of this file.
- 3) Document 31 of this file with DCR. Richard Awbrey of Ynys Cedwyn Hall, prosecutor.
- 4) Document 30 of this file, DCR, prosecutor Anne Portrey, spinster, of Ystrad Gynlais.

The St. Cynog Church records and Bishop's transcripts show that Elizabeth Portrey married Morgan Evans of Llan Giwg on 15th May 1755 and was widowed within a few years. She married her distant cousin and also my ancestor of the Royal Celtic Line, Morgan ap Thomas y Garth, on 19th January 1763. She died in 1825 at the age of 91 as recorded on her tombstone. She was born therefore about 1734 / 1735, and was nineteen at the time of the prosecution. She was twenty one when first married, and twenty nine when married for the second time.

Stuart Davies discovered the record of this case in the Court of

Great Sessions for 9th April 1753 that the prosecutor was Richard Awbrey, Squire or Gentleman of Ynys Cedwyn Hall (who had changed his name from Gough) and the two witnesses were Anne and Elizabeth Portrey. The items stolen were one Holland sheet of value five shillings, one Holland shirt of the value of five shillings, and one Muzlim cravat of the value of two shillings, all goods and chattels of Richard Awbrey. The case was sworn in court by Toovey. Therefore Gwenllian John, Elizabeth and Anne Portrey were in some form of domestic living with Richard Awbrey shortly after the death of Christopher Portrey. Stuart Davies discovered that on 19th June 1735, an infant named Elizabeth John was baptized at St. Cynog, her mother was Gwenllian John, my great great great great great great grandmother. Therefore Elizabeth Portrey was baptized Elizabeth John, and her father was Christopher Portrey, Squire of Ynys Cedwyn Hall, of the Royal Celtic line. Elizabeth Portrey died on 24th September 1825, aged 91 as on her tombstone in St Cynog. The age at her death is wrongly recorded as eighty in the Church record, and the correct age of death is now known to be ninety years and three months (June 19th. 1735 to September 24th. 1825). There is plenty of family memory of her, and stories, newspaper articles and so forth about her. However, document one above is the first documentary evidence that she lived at Ynys Cedwyn Hall, because she does not appear in the Ynys Cedwyn Estate papers.

Stuart Davies found that Anne Portrey married James Jervis on 18th May 1753, and probably moved away from Ystrad Gynlais. Anne Portrey was Elizabeth's sister of the Ynys Cedwyn Hall Gentry, or untitled nobility. Richard Awbrey died in 1759, and was buried at St. Cynog on 1st March of that year. There was also a younger sister Lucy Portrey who was married on 21st February 1765. They were probably children of Christopher Portrey of Ynys Cedwyn Hall. At the time of the prosecution, 1753, the Gough Awbrey Family had just acquired the Hall by marriage and Christopher Portrey had died in December 1752. The Hall was therefore in turmoil as the Gough family took it over under the Deed of Settlement, and adopted the Norman name Aubrey or Awbrey. The National Library of Wales has advised Stuart Davies that the original documents contain a list of items stolen, and this could have happened when the Gough Family were moving in.

Sentences in those days could be very harsh, for example death penalties for stealing one sheep or coining half a crown. However, there is no record of anything harsh happening to Mary Beynon. Sentences were also very arbitrary, could be very different for the same offence.

Stuart Davies discovered that in a Codicil to his Will dated 1752, Christopher Portrey of Ynys Cedwyn Hall left the small sum of five pounds (about five hundred pounds in today's currency) to Gwenllian John of Ystrad Gynlais, who was the mother of his daughter Elizabeth. In the codicil she is described as Elizabeth John, so legal documents must have been used to change her name from Elizabeth John to Elizabeth Portrey, Mary Beynon was probably a servant at the Hall. This proves that my ancestor Elizabeth Portrey lived at the Hall and was descended from the Princes and Normans. She is also the ancestor of Stuart Davies and that branch of the Morgan Awbrey Family, for example notables such Morgan Morgan, Leonid Morgan, Tommy and Jeff Morgan, the Potter Family and Tony Hibbert.

Also, in file 4/380/8, Document 9, dated 1st March 1754, Richard Gough Esq. Of Ynys Cedwyn Hall brought a prosecution against William Bowen of Ystrad Gynlais for rescue of livestock from pound. No other details.

SOURCE DOCUMENTS FOR MY GARTH ANCESTORS.

These were accurately researched by my late cousin, Leonid Morgan, and these notes give some of the source documents used but apparently not cited by Leonid Morgan.

1) D / Dyc . Conveyance of 28th July 1564 from Ieuan Gwyn ap Morgan ap Richard Awbrey to his brother, John ap Morgan ap Richard Awbrey (born about 1530) of Gwern yr Efail between Tir y Garth and Gwaun yr Afar. So, Y Garth passed down in the family.

2) Conveyance of 24th May 1577 from Richard ap Morgan ap Richard Awbrey to his brother John ap Morgan ap Richard Awbrey (born

about 1530).

3) D / D Yc 61. A bond of 200 pounds (about 200,000 pounds by today's currency) of 20th Feb. 1596 / 1597. Morgan ap Richard Awbrey, Gent., his son John ap Morgan ap Richard Awbrey (born about 1530), Gent. and Marged ferch Hywel Ddu (widow). So Morgan ap Richard died in this year. His son Morgan ap John ap Morgan (born about 1570). His son Thomas ap Morgan ap John, (< 1610 to 25th June 1689). The conveyance was to Gruffudd Jeffrey ap Rhys of Ystrad Gynlais, Gent. Marged ferch Hywel Ddu is referred to as "Margaret daughter of Hugh", a very inaccurate transcription.

4) D/D Yc 42 Conveyance (freehold of feoffment) of 5th Nov., 1610 from John ap Morgan ap Richard Awbrey and his son Morgan ap John ap Morgan ap Richard Awbrey, both Gentlemen of Ystrad Gynlais, to the latter's son Thomas ap Morgan ap John, who was buried at Callwen on 27th June 1689. Property as in D/D Yc 38. Parchment, seal tags, two seal, Latin. This proves that Thomas ap Morgan ap John was born before 1610. Thomas ap Morgan ap John is referred to as "Thomas John" (sic).

5) Quitclaim of 7th Nov. 1610. Morgan John of Ystradgynlais to Thomas John, i.e. Morgan ap John ap Morgan Awbrey to Thomas ap Morgan ap John Awbrey.

5a) Conveyance (feoffment or freehold) of 13th March 1612/1613, John Morgan Prichard of Ystrad Gynlais, Gent., and wife Angharad, Thomas ap John Gent., and wife Kathrine, to Morgan Aubrey of Ynys Cedwyn.

6) On 31/12/12 Stuart Davies discovered that Morgan ap Thomas ap Morgan ap John Garth was married to Angharad Bevan at St. Cynog, Ystrad Gynlais, on 25th February 1688. This is a source document for Morgan ap Thomas, who Leonid Morgan reports as having died in 1749. These dates suggest a stable, long lived, family who farmed Y Garth (the enclosed land) for many generations.

7) In 2013 Arthur Turner-Thomas discovered that Thomas ap Morgan y Garth (1690 - 1761) was married to Margareta John in Nov. 1729 and then to Elizabeth Owen on Dec. 21st 1742.

The Garth line then descended to Morgan ap Thomas y Garth as proven by Leonid Morgan and as recorded in volume one of my autobiography and in great detail on www.aias.us. So I descend in two Royal Celtic Lines from Morgan ap Thomas and Elizabeth Portrey, who were distant cousins.

Myron Evans

Craig Cefn Parc, July 2012.