

P-04-607 Call for the Welsh Government to Purchase Garth Celyn – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 16.02.2015

Hello,

I would like to emphasize the importance of Garth Celyn by attaching a few things the committee could maybe look at and also the video bellow which was part of the story of wales program introduced by Huw Edwards.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXREEQtvL2c>

GARTH CELYN

As has already been pointed out as Nation, we now have a rare opportunity. An opportunity that should not be missed.

It is true that the property is protected by its Grade II * Listing and part of the promontory has been Scheduled as being of National Importance by the Ancient Monuments Board. That is not an issue.

The late Dr John Davies in 'The History of Wales' stated that the letters written by Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and his Ministers from 'Garth Kelyn' in November 1282 are among 'the most sublime compositions of the Welsh Nation' and 'equivalent to the Declaration of Arbroath to Scotland.'

The place, as Gwynfor Evans pointed out, is a place of Memory to the people of Wales and further afield who care about such things. And many, many people do.

For many reasons, the promontory Garth Celyn, on the north coast of Gwynedd overlooking the A55 coastal highway and the Menai Strait, is ideally and uniquely situated to be a living, thriving Memorial to the Welsh Prince of Wales and his predecessors. This was, as Dr John Davies said, 'the main home and headquarters of the thirteenth century Princes as they struggled to maintain Welsh independence.' Those of us who have been involved in some way as volunteers in this project to date ask that the property be purchased by the Welsh Assembly Government and placed in the hands of independent Trustees and a Management Committee.

Garth Celyn could become a Memorial Garden– a place for performances and events, or quiet contemplation, with a landmark statue visible to all the thousands of people who pass by. The house and / or cottage could, if that was the decision of the Trustees, be restored and let to visitors for part of the year (using the role model of Landmark Trust) to produce an income; the buildings could then be used for Exhibitions, meetings and lectures for the remaining part of the year. Because of

its position the property is suited for that purpose which would be of the greatest public benefit. The project could be self sustaining. It would bring in Cultural and Tourism benefits that would have a wide and lasting effect for all parts of Wales.

Yours faithfully

Kevin Bates

LINEAGE & EVENTS

The Princes

Letter from Llywelyn, Prince of Wales to John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury:??
(From Latin)?

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To the most reverend father in Christ, the Lord John, by the Grace of God, Archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, from his humble and devoted son Llywelyn, prince of Wales, lord of Snowdon, greetings and filial affection, with all manner of reverence, submission and honour.

For the heavy labours which your fatherly holiness has assumed at this time, out of the love you bear to us and our nation, we render you grateful thanks, all the more since, as you have confided to us, you come against the king's will.?

You ask us to come to the king's peace. Your holiness should know that we are ready to do so, provided the lord king will truly observe that same peace as is due to us and ours.

We rejoice that this interlude granted to Wales is at your instance and you will find no impediments placed in the way of peace by us, for we would rather support your efforts than those of any other.

We hope, God willing, there need be no occasion for you to write anything to the pope concerning our pertinacity nor will you find us spurning your fatherly entreaties and strenuous endeavours, indeed we embrace them with all the warmth of our heart. Nor is it necessary for the king to weigh his hand yet further against us, since we are fully prepared to render him obedience, always saving our rights and laws, a reservation legally permitted to us.

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The realm of England may well be the special object of the Roman curia's affection, but the aforesaid curia has yet to learn, and must learn, and the lord pope likewise, what evils have been wrought upon us by the English, how the peace formerly made has been violated in all the clauses of the treaty, how churches have been fired and devastated, and ecclesiastical persons, priests, monks and nuns slaughtered, women slain with children at their breast, hospitals and other houses of religion burned, Welsh people murdered in cemeteries, churches, yes at the very altar, with other sacrilegious offences horrible to hear. All which are detailed in these rotuli we

send you in writing for your inspection.

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Now our best hope is that you fatherly piety may incline kindly towards us, and neither the Roman curia nor the realm of England need be shaken for our sake, provide it is understood in advance that the peace we seek be not only made, but observed. Those who do indeed delight in the shedding of blood are identified manifestly by their deeds, and thus far the English, in their usage of us, have spared none, whether for sex, or age, or weakness, nor passed by any church or sacred place. Such outrages the Welsh have not committed.

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It does, however, grieve us very deeply to acknowledge that it is true one ransomed prisoner was killed, but we have neither countenanced nor maintained the murderer, for he was wandering the forests as a freebooter.

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You speak of certain persons beginning the fighting at a holy season. We ourselves knew nothing of this until after the fact, when it was urged in their defence that if they had not struck then, death and rape threatened them, they dared neither dwell in their own houses at peace nor go about except in arms, and it was fear and despair that caused them to act when they did.

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As to the assertion that we are acting against God, and ought to repent as true Christians, seeking God's grace, if the war continues it shall not be set at our door, provided we can be indemnified as is our due. But while we are disinherited and slaughtered, it behoves us to defend ourselves to the utmost. Where any genuine injuries and damages come into consideration upon either side, we are prepared to make amends for those committed by our men, provided the like amends are made for damages inflicted upon us. In the making and preserving of peace we are similarly ready to assist to the limit of what is due from us. But when royal pacts and treaties made with us are of none effect, as thus far they have not been observed, it is impossible to establish peace, nor when new and unprecedented exactions against us and ours are daily being devised.

In the accompanying rotuli we send to you the catalogue of our wrongs, and of the breaches of that treaty formerly made with us.

We fight because we are forced to fight, for we, and all Wales, are oppressed, subjugated, despoiled, reduced to servitude by the royal officers and bailiffs, in defiance of the form of the peace and of all justice, more maliciously than if we were Saracens or Jews, so that we feel, and have often so protested to the king, that we are left without any remedy.

Always the justiciars and bailiffs grow more savage and cruel, and if these become satiated with their unjust exactions, those in their turn apply themselves to fresh exasperations against the people. To such a pass are we come that they begin to

prefer death to life. It is not fitting in such case to threaten greater armies, or move the Church against us. Let us but have peace, and observe it as due, as we have expressed above.

You should not believe all the words of our enemies, Holy Father, the very people who by their deeds oppress and ill-use us, and in their words defame us by attributing to us whatever they choose. They are ever present with you, and we absent, they the oppressors, we the oppressed. In accordance with divine faith, instead of quoting their words in all things, we should rather examine their deeds. May your holiness long flourish, to the benefit and good order of the Church.

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?Dated at Garth Celyn

Dated At Garth Celyn, On The Feast Of Saint Martin

The Reply Of The Council Of Wales:

(From Latin)

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Though it may please the king to say that he will allow no discussions concerning the Middle Country, or Anglesey, or the other lands bestowed upon his magnates, nevertheless the prince's council, if peace is to be made at all, will not countenance any departure from the premise that these cantrefs are a part of the unquestionable holding of the prince, lying within the bounds within which the prince and his predecessors have held since the time of Camber, son of Brutus.

Further, they belong to the principality renewed to the prince by confirmation, at the instance of Ottobuono of blessed memory, legate of the apostolic see in the realm of England, with the consent of the lord king and his magnates, as is manifest in the treaty.

Moreover, it is more equitable that the true heirs should hold the said cantrefs, if need be from the lord king for fee and customary service, rather than they should be given over to strangers and newcomers, even though they may have been powerful supporters of the king's cause.

Further, all the tenants of all the cantrefs of Wales declare with one voice that they dare not come to the king's will, to allow him to dispose of them according to his royal majesty, for these reasons:

First, because the lord king has kept neither treaty nor oath nor charter towards their lord prince and themselves from the beginning.

Second, because the king's men have used the most cruel tyranny against ecclesiastical establishments and persons.

Third, that they cannot be bound by the offered terms, since they are liegemen of the prince, who is prepared to hold the said lands of the king by customary service.

As to the demand that the prince shall submit absolutely to the king's will, we reply that since not one man of the aforesaid cantrefs would dare to submit himself to

that will, neither will the community of Wales permit its prince to do so upon such terms.

As to the king's magnates guaranteeing to procure an earldom for the prince, we say he need not and should not accept any such provision, procured by the very magnates who are striving to have him disinherited, so that they may possess his lands in Wales.

Item: that the prince is no way bound to forgo his heritage and that of his forebears from the time of Brutus, and again confirmed as his by the papal legate, as is suggested, and accept lands in England where language, manners, laws and customs are foreign to him, and where, moreover, malicious mischiefs may be perpetrated against him, out of hatred, by English neighbours, from whom that land has been expropriated in perpetuity.

Item: Since the king is proposing to deprive the prince of his original inheritance, it seems unbelievable that he will allow him to hold land in England, where he is seen to have no legal right. And similarly, if the prince is not to be allowed to hold the sterile and uncultivated land rightfully his by inheritance from old times, here in Wales, it is incredible to us that in England he will be allowed possession of lands cultivated, fertile and abundant.

Item: That the prince should place the king in possession of Snowdonia, absolutely, perpetually and peaceably. Since Snowdonia is part of the principality of Wales, which he and his ancestors have held since the time of Brutus, as we have said, his council will not permit him to renounce the said lands and accept land less rightfully his in England.

Item: The people of Snowdonia for their part state that even if the prince desired to give the king seisin of them, they themselves would not do homage to any stranger, of whose language, customs and laws they are utterly ignorant. For by doing so they could be brought into perpetual captivity and barbarously treated, as other cantrefs around them have been by the royal bailiffs and officers, more savagely than ever was wreaked upon Saracen enemies, as we have said above, reverend father, in the rotuli we sent to you.'

November 1282? – The Secret Terms:?

(From Latin)

These to be put to the prince in secret.

First: This is the form of the royal grace drawn up by the king's noblemen, if the Lord Llywelyn should submit himself to the king's will.

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The king will provide for him honourably, bestowing upon him an estate to the value of £1000 sterling, with the rank of an earl, in some part of England. This is on the understanding that the said Llywelyn surrenders to the lord king, absolutely, perpetually and peaceably, his possession of Snowdonia.

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The king himself will provide for the prince's daughter, in accordance with his obligations to his own blood-kin. To this end, the noblemen are confident that they will be able to persuade the king's mind to compassion.

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Item Two: If Llywelyn should take a second wife, and by her have male heirs, the noblemen undertake to procure of the lord king that such heirs shall succeed in perpetuity to inherit the earldom of £1000 value.

Item Three: Concerning the people presently subject of the prince in Snowdonia or elsewhere, provision shall be made for them as God sanctions, and as is consistent with the safety, honour and wellbeing of such people. To which course the king's mind is already strongly inclined since he desires to provide for all his people with conciliatory mercy.

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Lambeth Palace Archives

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November 1282

?The Terms Delivered To Prince Dafydd ap Gruffydd, Brother Of The Prince of Wales:??

(From Latin)

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These to be delivered to Dafydd?

First: If, to God's honour and his own, he will take upon him the burden of the Cross, and journey to aid the crusade in the Holy Land, he shall be provided with an establishment suitable to his rank, on condition that he shall never return unless recalled by the king's mercy.

We shall ask and we are sure effectively, that the lord king shall provide for Dafydd's children.

Item Two: To all the Welsh, of our own initiative, we add these warnings, that dangers will threaten them ever more gravely as time passes, as we have already admonished them by word of mouth, and written to them most urgently, for it grows infinitely burdensome to continue in arms for a longer time, only in the end to be totally extirpated, for the perils menacing you will every day be aggravated.

Item Three: After a longer time it grows ever more difficult to live in a state of war, in anguish of heart and body, forever among malignant perils, and at last to die in mortal sin and anger.

Item Four: Which grieves us sorely, if you do not come to peace to the best you may, we dread the necessity of urging ecclesiastical feeling against you to the last extreme, by reason of your excesses, for which there is no way you can be excused. But in which you shall find mercy, if you come to peace.

Concerning the above let me have written answer.

Garth Celyn – 11 November 1282

?The Response Of The Prince of Wales:

(From Latin)

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To the most reverend father in Christ, the Lord John, by the grace of God Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of all England, his obedient son in Christ, Llywelyn, Prince of Wales and Lord of Snowdon, sendeth greeting.

Holy father, as you have counselled, we are ready to come to the king's grace, if it is offered in a form safe and honourable for us. But the form contained in the articles which were sent to us, is in no particular either safe or honourable, in the judgement of our council and ourselves, indeed, so far from it that all who hear it are astonished, since it tends rather to the destruction and ruin of our people and our person than to our honour and safety.

There is no way in which our council could be brought to permit us to agree to it, even should we so wish, for never would our nobles and subjects consent in the inevitable destruction and dissipation that would surely derive from it.

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Wherefore we beg your fatherly holiness, as you are bound to pursue that renewed peace, honourable and secure, for which you have exerted such heroic labours already, to devise some expedient bearing a just relation to those articles we have submitted to you in writing.

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It would surely be more honourable, and more consonant with reason, if we should hold from the king those lands in which we have right, rather than to disinherit us, and hand over our lands and our people to strangers.

??? Tywysog Cymru ac Arglwydd Eryri

Prince of Wales and Lord of Eryri?

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OWAIN GWYNEDD (died 1170)

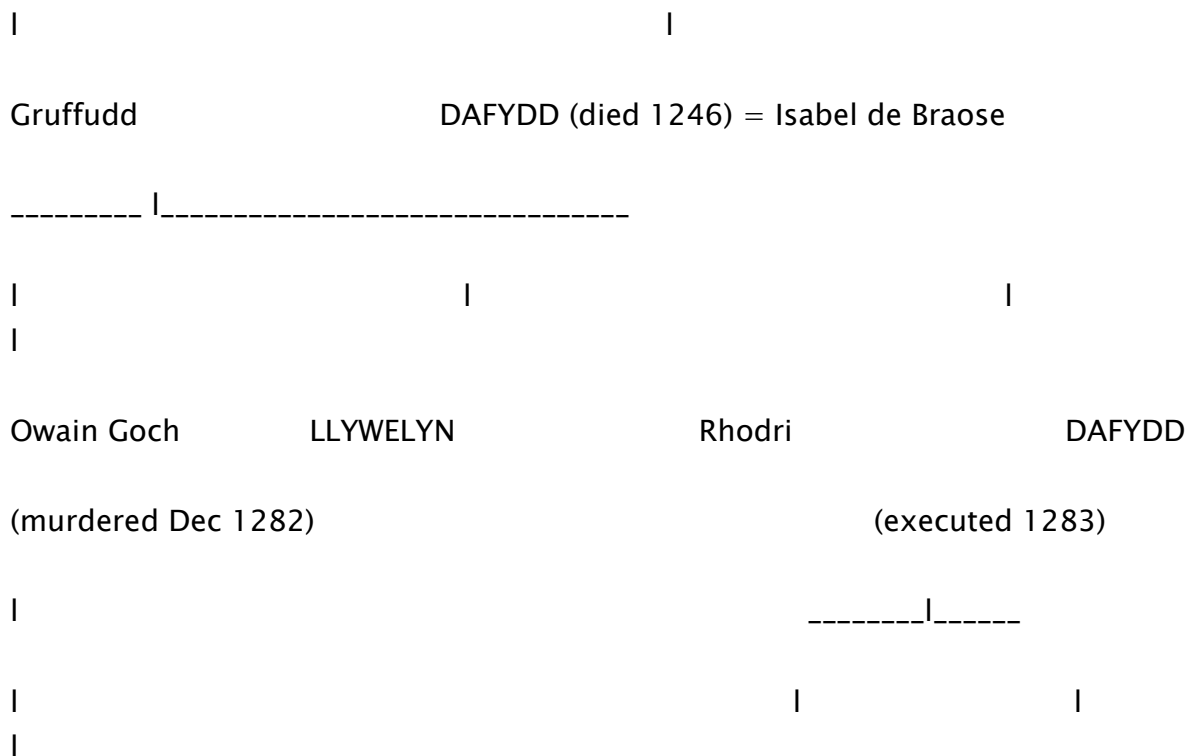
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Iorwerth Drwyndwn (died 1172)

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LLYWELYN AB IORWERTH (died 1240)

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The Princes of Wales at Garth Celyn

About the year 1200, Prince Llywelyn ap Iorwerth constructed a royal home on Garth Celyn. To the east of the Llys was the newly endowed Cistercian Monastery of Aberconwy; to the west the cathedral city of Bangor. Between Garth Celyn and the shore the fertile farmland provided food for the royal family, members of the court, and the local community. The sea and the river had fish in abundance and there was wild game to be hunted in the uplands.

The village of Aber Garth Celyn on the west side of the river was a bustling, thriving place. Travellers negotiating the dangerous Lafan Sands were given food and lodging in the valley. Goods brought by sea to the Port of Llanfaes were being distributed to other points on the mainland from here. Animals were herded along this routeway to and from the mountains. Grain was carted to the mill. The community came to attend services in the church. Pilgrims from far and wide walked the trackway and paused for refreshments. Bards came to recite poetry recalling the deeds of the heroes, the great defenders.

1200 Garth Celyn, a promontory of land on the north coast of Gwynedd overlooking the Menai Strait and the island of Anglesey, became the main home and court of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, Prince of north Wales.

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1205 Prince Llywelyn married Joan (Siwan), daughter of King John of England.

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1211 King John brought an army across the river Conwy, and in August occupied the Welsh royal home; his troops went on to burn Bangor. Princess Joan negotiated between the two men, and King John withdrew.

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1230 William Braose, a Norman Marcher Lord was found in Prince Llywelyn's bedchamber together with Lady Joan; De Braose was tried, found guilty, then castrated and hanged in the marshland immediately below Garth Celyn. (This incident formed the basis for the drama 'Siwan' by Saunders Lewis, 'Llywelyn Fawr' by Thomas Parry, and novels including 'The Green Branch' by Edith Pargeter.)

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1237 Princess Joan died at Garth Celyn, and was buried on the opposite shore of the Menai at Llanfaes.

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1246 Princess Dafydd ap Llywelyn died at Garth Celyn after a six year reign. (Dafydd's marriage to Isabella, daughter of William de Braose, was childless. Gwynedd was divided between his nephews.)

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1255 Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd became sole ruler of Gwynedd.

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?1282 King Edward Longshanks invaded north Wales with a massive army, and surrounded Snowdonia

–June Eleanor de Montfort, Lady of Wales, wife of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, died at Garth Celyn, giving birth to a baby, Gwenllïan ferch Llywelyn.

–November John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury, travelled to Garth Celyn to negotiate between the Prince of Wales and the King of England. Prince Llywelyn was offered a bribe – £1000 a year and an estate in England if he would surrender the Welsh Nation into the hands of the King. Prince Llywelyn's letters rejecting the bribe outright, and giving his reasons for doing so, were dated from 'Garth Kelyn'.

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On 11th December, Prince Llywelyn was lured into a trap and murdered.

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1283 Llywelyn's brother, Dafydd ap Gruffudd, continued the struggle to maintain Welsh independence and autonomy, but on 22 June 1283, Prince Dafydd ap Gruffudd, heir to the Principality, and his close family were captured, their hiding place at the foot of Bera in the uplands above Aber Garth Celyn, betrayed.

(E101 /3/30) Dafydd, seriously wounded 'graviter vulneratus' in the struggle was taken that same night to Edward at Rhuddlan. (Cotton Vesp. B xi, f. 30) Prince

Dafydd was hanged, drawn and quartered; the royal children locked away and never released. Princess Gwenllian was taken 'in her cradle' to a Gilbertine Priory at Sempringham, Lincolnshire, where she was held prisoner for 54 years until her death.

On 18 January 1283, Dolwyddelan Castle was occupied by the army of invasion (PRO. E101/359/9) and immediately munitioned to provide a base in the Lledr valley. At Edward's command raiding parties were sent out into the mountains of Snowdonia. Wales was plundered, and Edward's trophies taken across the border into England.

The matrices of the personal seals of Prince Llywelyn, his wife Eleanor de Montfort, daughter of Earl Simon, and his brother Prince Dafydd were seized and placed in the royal Wardrobe. Edward ordered that these also were to be melted down and the silver used to craft a chalice, which he intended to present to the new Cistercian foundation of Vale Royal abbey in Cheshire.

?King Edward annexed Wales to the Crown of England. Wales become England's first colony. (Edward gave the title Prince of Wales to his son, who later became Edward II.)

The Welsh royal home on Garth Celyn was occupied and became a Crown of England property: Edward and his entourage stayed there in 1283 and again in 1284. From that time on, although the Court Chapel was maintained for decades, no member of the English royal family again set foot on it, and it gradually fell into ruin.

After the Anglo Norman Conquest the name Garth Celyn continued in local use but was not used by the English administration. Instead the settlement Aber Garth Celyn adjacent to the royal home became officially known by the administrators simply as Aber, 'Estuary' with its identity removed; later more descriptively as Aber Gwyn Gregyn, 'Estuary of the White Shells'.

1295 Edward Longshanks ordered the building of Beaumaris Castle on the Anglesey shore of the Menai Strait, opposite Garth Celyn on the mainland. The royal home, surrounded and overshadowed by the symbols of conquest, the castles of Conwy, Caernarfon and Beaumaris, was sidelined and ignored by the history books.

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The Letters Written At Garth Celyn, Aber Garth Celyn,
October/November 1282?

(Lambeth Palace Archives: The Register of Archbishop John Peckham)

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1282 Edward Longshanks, king of England, moved a massive army into the neighbouring Principality of Wales, determined on conquest.

In October, with winter approaching and Edward faced with the difficulty of

over-wintering his army, Archbishop John Peckham intervened; letters passed between Peckham and the Prince of Wales, then Peckham traveled to Garth Celyn where he remained from 3rd to 6th November having discussions with the Prince and his Chief Ministers.

On 6th November, Luc de Tany, leader of the detachment that had occupied Anglesey, broke the truce that was in place, and led his troops over a bridge of boats that had been constructed at Moel y Don near Bangor. Forced back by the Welsh scouts onto the bridge which then collapsed under the weight, De Tany and his men, dragged down by the weight of their armor, drowned.

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English Conquest Of Edward I

11 December 1282, Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd was killed.

1283 Edward's army encircled Snowdonia.

21 / 21 June 1283 Prince Dafydd ap Gruffudd, his son Owain ap Dafydd, wife Elizabeth de Ferrers and seven daughters, were captured at Bera, in the uplands above Aber Garth Celyn. Dafydd, seriously wounded (graviter vulneratus) in the struggle, was taken to Edward at Rhuddlan that night. Llywelyn ap Dafydd was captured within days.

28 June 1283, Edward proclaimed that he had the 'last of the treacherous lineage' in his grasp.

(Haganby Chronicle: Annales Dunstable: Cotton Mss. Vesp B x1, f.30: Chronicles Edward I and Edward II; Calendar Welsh Rolls: Reg Swinfield: Public Record Office E101/3/30)

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-----Gwenllian ferch Llywelyn

? On the Feast Day of St. Gervasius and Prothasius 1282 (Friday 19th June), Eleanor de Montfort, Lady of Wales, died at Garth Celyn in childbirth.

?The baby was named Gwenllian ferch Llywelyn. Lady Eleanor was buried on the opposite shore of the Menai, facing Garth Celyn, in the Franciscan Friary at Llanfaes.

?1283 Princess Gwenllian was taken 'by the King's command' to the Gilbertine Priory at Sempringham in Lincolnshire 'in hir credil.' She was held prisoner there until her death fifty-four years later. (Robert Manning)

1287 Llywelyn ap Dafydd died at Bristol Castle; he was buried in the Dominican Friary.

(Chronicle of Bury St Edmunds: Brut y Tywysogion)

Sempringham Priory, Lincolnshire, England

1131 Gilbert of Sempringham set up a religious order and established a cloister for 'seven maidens' on the north side of the parish church.

In 1139 a new priory was built south of the church, on 360 acres given to the community by Gilbert of Ghent.

The new priory was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. At first the life for the nuns was austere, but after the death of Gilbert, the rule was relaxed.

In 1290 Pope Nicholas IV allowed the priory to have a learned doctor of theology and among the canons was Robert Manning of Bourne, who mentions Gwenllian in his writings.

The Dissolution of the Priory took place on 18th September 1538 and the buildings dismantled.

Today, all that remains of the great Priory, the mother house of an order of monasteries which ranged from Bedfordshire to Scotland is a parish church set in its churchyard, alone in the middle of the fields, half a mile west of the B1177 road, south of Billingboroug